The OLRC *News*

GTE Awards OLRC $50,000 Gran

Joe Philabaum, GTE Northeast Region President presents a $50,000 check to OLRC Director, Janie Johnson.

The Ohio Literacy Resource Center and GTE celebrated their continuing partnership at the Ohio Association for Adult and Continuing Education Annual (OAACE) Awards Banquet held at the Adams Mark Hotel in Columbus on April 14. Joe Philabaum, GTE's Northeast Region President, presented a $50,000 check to OLRC Director, Janie Johnson, to enhance the National Institute for Literacy's Literacy Information and Communications System (LINCS).

The $50,000 grant from GTE will be used in the development and implementation of an adult education and literacy curriculum database project entitled "Eureka!" A comprehensive lesson plan database will integrate the World Wide Web and hypermedia capabilities fo teaching and learning in adult literacy environments and will be located on the OLRC's (the National Institute for Literacy's midwest technology hub) web site.

"Eureka!" addresses the current lack of online instructional methods and materials needed for adult education and literacy teachers to guide adult learners toward greater productivity in today's world of work. As a result of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, adult education and adult literacy providers are accepting the clear responsibilities of accountability and efficiency in helping adults reach educational, employment, and family goals. Having electronic access to lesson plans, informational resources, and instructional materials will greatly increase the effectiveness of adult education and literacy providers who have Internet access.

GTE Foundation is the philanthropic arm of GTE, one of the world's largest telecommunications companies. One of the largest corporate contributors in the United States, the GTE Foundation provides more that $27 million each year to charitable and educational institutions on behalf of GTE. The company's grant to the Ohio Literacy Resource Center is one of four grants totaling $200,000 to the National Institute for Literacy's four technology hubs. The other three recipients include the University of Tennessee, California Literacy, Inc., and World Education, Inc .

"GTE has a continuing commitment to support literacy," said Philabaum. "We know education is vital to the success of every individual and to our communities. We're excited about this partnership and the posterities impact it will have on adult literacy throughout the Midwest."

From the Director:

There's a silly quote that goes something like, "The harder I peddle, the behinder I get." Of course educato rs don't talk or write or even think like that, but that sentiment sure captures my feeling about the pace of our field and ou world. We have fussed and discussed and done our very best to prepare for implementing the Workforce Investment Act and the National Repo t-ing System. Now we are in the midst of "just doing it" and desperately trying to make sense of what only yesterday seemed like some really good plans. I think that the next couple of years are going to be an amazing blend of give and take, of throwing up our hands in frustration and then re-grouping for one more try, of adjusting and r -adjusting our attitudes and our frames of refer-ence.

So, what will we have to do to survive? We'll have to resolve numerous misunderstandings, to forgive more than a few mistakes, and to accept that some of our best intentions just aren't quite panning out. Yet most of us will not only endure bu t will emerge somehow better for the experience. If nothing else, we will more accurately define our own parameters and will mo re realistically apprehend the capacity of publicly funded and non-profit adult learning systems. Adult educators and adult literacy providers are, after all, lifelong learners, too, and we must be willing to practice what we preach. We must master new c oncepts, stretch our boundaries, and tackle challenging transitions or transformations. We must model what we demand from our a dult learners (for their own good, of course). Each of us has our own reality check; one of mine is reviewing the Serenity Prayer--often. (It's that wisdom part that's hard.)

-Janie Johnson

OLRC Welcomes New Staff Members

The Ohio Literacy Resource Center we l-comes Dianna Baycich and Penny Graves. Dianna comes to us from the General Motors Plant i Lordstown where she was the On -Site Coordinator for the YES Skills Center. As the OLRC Research Assistant, Dianna will be responsible for many pr o-jects including writing lesson plans and study strat e-gies for the Eureka! Database, helping to coordinat Family Literacy projects, and working with Trade-books.

Penny is a familiar face at the OLRC havin worked as a part-time Program Assistant since June of 1999. Penny now works full-time splitting her du-ties between assisting with tech calls and accoun t-i n g .

Dianna Baycich and Penny Graves

History Project Extended
Thanks to OHC and GTE

In October 1999, the Ohio Humanities Council granted the Ohio Literacy Resource Center an award of $13,000 to launch the "Histor y of Ohio Communities Throughout the 20th Century" project. This award pr o-vides the opportunity for the OLRC to assist adult basic literacy education (ABLE) teachers to incorporate the i n-spiring study of community history into their classrooms. Additionally exciting, the award of a $20,000 GTE grant to complement the OHC grant award was announced by Theresa Lane, GTE Public Affairs Manager for Ohio, in April 2000.

During the fall of 1999, OLRC facilitators and Steve Paschen, President of the Ohio Association of Hi s-torical Societies and Museums, began the workshop phase of the project. Feedback from the workshops indicated an excitement about the project's potential for student i n-volvement from Ohio ABLE teachers.

The OLRC has received a project extension from the Ohio Humanities Council so that teachers and tudents will have additional time to develop projects. *Project sub-missions will now be due in mid-November 2000.* The project will conclude with a conference to celebrate com-munity history in March 2001 at which time the OLRC will release final products, will promote the project's web site, and will honor students for their projects.

If you have questions or need further information about the OLRC "History of Ohio Communities Through the 20th Century project", contact Connie Sapin at (800) 765-2897, ext. 17 or Dianna Baycich at ext. 31.

Resources and Reviews

Each item that is available from our library has this 📚 *symbol by it. If you would like to borrow a resource for two weeks, fill out the form on the back of the newsletter and send or fax it to us.*

Thomas, Adele, Fazio, Lynn, and Stiefelmeyer, Betty L. (1999). *Families at School: A Guide for Educators* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

📚 A school-based family literacy initiative in Niagra, Ontario, Canada invites parents to collaborate in developing home literacy connections. The eight chapters describing the collaboration include; 1) An Overview of Family; 2) Before the Program Doors Open; 3) Getting Started; 4) Parents and Children Together; 5) Core Activities for Family Reading Time; 6) Extension Activities for Parent Reading and Wri t-ing; 7) Parenting Issues; and 8) Learner Assessment and Pro-gram Evaluation.

The very practical, readable text includes questions and answers, checklists, forms for collecting data, an index, and a reference and resource section with lists of books and activities that invite adaptation. This book would be espe-cially useful in a start-up family literacy program.

Barclay, Kathy and Boone, Elizabeth (1996). *Th Parent Difference: Uniting School, Family, and Community.* Arlington Heights, IL: IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing.

📚 This book on parent involvement in the schools covers the usual topics about how to communicate better with pa r-ents and to increase participation in school events, parent -teacher conferences, and educational programs. Unusual ad-ditions, however, are chapters on home visits, public rela-tions, and parent advocacy. The final chapter, Building a Comprehensive Plan, includes checklists of the desirable characteristics of a school, families in a school, assessment of famil -school relationships, assessment of parent-teacher re-lationships, and a plan for recruiting and training volunteers. Appendices offer print resources for a parent library and videotapes for parent education. Throughout the book, the forms for gathering information are especially useful.

Hydrick, Janie (1996). *Parent's Guide to Literacy for the 21st Century.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

📚 Written for parents, this attractively formatted book explains terms used by educators, describes how the concept looks when applied in the classroom, and suggests at-home activities to support it. The book is divided into the follo w-ing chapters: Basics, Language, Reading, Writing, and

Across the Disciplines. Across the Disciplines contains a section on family literacy.

The explanation of a writing workshop in the cha p-ter on writing is a good example of how parents can learn about a current educational practice that they might not u n-derstand. The authors define a writing workshop as regular classroom time devoted to the on -going process of writing and revision facilitated by the teacher rather than the comple-tion of a specific writing assignment for the entire class. The classroom application reads like a video of the students wo k-ing on folders, talking ideas over with classmates, reviewing each other's work, and the teacher giving a mini lesson and then working on quotation marks with one student. One of the five suggested at-home activities describes how to keep a family journal.

Oglan, Gerald R. (1997). *Parents, Learning, and Whole Language Classrooms.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

📚 Like *A Parent's Guide to Literacy*, Oglan's book looks at whole language from the parents' perspective. A Canadian public school system invited the American author to work collaboratively with teachers and parents to learn about whole language. The first half of this small, informa-tive book addresses itself to the logical and emotional reasons why paradigm shifts are difficult to accept and implement. A secondary theme explores the nature and importance of in-quiry in making the students' work meaningful.

The second half of the book details Oglan's work with three different workshop groups of parents and clas s-room volunteers which may be of particular interest to ad-ministrators responsible for professional development. The description of the hands-on learning of parents includes se v-eral learning strategies.

The final chapter compares three different educa-tional reform reports: Report of the Royal Commission on Learning published by the Ontario Ministry of Education in 1994; the I RA/NCTE (International Reading Association/ National Council of Teachers of English) Standards for the Assessment of Reading and Writing, also published in 1994; and The NCTE/IRA Standards of the English Language, pu b-lished in 1996. The comparison highlights the role that pa r-ents can play in the education of their children not just as vol-unteers and supporters but also as learners themselves.

Books to Help Teachers Get Parents Involved In th Schools From the Center For Law and Education

📚 *Beyond the Bake Sale (1995)* by Anne T. Henderson, Carl L. Marburger and Theodora Ooms and *Urgent Message:*

Families Crucial to School Refor (1998) by Anne C. Lewis and Anne T. Henderson are two books from the Center for Law and Education that not only advocate parent involvement in the schools, but explain how to get that involvement. *Beyond the Bake Sale* is written for teachers, administrators, school board members, etc. who are looking for ways to improve their schools through parental involvement. The book begins with an explanation of five types of parental involvement. In chapter two the authors include a survey readers can use to examine their assumptions about parental involvement in the schools. The rest of the book explains in clear language what schools can do to get parents actively involved as true partners, not just as room mothers or sports boosters. The authors discuss barriers to home-school collaboration, provide checklists for schools to use for self-assessment, and offer recommendations for educators, parents and policymakers. Appendices with references and resources are also included in the book.

Urgent Message is more of a "why to" book than a "how to" book. The authors discuss why reforms are needed, why parents are not involved and how to get them to be full partners in reform effort. There are numerous examples of how schools across the United States are including parents in successful school reform efforts. The book contains an explanation of the legal rights to obtain a high qualit education for children and parents, questions parents can ask about school reform, and a chart comparing "fortress schools" to "21st Century" schools. Included in the appendices are summaries of the parent involvement provisions in state education laws for each state.

St. John, Edward P., Griffith, Alison I., and Allen-Haynes, Leetta. (1997). *Families in Schools: A Chorus of Voices in Restructuring*.

Families in Schools presents in-depth case studies of four of the ten schools involved in Louisiana's Accelerated Schools Project which began in 1992. A major goal of this project was to encourage more parent involvement in the schools. The authors' study lasted from the fall of 1992 to the spring of 1996 when they did the follo -up for the book. As part of their study the authors conducted extensive interviews of the parents, teachers and administrators of the schools involved in the project. These interviews show how the relationship between educators and parents changed over the course of the project. The authors discuss building community in the schools and demonstrate its importance in the success of the Accelerated Schools Project. The authors show through the case studies how the type and quality of parent involvement can change for the better with efforts from the schools. The authors also note that when the power relationship between parents and educators changes, schools begin to transform.

John E. Readence, David W. Moore, Robert Rickleman (2000). *Prereading Activities for Content Area Reading and Learning*. Newark Del., International Reading Association.

This book is full of practical activities to help student better read and understand difficult material. In the first chapter the authors give reasons for using prereading strategies and discuss instructional time frames and instructional cycles. They also discuss factors that affect learning: learning outcomes, motivation and engagement, content knowledge, attention, and learning strategies.

In the next chapters the authors describe strategies teachers can use with their students before students read difficult texts. There are strategies for asking and answering questions before reading and predicting what a reading selection will be about. There is a chapter on vocabulary strategies, one on graphic organizers, and another on writing activities that can be done before students read. The authors also include a chapter on using combinations of these strategies. At the end of the book is a list of references for anyone who would like more information on learning strategies.

Botrie, Maureen and Wenger, Pat. (1992). *Teachers and Parents Together*. Ontario: Pembroke Pblishers Limited.

Teachers and Parents Together is a resource fo teachers who are looking for ways to get parents involved in their children's learning. The authors begin the book by defining the roles of educators, parents and children and by discussing different levels of parent involvement. The rest of the book is full of ideas on how to get parents involved and information teachers can share with parents. Some of the highlights of the book:
- strategies to get information to parents and to get them involved including parent bulletin boards, parent libraries, and parent workshops.
- methods of communicating with parents along with a list of questions parents could ask their child's teacher.
- ways to get parents involved in school activities and with their child's learning. One of the programs mentioned is Language Partners. This program, developed by the authors, gets parents and kids together in fun, educational activities outside of school hours.
- reproducible handouts for parents with information and ideas parents can use to support their child's learning.
- an appendix with information about how to suppor a child's development at each elementary grade level in each of four language arts areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Vopat, James. *The Parent Project: A Workshop Approach to Parent Involvement*.

The Parent Project was started in Milwaukee's inner city schools as a way to increase parental involvement and help parents understand the changes that had taken place in classroom instruction from the time they were in school. Through the Parent Project parents had the opportunity to participate in workshops with their children. These workshops focused on reading, writing and self esteem and incorporated learning activities similar to the ones that were

being used in the classroom. Vopat's book is a guide and a resource for anyone who would like to start a Parent Project at their own school. the book explains how to get a Parent Project started, how to structure the workshops, and gives descriptions of specific workshop sessions. The book contains samples of parent/child writings that were done in the workshops and comments from and interviews with parents and teachers involved with the Parent Project. At the back of the book Vopat has included sample forms and workshop materials along with lists of children's books and parent resources.

Institute for Educational Renewal. (1998). *What Every Child Needs: A Caring Community*. Ohio: The Community Services Action Committee.

 What Every Child Needs: A Caring Community was produced by the Community Services Action Committee of the Institute for Educational Renewal based at Miami University. This kit contains a videotape and resource manual that can be used by families and leaders in the schools and communities to build effective partnerships that will benefit all chi l-dren.

The videotape begins by describing how a caring community benefits not just the children but the entire community. The process and benefits of building partnerships is discussed with an emphasis on family being an important part of any partnership.

The resource manual is a step by step guide for building partnerships and facilitating a collaborative team. It contains a discussion guide for the videotape, checklists and tips for the collaboration process, and reproducible forms that can be used for planning, conducting and evaluating team mee t-ings. At the end of the manual there are national, state and r e-gional resources where assistance and more information fo building partnerships can be obtained.

Russel, William. (1997). *Family Learning: How to Help Your Children Succeed in School by Learning at Home.* Illinois: First Word Learning Systems, Inc.

 "Opportunities for learning are everywhere - all around, all the time. They are in everything we see and everything we hear, o matter where we live or where we go. Learning can happen in our homes, out under the stars, on a trip, and yes, in classrooms, too." This is the guiding principle behind this resource. Noted author Dr. William F. Russell shows concerned parents and teachers how to locate, create, and use high - interest, out-of-school learning activities to stimulate curiosity and learning in the home. Family Learning helps parents recognize the countless learning opportunities that exist all around them and helps them begin to see telephone books, newspapers, road maps, and dinner table conversations as valuable educational aids that can both stimulate and reinforce learning in the home. These learning activities can be shared in any family, no matter what its size or configuration, and they can be introduced whenever a parent chooses and when-ever a need or opportunity arises. Family Learning shows

parents, teachers, school administrators, and community leaders how to promote and create activities that will n-courage learning - as well as the love of learning and a e-spect for learning - by using the powerful influence of the home and family to its best educational advantage. "Thi is not a textbook or reference book, but an instruction manual for building your own learning machine, which will then be able to run by itself," says Dr. Russell. Family literacy programs could use this resource in creating integrated curriculum with topics that focus around language, mathematics, science, geography, or history. There ar calendars with important dates that can be used to create lessons and useful family resources listed at the end of each section for more info mation. You can order this book from First Word Learning Systems, Inc. by calling (888) 414-8881, or it can be borrowed from th e OLRC library.

Ninke, Diane, Weeks, Linda, Angleone, and Wor k-place Education Indicators Project Team. (2000). *Ohio Workplace Education Resource Guide.* Ohio: Northwest ABLE Resource Center.

 The Northwest ABLE Resource Center Workplace Indicators' Project has produced an Ohio Workplace Education Resource Guide, useful for those just entering the workplace education arena or more seasoned veterans. Th guide includes program, administrator, and instructor pro-files and self-assessments, assessment grids, and a resource section. All Ohio ABLE programs received one copy of the Resource Guide at the 2000 Regional Spring Directors' Meetings. Additional copies are available on request with web access available soon. Watch for more information on a state-wide Workplace Education Meeting planned for Wednesday, November 29, 2000 in the Columbus area.

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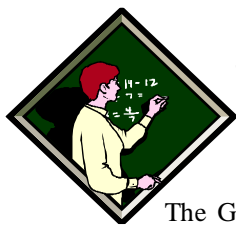
GED 2002: An Update from the OLRC

The GED Testing Service continues its work on the new GED test. Begun in January 1997, it was hoped that the GED 2000 Series tests would be ready for January 1, 2001; the target date is now January 1, 2002.

Ken Pendleton, GED math test consultant, and Myrna Manly (author of *The Problem Solver* and member of the specifications committee) spoke to members of the Adult Numeracy Network at their annual meeting in Chicago, (April 15, 2000). Some of the information gleaned from this meeting follows.

Since the GED is a reactive, not a proactive test, it will reflect the major and lasting outcomes of a fou -year high school program of study in the core disciplines of En g-lish language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. There will be an increased emphasis on workplace as well as higher education needs. The new test is a reflection of the increased standards implemented for high school graduation.

Several major changes mark the mathematics test. There has been a *specification (content) shift.* In addition, there will be a *calculator sectio* and *alternative formats* for answering.

Specification (content) Shift:

Current Specifications:
⇒ Measurement   30%
⇒ Algebra   30%
⇒ Geometry   20%
⇒ Number Relations   10%
⇒ Data Analysis   10%

GED 2002 Specifications:
⇒ Number, Number Sense and Operations   20-30%
⇒ Measurement and Geometry   20-30%
⇒ Data, Statistics, and Probability   20-30%
⇒ Algebra, Functions, and Pattern   20-30%

As can be seen, there will be an increased emphasis on data, statistics, and probability. In all areas, 20% will be proce-dural knowledge, 30% conceptual knowledge and 50% pro b-lem solving.

What this means for the adult education classroom:

Students will need more experience with charts, graphs, and t ables. Students will be asked not merely to find specific knowledge, but to interpret the data and apply it in contextual situations. Integrating math with other content areas will aid the students in this. (Note, the state-wide math

workshop held on February 5, 2000 utilized charts and graphs from ZPG materials. Information from that workshop is available at each Regional Resource Center.)

Students will need help in communicating math e-matically. Explaining relationships such as fractions, dec i-mals, and percents will help solidify concepts as well as ex-ploring why a concept works rather than memorizing for u-las or procedures. Since the test will expect students to u n-derstand and apply a wide variety of concepts in a wide var i-ety of situations, students need to practice problem solving. Paper and pencil computations must be de-emphasized in or-der for students to be successful. This is often an uncomfor t-able shift for both the teacher and student.

Calculators on the Test

Myrna Manly, author of *The Math Problem Solver* and member of the math specifications committee stated that "the GED has always been about more than paper and pencil computations." No w with the introduction of the calculator on the test, students and teachers will be more strongly urged to incorporate technology into the classroom. Fifty percent of the test will allow calculator use (previous recommend a-tions were 80% calculator use). At this time, the calculator will allowed on the first part of the test.

Problems in the calculator section will be longer and more involved than those on the present test in order to utilize the calculator's capabilities. In addition, the number of "not enough information" problems will be reduced from 12% to 4%. Set-up problems will remain at 25%.

GED Testing Service will provide calculators at each test site. The calculator chosen is the Casio fx -260. This solar calculator is an inexpensive scientific calculator. This is the ONLY calculator that will be allowed on the test at this time. A technology changes there is a chance that the official calculator will change during the ten-year life of the test. However, at this time, this was "best for the cost." e-cause this is a reactive test, the specifications committee felt that the calculator must reflect those used by high school stu-dents.

What this means for the adult education classroom:

Becoming familiar with the Casio fx-260 is critical for adult education students. Learning how to clear the calcu-lator, use the shift key, retrieve an answer, etc. will certainly be important. By shifting the emphasis of the classroom to

problem solving using calculators from pencil-and-paper math, students will become proficient in using the calculator and in applying mathematical concepts to problem solving.

It would make sense to purchase Casio fx-260 solar calculators for classroom use. While they are available at most office supply stores, they can be purchased through the GED fulfillment center at a reduced price. Item number 251434 is the Casio fx-260 Solar at $7 each. There is an overhead Casio OH-280 (similar with one key different), item number 251435 for $35. Credit card and purchase orders can be phoned at (301) 604-0158 or faxed at (301) 604-0158. Checks payable to GEDTS can be sent to:

GED Fulfillment Center
Department 191
Washington, DC 20055-0191.
Calculators should be sent within a week.

Alternate Format

Real-life is not a multiple choice test and 20% of the GED 2002 will be alternative format. This is 5 questions on the each of the calculator and non-calculator parts of the test. (Note: the test continues to consist of 56 questions. Six questions are "test" questions used to determine suitability for future tests.) The alternative formats will be "bubble grids" and "coordinate plane grids."

In the "bubble grids" students will be able to give specific answers by filling in "bubbles" that indicate positive and negative numbers, decimal points, and slashes for fractions. In the "coordinate plane grid," the student will "bubble" points on a coordinate grid.

What this means for the adult education classroom

Students will need practice using these alternative formats. Twenty percent of the test is a significant part and a part that can cause high levels of anxiety (and panic!). Generating an answer is always more difficult than determining which answer out of four or five choices is correct.

Where Can I G t Help to Prepar for These Changes

Idea #

- Use the Internet to develop professionalism and increase knowledge in helping your students.
- Join the Adult Numeracy Network Listserv to connect with adult numeracy educators throughout the country. This listserv is comprised of teachers interested in

improving mathematical instruction for adult students. Topics range from philosophical (What is the worth of a GED?), to practical (What is the best way to introduce problem solving?). Between 10-20 messages per week are exchanged. In order to join, send a message to: Majordomo@world.std.com . Your message should read "subscribe numeracy" followed by your first and last name.

- Log onto the Adult Numeracy Network website at: http://www.std.com/anpn/ . Information on workshops, conferences membership, newsletters, etc. are included as well as links to other numeracy related sites.

Idea #

- Join professional organizations to connect with innovative, effective teaching practices and techniques.
- The Adult Numeracy Network (ANN) is a professional group dedicated to improving mathematical instruction for adults. Newsletters, the above listserv, an annual meeting, and a national "voice" make this group a valuable resource for adult education teachers. Membership is only $10 per year and an application may be obtained on the above website or from Nancy Markus, past president and Ohio contact at: nmarkus@literacy.kent.edu or call (800) 765-2897 ext. 29.
- NCTM, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, is a professional organization with many resources available for all math educators. Information about NCTM can be obtained at their website: www.nctm.org or call (800) 235-7566 for membership information. NCTM's *Math in the Middle School* journal is especially appropriate for adult education classes.
- The state affiliate of NCTM is the Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The primary contact for this group is Margie Raub Hunt, 16734 Hamilton Court, Strongsville, Ohio 44136-5701. A journal is included in membership.

Idea #

- Utilize staff development workshops available through your Regional Resource Centers and the Ohio Literacy Resource Center. The OLRC has held annual state-wide math workshops on such topics as Visual Math: Using Concrete Objects for Abstract Math, The Power of Ratio, Family Math, and Integrating Math into the Curriculum. In addition, Math Kick-Off Days have been held regionally for the past six years in late summer/early fall. Materials have been developed in Ohio that will help with the new GED test. Volume 7 of the *Math Literacy News (Fall 1998)* suggests many techniques that will help ensure success on the GED 2002. Information from a NIFL-funded project, *Adult Numeracy Themes* was developed by Ohio Mathematical Planning Committee is available online (through the OLRC website) and at each Regional Resource center. This loose-leaf notebook in-

cludes lessons developed by Ohio's teachers. Handouts from each state-wide math workshop are also available at each resource center.

Idea #

Learn from books and magazines that promote problem solving and understanding. Suggestions include:

- Cossey, Ruth, Hall, Lawrence, Kerr Stenmark, Jean, and Thompson, Virginia, (1986). *Family Math*
- Manly, Myrna. (1991). *GED Math Problem Solver: Reasoning Skills to Pass the Test/Teacher's Guide.* NTC/ Contemporary Publishing.

Master's Degree Offered Through Distance Learning

St. Francis Xavier University in Canada is offering a self-directed master's degree program in adult education through distance learning. The program begins with a three-week residential orientation on the St. Francis Xavier campus. During this time each student, along with an advisor, develops a learning plan designed to explore an area of interest in adult education. After the three-week orientation, students work at home on the programs they have designed. Students have five years to complete their programs. In addition to the orientation, each program has four phases: learning program design (12 credits), project implementation (12 credits), learning program evaluation (6 credits) and a thesis (6 credits). Students maintain contact with their advisors throughout the program. Students have access to a computerized information data base and a list of web resources. The titles of thesis written by former students are also available on-line. The cost of the program is $7560 Canadian. For more information on this masters degree program visit www.stfx.ca/people/adulted

Literacy and Email

The impact of using Email in a literacy class was the subject of investigation for a COABE Incentive Grant conducted by Dr. Deborah Young of the Literacy Action Center in Salt Lake City. The project paired adult new and low level readers with student teachers from a teacher training institution in another state.

Using the books they were reading as a common starting point for communication with the student teachers, Email also provided the literacy students with writing activities. The student teachers "discussed" the books with and developed lessons based on the reading for their assigned students

Use of the technology both excited the students and sometimes became a source of frustration for them. They liked having electronic pen pals and were sometimes sidetracked from class work by wanting to know more about their Email partners.

Qualitative data suggests this approach to reading and writing development is worthwhile. Response from the student teachers about their involvement in this distance learning was positive. Dr. Young has conducted structured interviews with the literacy student participants. These case studies were still being analyzed at time of writing. Results of the analysis will be combined with quantitative data to evaluate effectiveness of this approach to instruction. Dr. Young will be submitting the results of her study to professional journals.

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Math Kick Off Days

The GED 2002 Science test will include "fundamental scientific knowledge" (60%). In addition, space science will be included on the test. In order to help our students with these changes, the 6th Annual OLRC Math Kick-Off Days will include a hand-on workshop by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) educators. Activities to help students become familiar with other changes such as calculator use and high level thinking skills will be explored.

Constraints from NASA limit attendance to only thirty persons per region. Scheduled dates are:

SW: **Friday, August 18, 200**
NE: **Friday, August 25, 200**
NW: **Friday, September 22, 200**
C/SE: **Friday, September 29, 200**

Contact your local Regional Resource Center to register. For more information, contact Nancy Markus: nmarkus@juno.com.

Everything You've Always Wanted to Know about ISPs But Were Afraid to Ask!

Kimberly McCoy

What is an ISP?

If you have a computer at home or are thinking about purchasing one, you have probably heard the abbe viation "ISP." ISP stands for Internet Service Providers. An ISP is one way to access the Internet from home or work. Choosing the right ISP can be as nerve -racking as selecting the right long distance company for your needs. Unfortunately, if you are not knowledgeable about the vari ous services and plans you could be throwing money out of the window. There are several items you should consider when selecting an ISP. Some of these items include what kind of service is available, price plans, and technical support, just to name a few.

Type of ISPs

Free ISPs - That's right, there are several companies that offer free (yes, free!) access to the Internet. In order to use any of the free ISPs you have to download and install the provider's software to your computer. Unfortunately, some of the free ISPs don't have local access numbers for certain areas. Currently, most of the companies required that you have Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher and are using either Windows 95, 98 or 2000. One major disadvantage is most of the free ISP's have banners and advertisements that you are not able to close or remove while you are on-line.

Before you run home and download the software, please visit the following two sites. Free ISP review at www.isp.f2s.com has a complete list of all the free ISPs, contact information for each, tech support hours and meth ods (email, toll free 800, etc.), whether the ISP has banners and advertisements, modem speed needed, software su pported, amount of web space provided, and reviews from users. Free ISP Internet Access Network located at www. free-isp-internet-access.net/isp.html reviews and rates some of the Free ISPs as well as free web based email programs. This site also has a FAQ page.

Filtered ISP - If you are concerned about your children visiting certain sites via the Internet, you can choose to sign up with a Filtered ISP. Filtered ISPs can prevent and/or block access to certain material on the Internet that's not appropriate for children. Periodically, updates will be needed from the provider, to ensure that the sof t ware is blocking the most recent information on the Web. One major disadvantage is that if an adult wants to go to a particular site, the Filtered ISP may consider it inappro priate and block the web site. Some filtering ISPs i n clude: Mayberry USA at www.mayberryusa.net , Safe Access located at safeaccess.net , Clean Web available at www.cleanweb.net , and Internet 4 Families at i4f.com.

Local ISP - Local ISPs are usually small companies that provide Internet access to individuals in a particular area or region. Local ISPs are usually less expensive than national ISPs. However, when traveling you might not be able to access the local ISP from any location. If you need a local ISP for your area visit the following sites and type in your area code.

> The List
> www.thelist.com/
> Sure ISP
> www.isps.co
> Computer User
> www.computeruser.com/resources/isp
> CNET
> www.cnet.com

- Locate Internet tools
- Click on the Find an ISP link

National ISP - National providers allow you to access the Internet from nearly any location. Usually national providers' cost more than local providers. However, if you are a frequent traveler and you need to access the Internet while you are on the road, you might want to go with a national provider. Some national ISPs are:
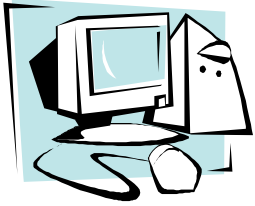
America Online
www.aol.co
AT&T WorldNet
www.worldnet.att.net
Prodigy
www.prodigy.com
Gateway
www.gateway.net

Email

If Email is the only reason you are going online, then you really shouldn't be spending a lot of money on an ISP. There are loads of free (yes, free) Web based Email providers. Even if you don't have a computer at home you can still a c-cess these Web based Email services from a library, work, community center, friend's house, or anywhere there is Inter-net access. One disadvantage to using some of the free Web based Email is that they lack some important features. To i l-lustrate, some don't have spell check or spam filters. Another disadvantage is that they tend to have a lot of advertisements. See the additional resources section for places that offer free Web based Email.

Things to Consider

Local access numbers

Before you sign-up with an ISP you should determin whether or not there is a local number for your area. If you select an ISP that doesn't have a local phone number for your area, you might end up paying the telephone company addi-tional money just to get online. Individuals who live in or near a major city shouldn't have to worry about this. However, if you live near or in a more rural area then you might have to pay a little more to access the Internet. In the event you can't locate an ISP with local access numbers, some ISPs provide consumers with an 800 number, but the calls are not free. For a comprehensive listing of 800 number services, visit www. isps.com.

Usage

Usage refers to the amount of time you plan to us the Internet. Some questions you need to ask yourself are: how often you go online? What you are doing while you are online? Are you only reading and sending email? Doing some occasional chatting or surfing? Creating and uploading Web pages? A frequent use r spends 10-15 hours a week online. If you don't consider yourself a frequent user, but you do consider yourself a casual one, you shouldn't be paying $20 or more a month to use it for 3 -5 hours. Plenty of ISPs pro-vide various price plan options. If you are a casual user and decide to go with a price plan option; it could save you money in the long run.

Price Plans

Most of the major ISPs will have both unlimited and limited price plans. Currently, the standard for unlim-ited plans is $19.95 for unlimited access. If you are, or think you will be a frequent user (10 -15 hours a week then the unlimited price plan is the best option. Some ISPs provide discounts for signing up for longer terms such as 12 months or 2 years. In addition to providing dis-counts for signing up longer, some companies also offer discounts if you decide to do automatic payments by credit or debit cards. Limited price plans will vary depending on the company. Usually limited price plans charge an y-where from $5 to $10 a month for a set number of usage hours (5, 10, 20 hours per month). Some companies also charge $2 or more for each additional hour over the plan. The limited price plans are ideal for the casual user who will only access the Internet a few times a week or month.

Test ISP

The ISP you are considering should have a Web site. The Web site should provide a lis t of numbers that would allow you to test them. In order to test the ISP's access numbers call the provider during high peak ho urs. If the numbers are always busy when you call, more than likely there will be a busy signal when you try and access them from your computer. *(High peak times usually are after 3:00 p.m. on weekdays, 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, and late Sunday evenings).*

Tech Support

See if the ISP you are considering has a F e-quently Asked Questions page (FAQ). Most ISPs should have a Web page that has a FAQ page to assist the user. Try to go with a company that has a toll-free 800 number for technical support and is available 24 hours a day, 7 day a week. Unfortunately, many companies don't provide a toll-free 800 number, but there are some still available. You don't want to go with a company that only offers tech support via Email. For example, how are you to get in touch with them when you can't get online?

Web Space and Tools

If you think you might want to put a personal Web page online now or some time in the near future, you need to find out how much space the ISP is offering. Most ISPs offer 5 to 10 MB for their customers, which should be plenty of space. In addi tion to offering you a specific amount of space, your ISP should also provide you with some type of publishing tool, a web edito r, or links to shareware that can assist you with publishing the web site. *(Shareware: inexpensive software via the Web)*

Modem Support

The most important item you want to consider before selecting an ISP is the modem speed. Some common modem speeds involve 28.8 kbps, 33.6 kbps, and 56 kpbs. Not all ISPs support all modem speeds. You want to make sure that you are utilizing your modem to its fullest potential. To illustrate, if your modem speed is 56 kbps and the ISP only supports 28.8 kbps then you are not getting the best connection possible. In order to determine the speed of your modem please refer to documentation that came with your computer.

Reliabilit

There are several ways to determine if an ISP is reliable before signing up with one. Ask friends, co-workers, or family members; review web sites that provide users' comments about their experiences and site that rates ISPs. Visual Network located at www.visualnetworks.com rates the performance of national ISPs monthly. This service is provided to evaluate how reliable the site is from the consumer's perspective. Some of the categories included on the rating scale are log-in-time, call failure rate, and Web page download rate, and Web failures/time-out rates. To review the latest ratings visit the site at www.visual networks.com and click on the link titled "Latest ISP ratings" located on the left-hand side of the home page.
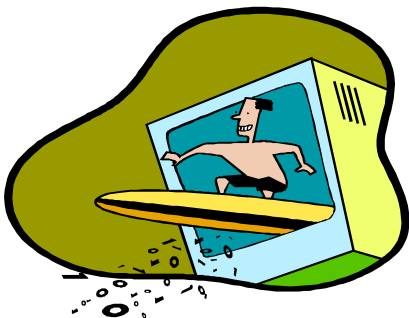
Additional Information and Resources on ISP

- CMPNET The Technology Network reviews and rates many ISPs. You can also search by area code, price, and national ISPs at www.ISPs.com
- ISP.COM available at www.isp.com is a comprehensive site that contains directories and reviews all dealing with various ISPs. You can also compare n ational ISPs by price and quality.
- CNET allows you to rate your ISP by completing the online questionnaire located at www.cnet.com. Locate Internet tools and click "Find an ISP" link.

- ZDNET located at www.zdnet.com/reviews/ contains information about services and reliability. Scroll down to Internet and network, select the ISPs link and select one of the ISP highlights located on the left-hand side.
- Computer USER at www.computeruser.com/resources/isp/ allows you to obtain a quote from an ISP or print out the checklist of questions one should ask when searching for an ISP. The site also allows you to search by company name and area code.
- ABOUT.COM Familyinternet.about.com . Once you get to the site, type ISP in the search box to locate the many resources on this site.

Free ISPs
- Address.com
  www.address.com/
- Free Internet access/Free Web access
  www.talkingdirectory.com/freewebcanada.com/
- Spinway.com Free Internet Access
  www.spinway.com/
- 1stUp.com
  www.1stup.com/
- Netzero
  www.netzero.com
- Freeintet
  www.freei.net
- Alta Vista Free Access
  www.zdnet.com/downloads/altavista/
- Juno
  www.juno.com

Free Web-based Email
- 1 on 1 Mail
  www.1on1mail.com
- Yahoo
  www.yahoo.co
- Netscape
  www.netscape.com
- My Own Email
  www.myownemail.com
- MailCit
  www.lycos.co
- Hotmail
  www.hotmail.com
- HushMail
  www.hushmail.com
- Email Choice
  www.emailchoice.com

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Enhancing Adult Literacy in Ohio

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http://literacy.kent.edu

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- Families in Schools: A Chorus of Voices in Restructuring

- Teachers and Parents Together
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