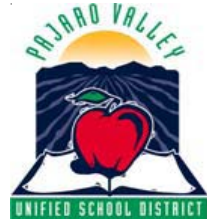


Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views



The paradox of education is precisely this— that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.”

- James Baldwin



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Back-to-School Issue

August 28, 2006

OVER 80 TEACHERS AND STAFF ATTEND BACK TO SCHOOL MEETING

On Friday, August 18, teachers and others met for two hours in the afternoon to hear reports from the department chairs and others on the Leadership Team about what our goals are as we start this year. Each year we have focused on instructional competencies from the Pro-Net competencies of adult education instructors. **The two instructional competencies are printed on page two in this newsletter.** One focuses on problem-based instruction that fosters the kind of challenge and feedback that has an impact on adult student persistence. The other focuses on assessments that give students feedback on their learning, and also assist teachers in planning instruction. Assessments will be a high priority for us this year (see article to the right).

We also use these competencies to align our professional development activities; the released time for teachers to work with each other, conference attendance,
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No Test Left Behind

- *Justice demands integrity. It's to have a moral universe — not only to know what is right or wrong but to put things in perspective, weigh things. Justice is different from violence and retribution; it requires complex accounting.*

- bell hooks

This week will see the public release of test scores that will indicate our mother district is entering “program improvement” year two status. It is a strange and deleterious environment in which we work, under the shadow of No Child Left Behind. That children who are marginalized by language, class and race do not receive all they deserve from schools is incontrovertible. That there is one single measure, standardized testing in English, with curiously unattainable and moving benchmarks, that is used to gauge what has happened to students, is near-sighted and illogical. Does this measure critical thinking? Does this measure good citizenship? Does this measure personal efficacy? Does this measure interpersonal skills and social responsibility? And does this measure what English learners know in the language they know best?

We in adult education are not immune to the narrowing influence of teaching-to-a-test. Although we have a strong reputation among our peers as a good adult education program, many of our documented “outcomes” (see Table 4 on page 3) are under the state averages. As we look at the data, it is clear that our lowered outcomes may be logistical; when we test and how we track student outcomes. It is a useful example of how “data-driven decisions” are very powerful, but need to be based on multiple sources of data. Remember two years ago when we asked ourselves “how do you know your students are getting what they want and need?” Having only one way to answer that question has great potential for error.

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BACK TO SCHOOL MEETING AND SCHOOL GOALS

(cont. from page 1) evaluation, materials selection, coaching, peer collaboration; the hope is that a synergy will be built if all our efforts point to these two common themes.

Also at the meeting new teachers were introduced, several teachers were welcomed back after a year or more absence, and three teachers were honored for their many years of service as they “retired.” Ann Veronica Coyle, Kathe Miedecke, and Michael Hillyer together represent over 50 years of service to the adult learners of our community! In keeping with our tradition however, they will all three continue working here after their retirement. We’re different in adult ed; we like to make our own rules.

Jose Luis Palacios also gave a well received reflection on how we as teachers and staff may be so important to our students, and how we may react to that importance with a certain unintentional superiority. Jose Luis suggested we explore how to build culturally responsive environments that have an impact on our students’ persistence. And that we find ways to engage our students as equals; he got a big response when he reminded us that our students quite concretely represent our paycheck. Gratitude to them is in order. Our “cohort” of action researchers, Cathy Diaz, Elizabeth Cunningham, Cary Keisler, and Kim Iwasko reported on their research of the impact of orientation classes on ESL adult student persistence. Their data were very impressive and the curriculum they developed will be used this year in a variety of ways. A.V. Coyle re-introduced our school’s mission and the student goals and strategic improvement plans that are derived from that mission. She described the many activities this year that will continue to build on these products of self-study. We will refer to these during departmental “Home Groups” and will re-establish program improvement “Focus Groups.” Instead of yawns, A.V. got a rousing ovation.

And we heard about the progress of “the New Building” and over 25 names were suggested for it. The building, the improvement plan, and the “Themes” may be the conceptual landscape of our school year:

This Year’s Themes

13. Models communication, negotiation, decision-making and problem-solving skills for learners.	13.1 Communicates to learners the thinking process for problem solving and meta-cognition and encourages classroom decision making by learners. 13.2 Provides timely feedback to learners regarding their progress. 13.3 Allows classroom time for group problem solving. 13.4 Exhibits several styles of communication: verbal, non-verbal, and written. 13.5 Organizes instruction and learning environment to enable students to participate in real life communication, negotiation, problem solving and decision-making.
24. Uses results of assessment data (diagnostic and needs) on a regular basis to plan lessons, develop curricula, monitor progress towards objectives and goals and to verify learning.	24.1 Assists learners in developing individual educational plans, articulating goals, developing strategies for achievement of goals and monitoring goal attainment. 24.2 Links and incorporates data from assessments with instructional objectives and strategies and shares information with learners.

All 31 Competencies may be found under “Staff Resources” on our newly re-designed website: www.waas.pvUSD.net. Check out the website and tell us what you think.

No Test Left Behind (cont.)

Still, as a proud department of our district, it is incumbent on us to do our part to help the schools and families in our district. Wherever we work with parents, we should support them, give them information and experiences so they can engage schools for their needs. We need to provide opportunities for parents to reflect on what schools are doing for their children, and how to help their children get what they need and deserve from schools.

As the district focuses on Academic Language and English Language Development, we should understand this matches well what we already do in adult education. Learning by rote, or simple survival language, has never been what adult education does. Critical thinking, problem-based learning, meta-cognitive reflection, and the higher order language needed by these, are the hallmarks of adult education. As we provide parents with these opportunities, we will surely also support the children's learning. There is a growing body of research that indicates that if parents are more engaged in schools, their children achieve more.

Perhaps, in some respects, we should see our district's increased and more urgent focus on students who are English learners as a great opportunity. What is our role? How can we act as a bridge between schools and community? How can we be used by our community as they mobilize to get more of what they need and want?

Standardized testing is one measure; justice's accounting is a bit more complex.

CA Federal Table 4 2004-05 WA AE 2004-05 2005-06

Educational Functioning Level	Performance Goal	Percentage Completing Level	Educational Functioning Level	Percentage Completing Level	Percentage Completing Level
ABE Beg Literacy	25%	25.13%	ABE Beg Literacy	0.00%	0.00%
ABE Beg Basic Ed	37%	43.00%	ABE Beg Basic Ed	0.00%	33.33%
ABE Intermediate low	39%	37.61%	ABE Intermediate low	14.29%	12.73%
ABE intermediate High	30%	30.38%	ABE intermediate High	13.57%	16.25%
ASE low	32%	24.67%	ASE low	24.24%	16.99%
ASE high	31%	26.24%	ASE high	37.50%	32.68 %
ESL Beg Literacy	34%	38.72%	ESL Beg Literacy	25.84%	38.10%
ESL Beg	31%	32.56%	ESL Beg	16.94%	19.00%
ESL Intermediate low	41%	42.94%	ESL Interlow	28.71%	28.67%
ESL intermediate High	43%	42.98%	ESL inter High	27.03%	27.39%
ESL low advanced	25%	22.18%	ESL low adv	13.00%	9.93/15.79 %
			ESLhigh adv		15.79%

Why are our "completers" so much below the state performance goals (which the state met)? Is it because our students don't persist? Is it the way we define "complete"?



WAAE Calendar

Monday, September 4
Labor Day

Wednesday, October 11
Community Advisory Council
Green Valley, 10:30am - Noon



Our FOUR Student Councils, Morning and Evening

Please encourage your class to have representation, our students' participation in decision-making is more important than ever.

GV: Sept 18, Porter: Sept. 19

GV: Oct. 16, Porter: Oct. 17

GV: Nov. 27, Porter: Nov. 28

School Councils

ALL are welcome. Tell your chair your concerns and have them put things on the agenda.

Sept. 13, 4:00-6:00, GV

Oct. 11, 4:00-6:00, Porter

Nov. 8, 4:00-6:00, GV

Dec. 13, 4:00-6:00, GV

ESL Recognition Ceremony and All School Holiday Dance

Thursday, Dec. 14, 7:00pm

CalPro Workshops Fall 2006

September, Cooperative Learning 1 - Monterey Adult School

September, Learner Goal Setting - Watsonville/Aptos Adult Ed.

October, Cooperative Learning 2 - Monterey Adult School

October, Enhancing Learner Persistence - Santa Cruz Adult School

November, Cooperative Learning III - Monterey Adult School

As the WAAE World Turns:



... congratulations to Marjorie Martinez in our office who on Thursday took the oath of citizenship... congratulations to our research cohort (Cathy Diaz, Elizabeth Cunningham, Cary Keisler and Kim Iwasko) who have been invited to present their research at the national adult education conference, "Meeting of the

Minds".... and, of course, congratulations to our office manager, Natalie Carranco Castillo, who on Saturday married Juan Castillo... may they have a lifetime of loving and helping each other. No one deserves this happiness more than