

National Conference on Effective Transitions in Adult Education: Helping Adults Succeed in Postsecondary Education and Training

I was fortunate enough to attend this conference in Providence, Rhode Island on November 8 and 9th. I was really anxious to go to this conference after attending Cynthia Zafft's sessions at OAACE last spring. I must say that I was really inspired by many of the sessions, and by the people working in this field. I certainly became more focused on what we need to do with our students in our programs, in order for them to have any chance of success in the post secondary world.

One of the most important messages I got at this conference was about the alignment of GED scores and developmental English and math courses. Students who obtain a 500 on a GED test basically will be correlated with a C in developmental courses! I could really see why there is a lot of emphases on having students improve their scores in a GED class so that they will not be spending their financial aid on developmental classes. Our classes need to target higher level critical thinking skills for students to succeed. Students need to deal with complex vocabulary and know how to read and respond to complex text. Since GED programs emphasize "completion", there is not enough focus on critical reading strategies. Students need to learn to ask questions and develop questioning techniques to succeed at the college level. As such, many Adult Ed and colleges are offering "gap classes". These classes are more content focused and have more stringent requirements. They have required assignments to complete. They teach students about note-taking and developing study habits. There are a number of good articles on College Readiness by Dr. David Connelly. You can find them at www.epiconline.org

I was amazed at all the emphasis on transitioning higher level ESOL students to postsecondary situations. I think this population is often neglected in terms of transitions. At CUNY, they offer a 900 hour Language Immersion program to succeed in English. You can read more about it at www.clip.cuny.edu.

There are a multitude of college prep classes being provided by adult education folks. All of them are providing supports to students in terms of financial aid, career counselors, career path training, and advising. Programs are taking students through the application process. Often, they cover the cost of the application fee for the student. The students visit campuses and tour the properties.

All the sessions attended inspired me to come back and think about how to enhance our services for our students. I would like to develop and find funding for a Bridges to College for our ESL and GED students. I know I owe it to them!

Submitted by

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