



the Achiever

news and notes from The Edward Stevens Center for
Literacy and Development of Literacy and Language

Stevens Literacy Center Awarded Almost \$250K in New Funding

By James Salzman, Executive Director

Though the holidays are over, the Stevens Literacy Center has still been on the receiving end of more than \$248,000 in new grants that we will be use to deliver high-quality literacy programming in Appalachia Ohio. These new grants will provide funding for professional development for teachers and expansion of tutoring services beyond the Athens campus of Ohio University, as well as technical assistance in financial and technological literacy to the non-profit community.

In mid-January, the Ohio Board of Regents granted us more than \$158,000 to run the fourth generation of Better Math through Literacy (BMTL) 4.0. The BMTL team, led by Drs. Tim McKeny and Susan Nolan and Ms. Susan Payne, will provide two separate week-long intensive summer workshops to K-3 teachers at OU's Athens and Chillicothe campuses in July 2010. The teachers who engage in this workshop will receive instruction in integrating mathematical concepts and activities with early childhood books and literacy strategies. Each teacher will also investigate the effectiveness of the changes they make in their classrooms by planning and executing an action research study.

In December 2009, we were also awarded grants by two private foundations. The Martha Holden Jennings Foundation is providing \$29,100 for the Early Intervention Reading Apprenticeship and Summer Literacy Camp for Struggling Readers. The Jennings Foundation award will fund two intensive week-long summer workshops for K-3 teachers to improve their skills in using multi-sensory reading strategies to help struggling readers. Working under the expert guidance

of Dr. Susan Nolan and Ms. Sue Payne, the teachers will immediately apply what they are learning in tutoring young readers to help them catch their grade-level peers. The workshops will take place the last two weeks of June 2010.

Also in December, The Verizon Foundation awarded \$35,000 for Appalachia Achieves: Expansion of Tutoring Services to help us to expand our tutoring center work to branch campuses and other literacy providers outside of the Athens area. The funds will be used to fund a start-up library of materials/books, a laptop computer to maintain student records, and a part-time coordinator for managing the center and matching learners and volunteer tutors. Each of the tutoring centers will provide free tutoring to K-12 students reading below grade level and adults reading below the 7th grade level. We have already engaged the Guernsey County Literacy Council as one of the service providers and are hoping to have this and two other tutoring sites engaged by March 2010.

Finally, the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives awarded \$288,000 through the Community Engagement Partnership Grant (CEPG) to a collaboration of organizations led by the Coalition of Appalachian Development (COAD) and the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs at OU. The Stevens Literacy Center is subcontracted for \$26,000 to provide training and technical assistance for non-profit organizations in financial literacy and technology standards to help them improve their own outreach services.

From the Director

James A. Salzman



About the time of publication of this newsletter, Ohio will have submitted their application for Race to the Top funding from USDE. The application calls for states to engage in “innovative” education reforms around four key areas: 1) Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students for success; 2) building

data systems that are informative of students’ growth and achievement and can be used by educators to inform instruction; 3) developing and ensuring that teachers and principals are effective; and 4) turning around the state’s lowest achieving schools.

While many believe that Ohio is well-positioned for meeting the criteria of a successful applicant, a recent analysis by the Fordham Foundation has identified some areas of concern, most notably on Ohio’s spotty record in turning around low achieving schools. Therein lies my concern when we tie the word “innovative” to school reform. Far too often that means trying the educational “flavor of the month.”

Anyone who has spent time in education is exhausted by the innovations that have been trumpeted, in many cases mandated from some higher ups, then failed miserably. One that comes to mind in my field of literacy is the abject failure of the whole language approach. In California in 1987, whole language was applied throughout the state system. Within 8 years, what was once one of the top K-12 systems in the country had California fourth graders outperforming only students from Louisiana and Guam in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Similarly dismal results have been documented in New York City and Denver schools.

Today, we know how to teach reading effectively through the work of the National Reading Panel and have six years of data that demonstrate how to turn around low achieving, high poverty schools here through the work done in Reading First Ohio. Though Reading First was limited to kindergarten to third grade, the lessons learned there can be applied to the entire K-12 system. These lessons have been most effectively learned and applied in rural schools in Appalachian Ohio. For many of the schools in this area, like Vinton County, Southern Local, Belpre, and Alexander, if Reading First were to be offered today, they would no longer be funded because they succeeded themselves out of eligibility on the 3rd grade OAT reading test.

The good news: the lessons are relatively simple. Provide professional development based on research-proven methods. Require that teachers use research-based materials in their classrooms. Use valid and reliable assessment data to measure growth and achievement as well as inform instruction. Ensure that schools effectively use Response to Intervention (RtI) models to differentiate instruction for students. Train instructional leaders to effectively observe instruction and support classroom change. Provide technical assistance to help schools and districts build the capacity to reform instruction. Hold schools accountable for children’s success and tie the release of further funding to implementation of classroom changes and improved student outcomes.

Most of these changes do not demand large sums of new money to continue after an initial infusion to purchase materials and provide intensive doses of high-quality professional development. What they do require is system-wide commitment and an unwavering focus on those strategies that make a difference. For many educators, this alone would be innovative. I am hopeful that state leadership will be truly innovative by looking within the state to the one program that has shown itself to be effective and use those lessons to craft a system-wide reform effort.

2010 National College Transition Network Annual Conference

By Sharon Reynolds, Director of Adult Learning

On November 16 and 17, 2009, I attended and co-presented Lining It Up: Ohio's Stackable Certificate Initiative at the National College Transition Network (NCTN) Annual Conference held in Providence, Rhode Island. The session, co-presented with Adrienne Glandon from Ohio State University, was well attended. Participants from across the country were very interested in the Stackable initiative in Ohio and what we have learned in our statewide pilot. Participants shared the related programming happening in their states.

The focus of the NCTN conference was Helping Adults Succeed in Post-Secondary Education and Training. This year's conference had more than 450 people in attendance and the increase from previous years was evident. Clearly, there is a national focus on helping adults transition to post-secondary and work. The ballroom was packed during the keynote presentations, the most compelling of which was Jennifer Herrera - Andjugar, a GED graduate who is now with the IMPACT Program and FUTURE NOW at the Bronx Community College. In her keynote presentation and in her breakout session, Jennifer spoke about the importance of developing leadership in the adult learners in our adult education programs. Student input is important to guide the future of adult education. Adult students who have completed ABE programs can provide leadership through:

- *Advocacy*
- *Information and communication*
- *Outreach and Community Organizing*
- *Support and motivation*

She cited the Student Voices Study (SVS) that was conducted through the Mayor's Office of Adult Education in New York City. In spring 2008, 141 adult learners participated in a study to better understand students' perspectives on the adult education system. The SVS engaged 141 adult learners in 13 focus groups from ESL and ABE programs across the city to understand their goals, experiences and priorities for adult education. Key findings are that adult learners:

- Seek quality education programs with strong academic outcomes where they can progress quickly toward specific goals.
- Have specific career and education goals in mind and the majority plan to eventually attend college or pursue career-related technical training.

You can view the NCTN presentation on Ohio Stackable Certificates at our website: <http://www.ouliteracycenter.org/partnerships/stackables/>

More information on the Student Voices Study can be found at: www.nyc.gov/html/adulted/html/students_alumni/t2c.shtml

More information on the NCTN can be found at www.collegetransitions.org.



“The qualities that one needs to be a leader are the same qualities one needs to be an adult learner.”

Jennifer Herrera Andjugar

Stackable Certificates in SE Ohio Moving Forward

By Carolyn Ervin, Director of Special Projects

For the past year, the Stevens Literacy Center has been collaborating with ABLE programs in Athens and Meigs counties, Hocking College, Mid-East Career and Technology Center, Morgan County Learning Center, The Work Station, Tri-County Adult Career Center, Washington State Community College and the George Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs to participate in the Ohio Board of Regents Stackable Certificates initiative. The Stackable Certificates initiative is designed to offer a clear and accessible path for adults seeking to advance their education. This collaboration resulted in the successful creation of a pre-nursing preparation pilot program for EDR 11. The goal of the pilot was to increase the number of students entering the nursing pathway in Region 11 by developing and implementing an accessible, contextualized Basic and Advanced Skills Certificate program that would prepare students to pass the initial step in the nursing pathway, the Nursing Entrance Test (NET).

Classes were held during the spring in both Athens and Morgan counties for a 10-week period. At the conclusion of these classes, 8 students completed classes with 5 students achieving the Advanced Certificates and 3 students achieving the Basic Certificates. Additionally, 6 students who were enrolled at the Morgan County Learning Center, also took the NET with 5 of those students passing the exam.

In July 2009, the Ohio Board of Regents awarded a \$75,000 grant to continue the Stackable Certificates project through June 2010. The Stevens Literacy Center has expanded the project with a broader scope of providing classes specifically designed to prepare students to enroll in health career programs. Approximately 8 adult students were enrolled in classes at the Morgan County Learning Center in November 2009. Additional classes are scheduled to begin in January 2010 in Athens and Monroe counties, with additional classes scheduled to begin Spring 2010 in Meigs and Washington counties.

The Stevens Literacy Center has been working closely with Hocking College, Tri-County Adult Career Center and Washington State Community College (WSCC) to recruit students who have been identified as “at-risk.” These students will be encouraged by school counselors to take advantage of the free classes offered through the Stackable Certificates initiative. We wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement of senior level administration at Hocking College, Tri-County Adult Career Center and WSCC. These institutions have provided on-campus space for classes as well as assistance in building a collaborative partnership uniting the work and efforts of all interested parties to provide academic resources for adult students in their quest to successfully transition into post-secondary education.

Teaching and Learning in Multiple Media

In 2005, Bill Kist wrote *New Literacies in Action: Teaching and Learning in Multiple Media*. In it, he qualitatively describes his research in classrooms, mostly English Language Arts, that used non-traditional and, in many cases, non-linear “texts” to read and critique, making them preferred pedagogical resources or the bases of major units of instruction. These non-linear texts included the Internet, movies and videos, Flash animation, presentation software (like Powerpoint) that provided a variety of ways for students of interacting with ideas that are different from the ways in which most teachers have been prepared. These new literacies capitalize on students’ interests in technology while presenting a challenge for teachers as they work to integrate these into a full curriculum.

Kist is not dismissive of this challenge, recognizing the potential that teachers and students may become more enamored of the technical aspects of the technology and inadvertently morph an English class into a computer class. This is certainly a challenge that teachers will have to keep in the fore of their thinking to avoid this very metamorphosis. That said, Kist also outlines the advantages to using new literacies as an instructional organizational strategy for teaching and learning. The advantages he cites from his research include: increasing collaboration and motivation among students; promoting higher order thinking by “translating” one form of text into others and evaluating

the messages sent and received from this transformation; providing a new space for teaching and learning that transcends the classroom; and transforming teachers’ professional practices as they plan and deliver instruction using multiple media.

As we look at the 21st Century Skills that are central in the Ohio Department of Education’s new look at standards, it is clear that the use of new literacies is embedded in the ways in which futurists see education evolving. As preamble to the listing of skills, the National Business Alliance Commission state: In order to thrive in a digital economy, students will need digital age proficiencies. It is important for the educational system to make parallel changes in order to fulfill its mission in society, namely the preparation of students for the world beyond the classroom. There is a good deal of interest in the education research world for how teachers and schools can make these parallel changes by taking advantage of technological innovations, like social networking sites for instance, that can concurrently help students become critical consumers and users of technology while fulfilling the educational mission of more traditional courses and content disciplines. For those who are looking to explore these new realms, works by Kist and others can help teachers see the possibilities for where new literacies will intersect with their previous curricular units and lessons.

21st Century Skills

In order to thrive in a digital economy, students will need digital age proficiencies. It is important for the educational system to make parallel changes in order to fulfill its mission in society, namely the preparation of students for the world beyond the classroom. Therefore, the educational system must understand and embrace the following 21st century skills within the context of rigorous academic standards.

1. Digital Age Literacy – Today’s Basics
 - Basic, Scientific and Technological Literacies
 - Visual and Information Literacies
 - Cultural Literacy and Global Awareness
2. Inventive Thinking – Intellectual Capital
 - Adaptability/Managing Complexity and Self-Direction

- Curiosity, Creativity and Risk-Taking
 - Higher Order Thinking and Sound Reasoning
3. Interactive Communication – Social and Personal Skills
 - Teaming and Collaboration
 - Personal and Social Responsibility
 - Interactive Communication
 4. Quality State-of-the-Art Results
 - Prioritizing, Planning, and Managing for Results
 - Effective Use of Real-World Tools
 - High Quality Results with Real-World Application

– 21st Century Workforce Commission National Business Alliance

Profiles in Success

Robert Glover

KSU-Ashtabula ABLE



My name is Robert Glover I am 51 years old. I was born premature and my eyes were severely damaged at birth. I am legally blind and have an eye disease called retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). Life is challenging, and school was nearly impossible. In grade school I used large print text books that were so big and so heavy I could only carry one book at a time. The resources for

students with disabilities were very limited.

After repeating the second grade and the seventh grade, I began to get frustrated. By ninth-grade I felt defeated and dropped out of school at the age of 16. For the next 32 years I went through life working at closed-ended minimum-wage jobs, or collecting disability Social Security. I always longed for an education, and admired people that could open a book and read it without holding it 2 inches from their faces.

After giving my son a long-winded lecture about higher education he looked up and said, “Dad, what about you?” I was outraged and said, “You know it’s not possible for me to go to school with my vision problem.” Once again my son challenged me and said, “Dad, I know how important education is to you. Why don’t you just make a phone call and see what’s available?”

After pondering our conversation for about two weeks, I finally mustered up enough courage to call Kent state at Ashtabula and ask for their adult education department. Before long I heard someone say, “Hello, ABLE.” I replied by saying, “Hi Able.” My name is Robert Glover, and I would like some information about getting a GED. The person on the

other end of the phone chuckled and said, “My name is not “ABLE”! My name is Doug. ABLE is the name of a program. It stands for “Adult Basic Literacy Education.”

After I got the name straight, Doug invited me to an orientation. I told Doug I would love to come to the orientation, but I’m legally blind. Doug said, “We can make accommodations.” I told Doug I am missing my right leg, and you are on the upper floor. Doug said, “We have an elevator.” I told him that I don’t drive. Once again Doug had an answer! He said, “We have public transportation that comes to the campus every hour.” After realizing Doug had an answer for anything I could throw at him, I agreed to go to the orientation.

Doug tested me and said, “If you work hard you will have a GED in no time.” I went to class 4 days a week for about six months, and finally it was time to take the test. Doug assured me that I was ready and ABLE would make all the necessary accommodations. I passed the test and received a GED! Doug asked me to be a guest speaker at the graduation, and I humbly accepted his offer. From that day forward, my life has not been the same. ABLE gave me the confidence and foundation I needed to move forward in a positive direction toward higher education.

By trial and error I discovered some software that would accommodate my special needs. It is speech recognition software called “Dragon NaturallySpeaking.” I simply talk to the computer and the software types for me. I use some other software called “Read Please.” It is a screen reader. I can copy and paste any text into the text box and it will read it to me.

Armed with everything I learned from ABLE, college would finally become a reality. The first semester I took two classes and received a 3.6 GPA. I am now a full-time student, and I’m currently on the Dean’s list. I do not determine success by GPA, Dean’s list or even a diploma. I define my success by how I can inspire other people.

Learning To Achieve Training Will Address Students With Special Needs

By Mary Barbara Totten-Hanna

As with other ABLÉ Regional Resource Centers in Ohio, the Central/Southeast ABLÉ Resource Center (C/SE ABLÉ) has specific areas of interest on which it focuses its research and professional development topics; primary among these topics is Learning Disabilities. Beginning with the National Institute for Literacy's (NIFL) Bridges to Practice in 2004, C/SE ABLÉ has brought information on serving adult students with special needs to the state of Ohio through online and face to face workshops, formation of a statewide Special Needs Steering Committee, a Learning Disabilities Program planning guide, and participation in the Ohio Initiative for Persons with Learning Disabilities. Bridges to Practice was the first set of workshops created by NIFL to introduce research-based strategies into adult learner programming.

From those workshops, C/SE ABLÉ created Learning Disabilities 101 for Administrators, Learning Disabilities 102 for Teachers and Support Staff and Learning Disabilities 202 for Teachers. Combined, these three workshops provide opportunities for

administrators, instructors and support staff to learn about screenings, laws supporting individuals with disabilities, and strategies for helping individuals commit to and complete adult learning programs.

In 2009 NIFL introduced its findings on the latest learning disability research with its program, Learning to Achieve, which addresses new topics, such as English language learners and LD, and provides a standard set of materials. In this "train the trainer" model, attendees commit to a five day training program and to training twenty other individuals within a six-month period after completion of the program.

Through this updated course and subsequent workshops, C/SE ABLÉ will continue to provide the latest research and strategic methods to adult education programs throughout Ohio. If you would like more information on serving people with learning disabilities, or on Learning to Achieve, please contact Sharon Reynolds (reynols1@ohio.edu) or MB Totten-Hanna (totten@ohio.edu).

From the Teacher's Desk

By Christina Chuey, Columbia County Career and Technical Center

The students who attended the pilot program are busy applying to post-secondary institutions. Most of the students also completed our mathematics transitions class. We are also giving them the opportunity to take the WorkKeys tests at no charge through the WorkKeys Incentive Project that CCCTC ABLÉ received. We hope that these students achieve the Advanced Stackable Certificate or a National Career Readiness Certificate.

Although the pilot project was a huge success, we plan to adopt changes for the spring session. The pilot project was evaluated by the ABLÉ staff and the students. The following adaptations will be instituted in the spring class. The time frame will be extended to approximately 15 weeks or 90 hours of instructional time to mirror a college semester. We will increase the rigor of the class by adding more out of classroom assignments, lab activities, assessments that measure the student's knowledge in the specific content area. Students will also be given the opportunity to attend mini-sessions for WorkKeys and Compass preparation. Students will also be required to complete and submit an application and personal statement to apply for the spring class.

We debuted our pilot project of Introduction to Health Care Sciences this fall, and it was very well received by the class. Because I teach Anatomy and Physiology, Medical Terminology, and Medical Math for Columbiana County Career and Technical Center's licensed practical nursing program, I was aware of many of the problems our nursing students face. These



... From the Teacher's Desk

challenges seemed universal to anyone entering a medical career, but seemed especially true for the non-traditional student. Their biggest difficulties seemed to be dealing with the multitude of new vocabulary words that they are taught, refreshing math skills necessary to the health care fields, and learning study strategies that will aid them in any college-level course.

We designed a program that would address many of these issues. We included math lessons in basic math skills such as fractions, decimals, integers, and percents, and practiced ratio, proportion, and word problems that are often encountered in the health care fields. Study skills were learned and practiced with daily reading and vocabulary assignments from a biology text. We also had the students choose a disease to research and write a paper about. We are in the process of getting certified to administer the WorkKeys test that career and technical schools use as an entrance exam, and plan to add strategies for achieving a good score on this test to the program in the future.



The students seemed to respond well to the course. Many of them were not sure what to expect when we started, as this is a brand-new offering, but they gained skills that, I believe, are going to help them succeed in their future schooling. Several of them are planning on going on to the LPN program at CCCTC, and have built friendships that are going to allow them have a support network already in place when they begin school.

These are Introduction to Health Care Sciences student Tricia Cline's thoughts on this course:

"I wanted to take the Intro to Health Care Sciences class because I am going to attend a LPN program. I was informed that the course would prepare me with math and science skills necessary to succeed in any kind of health-care program. The curriculum taught is an excellent foundation for those planning to attend any kind of medical career course. (Medical Secretary, Phlebotomy, STNA, Medical Assistant, EMT, LPN)

I was astonished at everything we learned in this course! We began with the basis of science, what it is, why and how scientist develop hypothesis and experiments, why and how living things adapt to their surroundings. . . . It was awesome to have someone teach us step by step how the human body works and

what it is made up of. The vocabulary words assigned and the workbook assignments are an excellent way to reinforce what Ms. Chuey is teaching and explaining.

Not only did we learn Human Biology, but we were also taught medical math, which is an excellent way to prepare adult students for math they will use in the Medical Field. . . . This course is outstanding and exceeded all expectations I had! I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to take this course."

Patti Y. Jenkins adds:

"...The class has been a big help. It is amazing how much comes back to you after not being in school for a long time. I think it is all in the presentation. The teacher, Christina Chuey, just made it all make sense. She taught me at my level. I feel that is a really good program that will have good lifetime results"

Included is a class photo. The green alien was made for me as a joke on the last day of class. We were learning genetics at the end of a long evening, and the students were getting tired, so I tried to think of a way to make things interesting for them. Instead of doing Punnett squares with the classic tall/short, white/red flowered sweet pea plants, we started crossing aliens with either green or blue skin and either two or three eyes! (Green skin and two eyes were dominant traits!) It may not be traditional, but every one of them can now use a Punnett square!



Research Connections

K-12

Atkinson, R. C., & Geiser, S. (2009). Reflections on a century of college admissions tests. *Educational Researcher*, 38, 665-676.

The authors discuss the underpinnings of educational testing and the historical trends of using admission tests as an entry ticket into universities. They discuss the greater predictive validity of high school GPA over admission tests, especially when predicting college completion rates. GPA as a predictor variable also appears to be superior regardless of socioeconomic status, a finding that flies in the face of conventional wisdom about the preparation of lower-SES students and the teaching that takes place in higher poverty areas. Of potentially greater interest to Ohioans as the state considers requiring ACT scores for high school completion is their rejection of the educational appropriateness of these types of tests for a purpose for which they are not designed. They also cite the professional organizations that have criticized these practices in states where this practice currently is in vogue.

Princiotta, D., & Reyna, R. (2009). *Achieving graduation for all: A governor's guide to dropout prevention and recovery*. Washington, DC: National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices.

The authors discuss recommendations for promoting graduation among the nation's youth within the context of the dropout crisis where 1 in 5 students leave their schools before graduation. They report on the economic costs to society that is estimated to be nearly \$300 billion in lost wages and increased social services. They recommend that governors take four specific actions: 1) promote high school graduation for all; 2) target youths at risk of dropping out for special support; 3) increase outreach efforts to encourage youth who have dropped out to reengage; 4) provide rigorous and relevant options for earning a diploma that do not necessarily rely on seat time. The full report describes efforts in different states that may provide exemplars for others.

Adult

Swanson, H. L., & Hsieh, C. (2009). Reading disabilities in adults: A selective meta-analysis of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 79, 1362-1390.

The authors reviewed experimental and quasi-experimental research in attempting to answer the question of to what extent and in what manner do adults with learning disabilities differ from adults without learning disabilities on measures associated with reading comprehension. Fifty-two studies met the criteria established for being included in the analysis. Hierarchical linear models indicated that verbal IQ, vocabulary, math, spelling and specific cognitive processes – like naming speed, phonological processing, and verbal memory – were significantly related to outcome differences. The results suggest that some of the characteristics (e.g., phonological processing) that are present in children with reading disabilities play an equally important role in adults, but that other factors (e.g., verbal memory, vocabulary) provide a much broader spectrum of issues to address in working with adults.



Tutors of Fall Quarter 2009

The Stevens Literacy Center is proud to announce the tutors of the Quarter for Fall 2009. Clockwise from the top left, the recipients are Beth Brown, Rebecca Leavitt, and Briana Sims. Each was cited by Center staff for their hard work, dedication to their learners, responsibility (e.g., turning in lesson plans), creative use of curriculum, and active participation in trainings. They each received a \$25.00 gift certificate from Follet's Book Store.