

OVAE 2013 Community College Webinar Series

“Transforming Adult Education to Better Prepare Adult Learners to Successfully Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training”

March 07, 2013

1:00 – 2:30 p.m. EST

Cheryl Keenan: I want to thank you all so much for joining us today. This is the first event in our 2013 community college webinar series, which will focus on transforming adult education to ease the transition to post-secondary education and training.

I am Cheryl Keenan, the director of OVAE's Division of Adult Education and Literacy and I'm pleased to have the opportunity to moderate today's event. The next 90 minutes are sure to be very engaging many - much more engaging than the first 15 minutes, I hope.

We have several experts in adult education and post-secondary education transition joining us today to discuss their work. It looks like we have a large group of adult education, community college and government stakeholders taking part in today's event as well and right now, we probably have over 300 - going on 330 attendees.

I believe there will be more of you and some of you may be joining us from conference rooms together with your colleagues and partner so I thank you for the overwhelming response to today's webinar.

Before we jump into the content, I just want to go quickly over the technical specification. You should be seeing an introductory slide on the left side of your screen. If not and if you're having difficulty with the display and you have another Web browser on your system, you may want to try switching to a different browser.

The audio will be provided to the teleconference line that is provided on the introductory slide. Please email Matthew Valerius at the email address provided or David Preve at the email address provided if you are experiencing any technical problem.

Because of the large number of people, we have online with us today we will be taking questions electronically throughout the session. We have built-in time for Q&A following each presentation and even with the delays, I believe we will be able to accommodate the question.

To ask a question to our presenters, please type in the bottom of the Q&A box and click send to all panelists. You can also use the Q&A to enter any technical questions of problem. We'll help you with those the best we can.

Thank you so much for taking part in this event today. Brenda Dann-Messier the assistant secretary of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education would like to say a few opening words welcoming all of you as well. Brenda.

Brenda Dann-Messier: Thank you very much, Cheryl, for moderating today's event. On behalf of Secretary Duncan, Undersecretary Martha Kanter and the entire Department of Education, I want to welcome you and thank each of you for joining us today for the first event in OVAE's 2013 Community College Webinar Series and again, thank you for hanging in there. We apologize for the delay.

Our administration is very proud to focus on community college as gateways of opportunity for all Americans as well as drivers of a robust economy and job market. And while we know that you are being challenged with increased

enrollment and declining resources in many instances, we're here to support and invest in your success.

I want to thank our partners on this webinar series -- the American Association of Community Colleges and the Association of Community College Trustees -- for their valuable input on the development of this event. But really most importantly, I want thank our audience for your interest and engagement on these critical issues and for all the tremendous work you're doing out there on the ground to expand educational opportunities for our students.

We all know how valuable community colleges are in the many ways they server their local communities. This first webinar will focus on the role of community colleges and helping adult learners transition from adult basic education and GED programs to post-secondary education and absolutely critical function given the over 90 million adults in the US with only basic or below basic literacy skills.

Among those already in the workforce between the ages of 18 to 64, 75 million do not hold a post-secondary credential and are not enrolled in college. These are the adults we desperately need to reach both to ensure our countries has the skill, the workforce we need to remain competitive in the 21st century economy and to ensure every American has the opportunity to achieve their educational and career goals.

We need a two-prong strategies that addresses basic literacy needs and creates opportunities for incumbent and dislocated workers to return to school to gain the skills and credentials they need to secure good jobs and advance in their career.

We have to generate new college graduates from older students, career changes, students who enrolled in college and then left before attaining a degree, and the unemployed.

We have to reach out to people who might never have considered higher education a few years ago. In short, we need a fundamental paradigm shift from the view of education as a one-shot opportunity to a lifelong pursuit. This is the kind of word our panelists are engaged in today and I'm thrilled to have them offer their knowledge and expertise.

So let me take a moment to introduce our distinguished panelists. Our first presenter is Barbara Endel, System Director of the Accelerating Opportunity Initiative at Jobs for the Future. Barbara brings a wealth of community college and workforce development experience to this discussion. Most recently, she served as a policy consultant to JFF on the Developmental Education Initiative -- a project of achieving the dream that focused on utilizing data to improve student success in community colleges.

Prior to joining JFF, Barbara help the Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network, create career pathways for over 3000 participants through a project funded by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

Following Barbara will be Judy Alamprese principal scientist at Abt Associate. She'll present findings from a recent study she conducted on behalf of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education on transforming ABE and GED reading instruction to better prepare adult learners for the demand of college level course work.

Judy also brings extensive adult education and workforce training experience to this discussion. She has directed research, evaluation, policy, technical

assistance and demonstration project in adult education and workforce development for more than 30 years.

Judy has completed three national studies of promising strategies and adult reading instruction and directing to evaluations of adult career pathways program in which accelerating extraction is a key focus.

For the past seven years, she has worked to the Oregon's Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development developing that Oregon Pathways for Adult Basic Skills Transition -- the education and work initiative, a systemic approach to enhancing ABE services and coordination between ABE and post-secondary workforce development programs.

Rounding out our panel today is Amy Dalsimer, the Director of the Pre-College Academic Programming Department LaGuardia Community College in LaGuardia Community College City University of New York. Amy will provide a fascinating local example of a community college that has purposely redesigned its ABE and GED program to provide their adult students with a strong bridge to college.

Amy manages a variety of adult literacy, workforce development and post-secondary transition initiatives at LaGuardia including the GED bridge to career and college project and several NYBEST adult career pathways programs. These include the Integrated Medical Office, Clinical Technician Program, to Supporting Adults through a Vocational EMT Program, The Integrated Central Surgical Technician Program and the Integrated Community Health Worker Training Program.

I'd like to thank all of our panelists in advance for their impressive work in their participation in today's event. I'm sure we will all learn a lot from all of

your work. And with that let me turn it over to Barbara who'll begin the discussion to discuss the accelerating opportunity initiative.

Barbara Endel: Thank you, Brenda. I'm very pleased to be here on behalf of Jobs for the Future and really want to thank you, Brenda, and your staff -- (Johan) and Cheryl Keenan, and others -- that have been so supportive of this important national project as we address how adult education can better prepare our adult learners to transition to post-secondary.

And I also want to acknowledge the real champions of this work -- the eight states and over 55 community colleges that are engaged in Accelerating Opportunity, many of whom are logged in today.

So I'm going to go ahead and take a few minutes and just do a very quick journey through our accelerating opportunity initiative. And to me, I want to get to the most important aspects which are those transformational efforts our states are doing and our colleges are doing that I think will be instructive and hopefully catalytic for those that are on the webinar today.

And Brenda, as you so aptly mentioned at the beginning, I wanted to discuss the table very quickly for why Jobs for the Future and our partners and our funders and our state and colleges are engaged in this work at the beginning.

We know that is a tremendous number of Americans with basic or below basic literacy skills and that the number of adult ages have less than a high school credential is still quite high. We also have a significant population of Americans that have no high school credential and we know that the Jobs for the Future will not - will definitely require something beyond a high school diploma or a GED.

We also note since 1979, investments in both adult education and workforce development have declined in real terms and as we all know and we are, you know, in essence speaking to the choir giving a post-secondary credential is essentially one of the only ways to break intergenerational transmission of poverty in America.

So this is the, you know, for these reasons, we are deeply engaged as partners in this work to find ways to ensure that adults can successfully transition to a credential that has labor market value.

Very quickly, accelerating opportunity is a national multistate, multiyear initiative. It's managed by Jobs for the Future and we have a tremendous set of partners that are included in this initiative including NCTN -- the National College Transition Network -- National Council of Workforce Education and obviously we're standing on the very broad shoulders of our Washington State Board for Community and technical colleges.

So I think this really represents some of the best minds in the country to essentially help address these issues that we're all focusing on.

As I mentioned that we have private foundations that are engaged in funding this work including the Gates Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, Kresge, Kellogg, Open Society, University of Phoenix Foundation and the Arthur Blank Foundation and the Robert Woodruff Foundations in Georgia and - so we're so thrilled to have these sorts of investments.

We have a number of states that are engaged in this work. As I mentioned earlier, we now have eight states. We just included Arkansas as our latest state from last week who just joined and they are investing their own resources, by the way, into this initiative. This will impact over 50 community colleges

across the country and essentially, this framework around accelerating opportunity includes three major pieces of the work.

We obviously think that both the program redesign and the state policy framework is so important. We will be also including program cost and a rigorous independent evaluation and I was talking earlier this morning with our two co-presenters.

And we essentially came to the conclusion that we think many across the country believes an investment into these sorts of models from the Washington I-BEST program are too expensive or maybe that they feel like it's too costly and we are trying to really build compelling evidence to provide otherwise, to basically say these are worthy investments. So we will be adding a significant cost analysis to the fields to determine how this will play out.

Here is just a quick math of our states that are included. Again, we felt like we wanted representation from states from across the country so we feel like we've got a terrific set of states and their collages that are eagerly investing themselves into innovation and doing things differently knowing the staggering numbers that we're really trying to impact around this particular work.

So what are they signed up for? What are really working on and what we will get out of this investment in time? So essentially, we have our states - are committing to over 20,000 credentials by 2015. And what we mean by credentials are those folks' post-secondary credentials that have labor market value. We know that we were basically mapping curriculum in our pathways to family sustainable wages and we're not supporting pathways that don't lead to this family sustainable jobs.

As I mentioned a moment ago, we have a robust policy agenda and to me, this is one of the most exciting aspects of our initiatives. In fact this is one of the first time to cross some of our states that they focused an exclusive policy agenda on their under prepared adult learners and have done so in an explicit way with many different partners in state agencies.

The other - one of the other key aspects of this, is this really the states and college pedagogical transformation by linking adult basic education with career technical education courses.

To me, the magic of I-BEST and to me the most promising part of this initiative is to basically say we are going to short-circuit this learning curve and at the same time students are engaged in professional technical courses at the community college. They're learning the foundation of learning through adult basic skills programs. They are not these long sequences of first, you must get your GED, then you might be able to go into a technical program, then you may go further. We're really short-circuiting that learning curve.

We also know that states and colleges need help around this innovative models. Team teaching isn't something we were taught when we went to school or how to do. And so we relied on our terrific partners at Washington State and NCTN and NCEE to help provide these professional developments to influence culture shift and when we talk about culture shift, what we mean is how can we make sure adult basic skills students feel they're part of the college, feel that they're very much integrated into this work.

We all know the commitment to working with the employers but it's so very important states are aligning their career pathway credentials to the labor market more than ever before. In fact, that was a prerequisite before joining the initiative. We required firm evidence and compelling evidence of labor

market information so that students would have a good job when they finish their program and the opportunity to come back into continued learning, Brenda, as you mentioned earlier.

And last, our ambitious transformational efforts to create a national movement around I-BEST. We really believe that with the eight years of experience Washington State has been able to put in together with the independent evaluations that they have comprised and that we will be able to contribute, I really think this is a viable national model for states to really look at.

Next, I want to talk to you about some of the major policy reforms. Just to give you a sense of the depths and breadths of the work that these states are courageously undertaking and we will have all of this information available for those that are on this webinar -- our accelerating opportunity website.

So essentially, for example, with Illinois, Illinois has - their inclusion in Accelerating Opportunity was so important. They came into a window of opportunity where a state-performance funding workgroup was considering performance funding formulas. At the time, adult basic education and measuring and including this important population was not being considered.

So the Illinois Community College Board was successful in advocating and getting included adult basic education students into the performance funding framework and this is something we think is a huge breakthrough for the state and something other states should consistently look at.

A second thing that Illinois has done which I think is so provocative is that for the first time ever, they're actually putting together a strategic statewide workforce development plan which would include the integration of academics, career and technical ed, adult ed, and workforce and it's just this

terrific opportunity to institutionalize and rate together funding and think about data systems and tracking and think about a coherent cogent set of strategies across the very silos to work together toward make a difference for this underprepared population. So we're very proud of Illinois.

With Kentucky, they have scaled the initiative within one year. It started with eight community colleges. They now have their entire system engaged and how many have done that is they've been able to leverage the grant dollars that have been made available by also including state workforce and developmental add dollars.

They just took a team, if you believe, of 75 people from Kentucky to go visit Washington State just to have a multiday symposium to see the I-BEST programs in action and they're going to do a mentorship model where the colleges that were in it for the first and a half are essentially helping the other eight colleges come on board and it's extraordinarily exciting.

The other thing Kentucky is doing which is still emerging is essentially they are going into a deep level of mapping their career pathways in their curriculum that's being offered across this certificate programs to employer demand and they're doing that through the use of real-time labor market data. It's called a dynamic skills audit. And this sort of process holds terrific promise for other colleges across the country. If you really want to know if your certificates are in demand and producing jobs and what the jobs are asking for, this is the way to go at it.

And last in Kansas, they're using a braided funding toolkit which is on our (unintelligible) Accelerating Opportunity Website to essentially look to finance Career Pathways with very broad state and local agency buy-in. Blake Flanders who is our state lead, they basically said they've been able to (broke)

our conversation with a variety of state agency in ways that they never had before because they're coming together around this underserved populations. So we're - it's really terrific to see this sort of major policy reforms.

Next, I'd like to talk about the key instructional reforms that's happening. So - as I mentioned, this is really advancing the whole idea of how adult learners learn. So instead of essentially being able to take classes and traditionally deliver adult basic education courses, students without a high school diploma or a GED are getting a ticket into community college and we're doing that with terrific support services, great career counseling and matching it up with their career interest and starting them off into shorter term leading to longer term credentials and it's very exciting.

And so for us, this integration of basic skills and career and technical education is cutting significantly in time -- that the amount of time students need -- to get their GED or the foundational learning plus their certificate.

And then obviously, we have been a strong supporter for decades around this idea of career pathways and stackable credentials so that you can essentially, you know, jump from off the subway, go get a job, get back on that subway, get the next credential and keep moving up the ladder into higher levels of learning.

And obviously all of this comes with ongoing support where campuses are really stepping up their efforts to embed rather than refer students to these various ongoing support services.

So essentially, as I just mentioned, the key of this is team teaching. You've got adult basic skills instructors in the classroom with the technical faculty at least 50% of the time with support services essentially wrapping around the entire

process which again we think is then a really key advocate - a key model that's part of this initiative.

So here's where I will start - I will really end and that is we are trying to really streamline adult education pathways with these instructional reforms where we're embedding career exploration in the contextualized learning and really trying to make articulated career pathways the way that we do business and make this communication and this alignment with adult basic skills stronger than it is ever before and also, making sure that that leads to labor market value and a terrific job at the end of the line for students with always the opportunity to come back with these articulated pathways when they want to go into deeper levels of learning.

So essentially, what I'd like to do is knowing we have much more great information to come. I just want to wrap up my key point and then I'll turn it back over and that is in the end, we have aspirations that's accelerating opportunity and the compelling evidence that is really produced from this work, provides the platform to build strong learning environments for students.

One of the best in the country, I think, to help capture this promising instructional strategies and my professional colleague, Judy Alamprese, so thank you for the opportunity to present around accelerating opportunity and I'll now turn it back over to OVAE and Cheryl to continue the discussion.

Cheryl Keenan: Thank you, Barbara. Your overview was very interesting and I think that there are - you have solicited a great interest among our participants as evidenced by the number of questions that we have coming in. I'm going to move to right into some questions, Barbara. And Barbara know that we have about -- how many questions up here? We have probably about seven or eight questions up

here right now so if you can gauge the length of your answers so that perhaps we can get to all of these questions it would be great.

The first question that's coming from a couple of folks, Barb, is folks are asking for a little bit more description of the JFF braided funding toolkit and for you to provide exactly what that is.

Barbara Endel: Exactly. So what this braided funding toolkit is it's - we've essentially been able to identify through deep research and building on the work that class provided on a federally - we adopted the class federal funding toolkit that we essentially took that framework and applied it to state and local level.

So for example, you saw the eight states that were included in this initiative, we're able to take this framework which identifies all of the available funding sources and provide a deep discussion guide and point to specific funding streams that really essentially are the platform for both the state and the colleges to figure out what sorts of funding streams can be applied to help cover the cost of tuition and resources that are needed to engage in this work.

And so what I would be happy to do, Cheryl, is essentially kind of provide what that framework looks like and a follow up to you and we can - and what will happen also at the state ABE directors meeting in May, we will have that showcase there as well. So we'll make sure that folks understand and get a chance to look at it.

Cheryl Keenan: Thank you, Barb. We have a series of questions about non-GED completers and affordability. Are GED completers paying for the college courses since they are no longer Pell eligible? Can you address how that is being handled in the AO sites?

Barbara Endel: Yes. I mean as you all know, right, that - and this is, you know, have been - not just impacted are AO states that across country, you know, for those without high school diploma or GED, they are no longer Pell eligible with cost cutting measures that were taken earlier. That's why we developed a braided funded toolkit.

So, you know, we wanted to assume students will have a little or no debt burden in the career technical courses and certificate programs that they would enroll in and so that's why we essentially put together once identified the top 10 to 12 funding sources that both states and colleges can use to help students cover these costs including (unintelligible) dollars, including the college taking steps to possibly waive tuition, including the students taking, you know, some, you know, they may be doing some self-pay.

Some times, it's community college foundation dollars. We are working in Arkansas on leveraging their (unintelligible) dollars for students that are eligible to go into those pathways so we're really trying to be as creative as we can within these constraints.

Cheryl Keenan: Thanks, Barb. We've got another series of questions around credentials. One question is if accelerating opportunities is using the Department of Labor definition of credential that was put out in their (unintelligible) 1510 and related to that question if you can bundle the answer in the sake of time, what have you found are the certifications or credentials that are most viable for family sustaining job?

Barbara Endel: So let's see, to the first question again, knowing kind of the - for gravity, we did utilize the federal guidelines around the definition of credentials and that is embedded in our - in what states are able to count, if you will, toward credentials and we also expanded that to include some exception so if states

had some other industry recognized credentials or others that - or even some that they created - co-created with employers, we created a little bit of wiggle room around what counts as a credential.

Is it results in a certification that has real labor market value where employers are recognizing it and paying for it? You know, because there are always this exceptions as you all know.

And excuse me, Cheryl, remind me of the second question.

Cheryl Keenan: The second question was around what definition of credential you're using, if you're using the Department of Labor definition.

Barbara Endel: Yes. We are using that. That is correct. And we provided some latitude for the states to tell us if they have some exceptions to what constituted a credential and then I think you mentioned what have we found to be the most viable for family sustainable wages?

And so here's how we've done. We basically use - we basically have the states and the colleges utilize the living wage calculator and provide evidence that the certificates are mapping the family sustainable wages and so it's very interesting, you know, our data will be essentially coming out in the spring but, you know, we're not only finding the case for short term credentials equal low pay. You know, that hasn't been the case in all instances.

So we'll actually have a lot more to say later this spring when we get our evaluators and our data analysis to come out and we'll be able to make stronger statements about what those are.

Cheryl Keenan: Thank you. We have a question about the states that are targeted and how they were selected and a related question as to whether or not adult education that is affiliated with K-12 agencies are included in this initiative.

Barbara Endel: Yes. A really quick answer. So essentially our funders together with our partners determine that at least to start out, we wanted to target those states where adult basic education was somehow included in the structure of higher ed whether it was in the community college system or in the post-secondary system because we saw that it would provide the greatest platform for transition rates and partnership.

But as you can see, we just added Arkansas which has their adult education organized not inside post-secondary community colleges. So we are looking at models where K-12, you know, where adult basic skills and adult basic education are not in the post-secondary and we'll be looking forward to that at some point.

You know, we will be taking on a few states and what we are calling an affiliate network but we're doing so carefully and so we do have Arkansas that will provide some evidence around that but that's how we selected the initial stage, Cheryl.

Cheryl Keenan: Great. Thank you so much. We have one last question I think that we can fit in and that is a question about teachers and what are you doing to support teachers in the ABE field?

Barbara Endel: Yes. So we - this is really area that we've put a lot of time and effort into. We developed a virtual academy that's connected to our accelerating opportunity Website and it has some of the most best organized resources and tools on the

planet around team teaching in this integrated model and resources that, you know, we've been mentioning throughout.

Also, we've got some self-paced team-teaching courses that NCTN has developed. Those are available to anyone. You can log-in and look at those and what those look like. And then we've been developing actually a structured what we call an induction model where we have specific steps and sequences that any of the team teachers that are going to be engaged in this initiative need to go through in order to be eligible to teach and to get engaged in this and that was again our NCTN partners who just are terrific to work with.

And we've been leveraging all of the professional development opportunities that each of the states and the colleges have been able to develop as well so there's a lot that we're doing to make sure that teachers are supported.

Cheryl Keenan: Okay. Well, once again, I'd like to thank Barbara for being with us this morning and afternoon depending on which coast you're on. Barbara, I think that the breadth of the questions that were asked demonstrate how effective your presentation is and how interested people are in watching the progress that you're making in accelerating opportunities.

So thank you very much. It's now my pleasure to turn the presentation to our second stage and ask (Judy Alamprese) to start her presentation on transforming reading instruction to prepare adult learners for the transition to post-secondary education.

Judy, take it from here.

Judy Alamprese: Thank you, Cheryl. I'd like to begin by thanking OVAE for supporting Abt Associates study on transforming reading instruction. It was a wonderful opportunity both to look in depth at some research and to conduct some case studies of some site visits.

Our - this afternoon, I'm going to provide you with an overview of Abt Associates Research and Reading Instruction for adults at the adult secondary education level and including our key findings and some examples of some promising practices and with some conclusions and further steps to consider.

That study was conducted for the Department of Education's office of the Vocational and Adult Ed to fill a gap in our knowledge about research-based approaches and teaching, reading to prepare GED level learners for post-secondary participation.

We first conducted a review of the literature on reading and writing research at the secondary and post-secondary levels. We looked at various states and national initiatives including the Common Core to define college and career readiness through the standards and we also examined the available information about the GED 2004 requirements.

The (leadership) pointed to the gaps between college student's reading and writing at the time of their enrollment in post-secondary courses and the knowledge that scale a student's needs to actually succeed in these courses.

We - there's a very limited literature on GED instructions so we reviewed the few studies that we could find on processes of GED reading instruction as well as we look at information about instructional approaches through published GED curricula in computer based instruction.

To provide a context for the reading and writing instruction that we were looking at, we conducted site visits to five programs that we're implementing ABE transition to post-secondary education as potential promising practices and these programs were the GED Bridge to college and career at LaGuardia, Community College in New York whom you're going to hear from in a few minutes, the use of the reading apprenticeship program in the context of the - an Allied Health I-BEST at Renton Community College in Washington State.

We also went to the Integrated Transitional Studies called I-TRANS which is an academic I-BEST at Lower Columbia College in Longview, Washington. We went into Oregon to look at the Oregon Pathways for adult basic skills transition to education and work called OPABS at Mount Hood Community College in Gresham.

And finally, we went to the ABE Transition to College Program which is being conducted in collaboration between Rochester Adult Education Program and Rochester Community and Technical College in Rochester, Minnesota.

So the five programs, four of which were based primarily in a community colleges (unintelligible) a combination between a K-12 and community college collaboration.

When we looked at the literature, yes, we found three factors that are really critical for overall success in post-secondary education and for what some would say is (reading) success in post-secondary.

The first is the ability of students to make academic reading demands - reading and writing demands in post-secondary courses. They also learn (unintelligible) need a psycho social skills sometimes called non-cognitive skills such as self-direction, self-efficacy, perseverance and the motivation

that can propel students to persist and learn and finally, adult's knowledge of college and careers and their movement towards that end goal.

When we look at the academic reading and writing demands, a range of skills are associated with success and post-secondary. The development of critical thinking, comprehension through summarization, synthesis and evaluation are key skills and this is in contrast to the reading for information that has generally characterized GED instruction historically.

Also, college students need to be able to read and process complex text including different types of text such as occupational textbook, general articles, novels with multiple chapters, the whole issue of students having to increase their depths of background knowledge has - is written about extensively.

A key finding is that GED level students generally do not have that range of background knowledge and subjects such as history and science which is critical to being able to enroll in post-secondary (unintelligible) occupational academic courses in which, of course, will be an issue for the GED 2014 test that will go - which will require some background content knowledge in those subjects.

The college environment also requires that students can apply information in concepts to different situations across different courses that students need strong oral and written communication skills with the touch of assignments of in terms of class presentations, group projects and the like will require that students both can work independently and with groups. As students enroll on this program, they're going to have to manage multiple courses and subjects, work across this and really apply their reading skills to a variety of different areas of content.

And finally, looking at the student's ability to navigate using the internet and other knowledge and communication technologies, the reading demands once you start to look at the internet and these other technologies are different than looking at printed text and students have to be able to navigate between these two.

The whole issue of non-academic skills and dispositions, psychosocial skills has been recognized in the literature for a long time but is now a part of most programs that are focused on basic school transition to post-secondary education and these skills are multi-faceted. Some of them typically defined as psychosocial looking at note taking, time management and study skills.

Students need to have, you know, a good sense of self-direction, self-regulation so that they can monitor their progress, they can monitor their time and how they apply their studying to different types of assignments and, of course, they need to be motivated and have a sense of self-efficacy about their knowledge and their ability to learn new information.

Finally, the third part of this is the college knowledge - college and career knowledge and goals. What we've seen and what we've read in a literature is that it's really important for students to have a goal as they begin this transition process.

Many adults basic education students even at the GED level have not yet set a goal and, very often, it's due to their lack of knowledge about the local labor market and the skills and knowledge requires at the job as the labor market as well as the educational requirements of these jobs.

So having this realm of information included in reading and writing instruction is one way to kind of move students who have now yet set goals or done the kind of background research they need to do to understand what their skills and interest are and how those map on to the labor market and their goals can be addressed.

So if we look at approaches to reading instruction for post-secondary success, I'm going to go over the key approaches that we've seen in the literature and give you some a couple of examples from the sites. I'm not going to reference LaGuardia's work because Amy will do - is going to talk about that in her presentation and will map back to a lot of these various approaches.

The first trend is to really integrate reading and writing instruction and talk about two aspects of this. One is this whole issue of contextualization and integration. There are many efforts underway to teach reading and writing as part of occupational instructions which we see in the I-BEST and I-BEST-like courses where the focus is on occupational instruction and then that is used as a the base to strengthen their reading and writing and the math skills as needed.

And the other approach is to integrate occupational themes into basic skills instruction and we have examples from both of this. So the first one in the integrating reading and writing into the -- I'm sorry -- teaching the reading and writing is part of occupational instruction.

Both the I-BEST Allied Health Program in Renton Community College that was looking at CAN -- Certified Nursing Assistant -- and phlebotomy instruction. They were teaching reading and writing in the context of those allied health subjects and the integrated - the I-TRANS program integrated transition studies program in - at Columbia - Lower Columbia College -- they

were teaching humanities and then as the college subject and then integrating reading and writing in the context of the humanities course.

In terms of the occupational theme integration, Amy will tell you what they have done at LaGuardia and in Oregon at the OPABS Project at Mount Hood, they looked at key themes from allied health, from manufacturing and from sales and service as high demand area - occupational areas in the state and information from those occupations was integrated into the basic skills instruction there.

Another aspect of integration and reading and writing has to do with the extent to which you are encouraging students to write as they read and there are many strategies that have been tested with proper middle school and high school students that appeared to be effective with adults as well and we're looking at, you know, taking notes during courses, reacting to different reading passages by using - taking -- my mind went blank -- writing logs and the like and also having students synthesize text and, you know, and interprets what they're seeing and reading in the text.

So I-TRANS is a good example where -- in the context of the humanities course -- students were asked to do a lot of synthesis. They were asked to do summarization and as far as they go on reading and also begin to do some structural analysis.

In terms of developing background knowledge purposely, the I-TRANS project - program also had - gave students additional readings to supplement their knowledge of humanities. There are also some CD materials available where they - were on the topic that was being discussed in the humanities course and students also had the option of listening to information about that particular subject.

All of these projects emphasized higher order of thinking skill in terms of particularly the summarization which is a skill that is sometimes not very well developed in GED instruction. And in the Rochester program the ABE instructor worked with the developmental education instructor to really emphasize a higher level of reading instruction that really promoted students development of their skills using various forms of text is, you know, is a common approach to expand reading ability.

And this is done through in the I-BEST project in Renton which was focused on allied health. They were taught to understand medical vocabulary and navigating medical textbooks, looking at chart writing and the like.

And finally, a lot of this college courses -- these ABE transition courses -- were modeled on college courses in terms of the types of assignments much more independent work. They all gave homework and many of them had group projects.

So this, in kind of a very quick nutshell, is a synthesis of these key approaches that we saw both in the literature and in practice in these five sites.

So in conclusion, we find that there's generally agreement about the reading skills that adults at the GED level need to meet the academic demands of entry level post-secondary courses such as the summarizations of the (unintelligible) evaluation.

There's also agreement about the need to engage GED level learners with a wider range of reading materials that traditional have been used to prepare adults to the GED test such as occupational textbook, novels, general articles

and different kinds of text that integrate charts and graph and different types of data of that nature.

Also, there is a need to develop background knowledge and that can be done, you know, by extension given additional materials to read, looking at alternative ways of discussing the background information during the classes and we also find that the instruction that integrates teaching and reading and writing can facilitate adults development of comprehension skills and increase their overall ability to write text.

What is still not well documented in the literature is on the particular processes that are required for students to create text as we search on this for the K Through 8 less of that has been tested with adults so this whole issue of sense in structure and grammar and are like are, you know, yet to be tested very well with adults.

Finally, research in adults at the GED level is needed to identify set of strategies for developing comprehensive skills particularly concerning the extent to which multistep comprehension strategies can be easily understood and used by learners. There is some limited research in adults use of comprehension strategies and there have been mixed findings about a use of such strategies -- so more investigation is needed.

We also observed that over - a number of different approaches are being used to teach basic skills in the context of occupational information or to integrate occupational basic skills instruction. The use of the terminology of conceptualization and integration can be confusing. More consistent use of the terms will promote better understanding and communication.

Also while contextualized instruction is viewed as instrumental in engaging and motivating learners, the research on the use of contextualized and integrated instruction is limited and we could benefit from more rigorous studies that would inform particular approaches to these processes.

Also, we saw the instructive knowledge about the use of results from research and reading and writing instruction is evolving and their instruction is really primarily guided by the background and experience which one would expect. This suggest that perhaps more efforts may be needed to package some of the professional development that is based on available research and can be easily accessible so instructive.

To other conclusions - when other one have to deal with teaching a career and college awareness and the development of non-academic skills. The content of career and college awareness seems to be an engaging context developing comprehension and writing. There were various approaches being used in the field of adult education could benefit again from evidence on more effective approaches for using this context to develop basic skills.

There also appears to be a trend in adult education to integrate career and college awareness and instruction rather than to teach discreet courses for set of skills and time management.

In closing, I think at the available research and reading and writing instruction approaches points to a number of strategies that can be implemented in adult basic education to prepare GED learners for post-secondary success and that overall, we would benefit from more systematic testing in these approaches and that would help to advance both our knowledge of what works in terms of teaching but also could inform future professional development of instructors.

Cheryl Keenan: Thank you, Judy. I think that your presentation has been extremely informative and we do have a number of questions that we probably will not be able to get to in the limited amount of time that we have available but I'd like to ask just may be a couple of questions that are - is mostly closely related to what you've talked about.

The one question that's in, Judy, that I think would be great to take a few minutes to talk about is that there is a question here asking, the factors for success are demanding and take time for students to develop. Is this possible in the "accelerated mode" discussed previously in the accelerating opportunities?

So can you talk a little bit about what it really takes to develop these skills the movement towards accelerated learning?

Judy Alamprese: Yes. It is indeed challenging and it does take a one time - what we have seen in practice and it's a moving target as we know as folks in the field begin to try out different approaches. They are somewhat targeting so even if you have a class with students who test and say at the adult secondary level as defined by the national reporting system, obviously their skills in reading and writing are varied even though the test scores are within a limited range.

And what we have observed is that instructors are trying to address all of those key approaches in small ways and to the extent to which these instructors in ABE have looked at what is going on in their local community college and sometimes it's the same institution, sometimes it's the partner colleges who try to benchmark what the reading and writing demands are of the entry level occupational courses or academic courses. They have a little better gauge to figure out for example how to expand their materials -- the kinds of writing assignments to emphasize in this transition courses.

So part of this is, first of all, understanding really what the gaps are with the current students and then looking again perhaps at their goals for college and career and then trying to obtain a better idea of what the local colleges are doing and then take that information back in target through, you know, how they - the kinds of skills they teach, the types of text that they use and the kinds of assignments that they give.

Cheryl Keenan: Great. Thank you. Judy, I'd like to just squeeze one more question and that perhaps you can do a real quick summary answers since we're getting low on time. This is about - a question about the applicability of this approach to our ESL students and this comes from a person that's strongly - a program that's strongly directing teachers to implement career pathways, bridges to college and accelerated learning in their core (ESOL) curriculum and the person is wanting to know whether or not this is a beneficial approach for students whose basic need is still English language learning.

Judy Alamprese: Right. In the history of the I-BEST program in Washington State is that they began - I-BEST was first implemented actually in ESL with ESL students.

And so, there is history with many colleges in Washington State having looked at higher level ESL student, you know, enrolled in entry level occupational courses that were also receiving ESL instruction while they were in those college (unintelligible) courses.

In Oregon, there has been some work particularly looking at the college and career awareness course which is pegged at about a 7th to 8th grade reading level and, is of course, that in Oregon is tied between both the pre-bridge and the bridge level and it's being now tied with upper level ESL students.

So again, it probably makes a difference to what the gaps are with the students skills and the extent to which one can integrate this, you know, ESL instruction in the context of the occupational teaching.

Cheryl Keenan: Thank you very much. That was a great answer to that question and I think that your presentation has been spot on Judy as it always is. I'd like to take this opportunity to turn the webinar over to Amy. And Amy, if you can share your experiences at LaGuardia and bring it home to the practitioner level for us. Thank you.

Amy Dalsimer: Absolutely. Thank you, Cheryl. It's a real pleasure for us to participate in the webinar today and be able to share our work. LaGuardia and (unintelligible) have been spending a lot of efforts to transform our adult at classes on our system to help our students transition to post-secondary and I really want to appreciate OVAE and JFF and Judy. We've learned a lot from the work and practices of your organizations along the way.

LaGuardia, for those of you who don't know, I just want to give a little bit of background is we're located in New York City, we're part of the city university of New York system. We're a large and very diverse urban campus. We serve about 15,000 undergraduate students in degree programs and about 50,000 non-credit adult and continuing ed students majority of whom RN, ESL, basic education GED and adult literacy and professional and certification programs.

As I said, our student body here in Queens, New York is very diverse representing, I think, the most diverse county in the world and our students come from over 150 different countries and speak more than a hundred native or mother languages.

I'm the director of the pre-college academic programming department. Our department is part of the adult and continuing ed division. In our department, we serve about 16,000 students each year in comprehensive academic college readiness, college prep, GED, ESL and certificate training programs.

Our work focuses on three main areas. We collaborate with campus partners -- our professional and technical partners on the campus -- to deliver integrated career pathways programs. We call them NYBEST here because we took a lot of inspiration from our colleagues in Washington State but we have modified them to do in a New York style way and we help to build basic skills in the context of helping adult students earn a certification so that they can go to work.

The second big area of our work is professional development around contextualized literacy and how to develop integrated career pathways programs and the third and big piece of our work is our GED Bridge to College and Career Program which is going to be the focus of our presentation today and was also the program that Judy studied as part of her look into reading.

Just to say a word about why focus on the high school equivalency or GED preparation here at LaGuardia, the high school equivalency is very important in New York in terms of an educational pathway. The city university and the state university of New York have required a high school diploma or a GED as criteria for entry into credit bearing and degree program so that high school equivalency has been the gateway credential for our adult students unlike other states where students have been able to access community college and credit and degree-bearing programs.

The other reason that it's very important to us here in Queens is that 25% or more adults over the age of 19 and just to continue the zip codes around our college are without a high school diploma so...

So there's just a tremendous need to bring people adult back to school have them earn high school equivalency and go on to post-secondary so they can compete in today's economy.

With that said, we launched an initiative called the GED Bridge to College and Career's project back in 2007. Since then, we've served more than 700 students in the program. The program serves adult students 19 years or older who need to earn high school equivalency and have career aspirations in the field of healthcare business or science.

The program is design as a spring board to either college or post-secondary professional certification training. Bridge classes provide career-focused academic preparation that works to develop student's reading, writing and math skills in preparation both for the GED examination and post-secondary education simultaneously. Course work is contextualize and investigates themes in healthcare business or science in order to improve student's academic skills.

And the slide that you're looking at represents these three tracks that we offer to students as they enter and students would enter into one of these classes as a cohort.

LaGuardia has a long history of providing GED programming to out of school youth, formally incarcerated adult, use in adults to adult education populations in general and on campus, we probably served about 3000 students a year.

In 2006, we did an informal study and found that we could do a much better job overall of retaining students in our adult and GED program and helping them to earn the GED and then in transitioning to post-secondary. Essentially, what we've discovered was that many of our GED earners were actually moving on to post-secondary.

The Bridge Program has been designed as an access model for students who lack the literacy proficiencies and credentials that they need to get into college. We intentionally design the program so that we could accept people in our Bridge classes that read at the 7th grade level and above because a majority of students coming to our campus are actually testing below the 8th grade but are asking for high school equivalency preparation.

For those of you who are listening and thinking, you know, how do we re-design, how do we transform our adult education program or, you know, how do we approach this. When we began to re-design the GED model back in 2006, three major areas sort of emerged.

The first is that the Bridge Program has a very intentional program design that takes into account's student's needs and goals and we have a very intentional model for building staff capacity in our teacher effectiveness.

We've also been working continuously to improve the curriculum to align the academic skills to meaningful issues and topics in the field of business science and health so that the discipline focus or contextualized focused curriculum aligns to the way a college would organize itself and introduce the students to thinking in a discipline.

And finally, we've worked really hard over the last three years to work across the college systems and forge partnerships with the student enrollment,

admission's office, financial aid that foster effective and seamless transition for students moving across from adult ed into the credit side. Just quickly, I'd like to say that part of the Bridge design includes having a model that's cohort-based so that students and follows the college calendar so that students enter a course and are there for an entire semester of learning together.

We do offer part-time day and evening classes because we realized that our students have many adult responsibilities, many are working and have children and other responsibilities and cannot be in school full time.

Building on a college model this semester includes (unintelligible) assignments that serves as a portfolio, a student's progress and their academic skill development. These projects requires student to synthesize key content and ideas they've explored in their discipline or their sector of focus during the semester and these types of assignments allow students to build their academic sense of self-efficacy and their investment in their learning over the long term.

The training and development of our teacher is essential to Bridge program practice. Our team works collaboratively to constantly revise the curriculum and to make sure that we're using effective case management strategies and developing classroom cultures that are effective.

The Bridge really offers an early and ongoing focus on post-secondary transition to our adult students coming in. It starts at the point of intake in the admission sessions where the Bridge program is portrayed as a first step in the path to college and better careers rather than an endpoint and over the course of the semester, students complete a set of college and career activities that are academic in nature but helps students explore the career pathways, what the transitional experience will be and to set goals.

As I said, one of the hallmarks of - or really the heart of our Bridge battle is that it's contextualized career-focus curriculum. That curriculum is designed around sector-focused material that helps students begin to think in the discipline. When you go to college, you pick a major and you begin to develop a body of knowledge. When you become a professional, you have a certain set of not just vocabulary but practices and ways of knowing and information and starting that focus on the discipline and professional body of knowledge in the pre-college phase has been very effective.

The curriculum takes into account what the academic skills and needs of the students have to pass the GED but really goes beyond to align to those skills that are also required in college and post-secondary training.

Curriculum - the contextualized curriculum also offers opportunities for our teachers and our practitioners to shift the burden away from the standardized test to a more rigorous and comprehensive set of learning outcomes and objectives that can include essays, group projects, discussions, students academic self-evaluation and it's through the participation and these types of activities that students really learn to monitor their own progress and see their own academic progress which is a key scale when they go to college and become much more independent.

Part of the components of our classroom include the use of interdisciplinary tax and a range of tax as Judy was talking about earlier. The students do a lot of reading and writing activities, writing for comprehension that help them deepen their interaction with the text and their understanding of it and our math projects incorporate lot of real world data students may be working on projects that help them take information from surveys and studies and incorporate that into their own graphs and charts and perform their own analysis of original source materials.

For those of you who are really interested in what does this really look like at the classroom level this is just a quick snapshot of the types of units and themes that students in the Bridge to health and the Bridge to business class would be exploring. As the semester moves along, students participate in units that are focused around central concepts in their fields of interest.

Sector-focused units are usually focused around a central text that explores one issue and incorporates supplemental readings and other materials to support the academic skills and the concept development in these areas.

The last sort of key feature of our program redesign involves this alignment with post-secondary systems and that in that way, we mean the faculty on the degree side of the house and also our professional and technical faculty both here on campus and there's other flagship programs in New York.

We've done a lot of work to get input from the faculty on our curriculum design so that we can understand what it means to learn and think in these different disciplines and then an example of that would be that in the healthcare field, there's a lot of use of case studies to teach students, nursing students and occupational therapist and physical therapy students about servicing clients and so we, in the Bridge, would include some of those types of case studies and learning at that earlier point to help in the transition.

We focus a lot on the social integration of our students. A lot of the research on first year retention and success in college has to do with students becoming both socially integrated and academically. So our GED students are in - on campus, they're using the same facility use. They have college IDs. They have access to the student services and a lot of the college (unintelligible) activities that we have here.

We bring in our alumni and faculty into the Bridge classrooms and we do our best to try to foster relationships that will provide a seamless pathway in all the offices of the college.

In closing, I just want to say that for those of you who are interested between fall 2010 and spring 2012, MDRC which is a National Social Research Firm conducted around assignment evaluation to examine the impacts of our Bridge program on student outcomes.

The policy brief should be out any day and we'll be happy to share that with you. It has shown that we have higher success rates in our GED Bridge classes and a higher transition rate.

So I'd like to thank you for listening. If you're interested in our work, I welcome you to visit our Web site and you're welcome always to come and see the classes in person if you're here in New York. Thank you.

Cheryl Keenan: Thank you, Amy. I think we're all waiting with great anticipation to see the full written report on the evaluation. It is just so incredibly important to document and evaluate these things that we believe are making a big difference in the lives of our students.

We have quite a few questions, Amy, but unfortunately, I think we'll only be able to take one because we are bumping up against our time and we will give opportunity for folks that did not get their questions answered to work directly with our panelist in getting those things answered.

But the question that we have for you right now, Amy came in from the audience and it's about ESL students and GED students and the question is,

have you ever run cohorts with ESL students and GED students working within one cohort. And if so, how successful was the comingling of that effort.

Amy Dalsimer: So that's a great question because of the nature of our community here in Queens many of our students here at LaGuardia whether they be in basic education, GED or more traditional ELL or ESL classes. Many has English as a second language and so in our Bridge class, I'd say maybe close to 50% of the students have English as a second language but they are measured on the (unintelligible) and they're reading at the 7th grade level above.

So they have fairly high level of academic English when they enter but we do work with students in the classroom in different ways. The ESL and the second language learning students have different sort of issues that have to be worked through in their academic writing. The native-born students show in their writing certain patterns and habits that may be different from a student who's learning English as a second language and the teachers are trained to respond to both.

Brenda Dann-Messier: Thank you very much, Amy. And I also want to thank Cheryl for moderating today's discussion. I'm really sorry that the presenters can't hear the applause from everyone who participated in the event. It was fascinating and informative webinar on the importance of educating our adult students in ABE and GED programs to make the transition to post-secondary education and training.

All our presenters today were incredibly thorough and insightful. Your work is terrific and it's impressive to hear all the good great innovative work you're doing to move ABE and GED programs in the right direction. I know that folks who are listening were able to learn so much from the presentation you gave and will continue these important conversations in their organization.

So thank you very much, Barbara, (Judy) and Amy for taking the time to present your important work. And really thank you to all to our large and engaged audience for your thoughtful questions. Unfortunately, we run out of time but couldn't get to all of them but it does show the tremendous interest in this work out there in the field.

And if it's the case that your question wasn't answered or if you have a subsequent follow-up question, we encourage you to reach out to your peers, featured during the session. They were gracious enough to say they would be happy to continue the discussions with all of you.

The webinar will also be archived and accessible to future date so feel free to check that on our Website -- www.ed.gov/ovae -- O-V-A-E -- for more details.

I also want to note that you'll have an opportunity to continue engagement at the department and community college experts in our upcoming events. This was just the first of our 2013 community college webinar series which will continue early in next month. We invite you all to participate in that event.

In April, we'll focus on innovative correctional and re-entry education programs at community colleges. So stay tuned for more details. We'll be sending out more information in the upcoming events along with the registration link.

So I want to thank again our partners on this series ACCE and ACCT for their involvement and input during the development of this event. I also want to thank Cheryl Keenan, the Director of our Adult Education and Literacy Division here in OVAE for moderating.

And I want to thank Matt Valerius who organized today's webinar and our entire webinar series and I want to thank him for his cool demeanor while we work out all our technical problems.

Lastly, thank you to everyone who logged and participated in this webinar today, for all the questions and interest and enthusiasm on this issue. We look forward to engaging with all of you on future events. Thank you and take care.

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