

MVAEA

Happenings in the Valley

Patterns in learning...

Implications for traditional and online learning

by Judith M. Smith, Ph.D.

Adult learning, particularly technology-enhanced learning, is still in development stages. We are now learning more about *how* we learn! As we grow in our understanding about what it takes to teach adults effectively, we are seeing distinct patterns in how adults learn. This article attempts to identify some common and critical patterns we should consider when developing adult learning opportunities.

PATTERN ONE

Adult learners often expect learning delivered in a traditional, teacher-led way; they expect the faculty member to do the “work” of the learning. Now, this does *not* say that this is an effective way to teach adults. This says that most of us, for years, have been taught via a certain method—namely, faculty-led instruction. We have not been expected to have a hands-on learning process. While this pattern is being broken down, it has been in existence for decades—even centuries. This mindset is not going away easily. Expecting adult learners to automatically embrace a brand new way of learning without proper orientation is expecting too much.

PATTERN TWO

Adult learners who tend to undertake a project on their own (as opposed to being assigned the project) do so to solve a problem or apply the information right away—as opposed to learning a new subject for the sake of learning it.

This may be a factor of our “hurry up” culture; our plates are full with home, work, and family responsibilities. Any free time we have in our lives should be used as economically as

possible...and we can see how this carries over into adult education. It’s no wonder that many online courses, for example, are viewed primarily as good “training” courses, and not necessarily “educational” courses. This is not to slight the efforts of institutions that focus on education rather than training. However, this is the perception held by many toward online learning.

PATTERN THREE

Motivation for adult learners in education tends to come from a need to fill a professional gap or a direction from superiors.

This pattern should come as no surprise, based on the fact that Pattern Two illustrates the “practicality” mindset of adult learners toward continuing education. Cross (1981) notes this may be dependent on where adult learners are in different professional stages of their lives. The higher up the individual may be on the professional ladder, for instance, the more likely the individual may wish to learn new subject matter for the sake of learning it.

PATTERN FOUR

Adult learners tend to rely on colleagues or friends who may also be experts in their professional field when seeking advice on learning or when embarking on a new educational venture.

This has both positive and negative consequences. If we have colleagues who share our learning interests and who have had positive experiences, we want to know more about those experiences and apply that potential to our own lives. We trust these individuals to help us make a significant decision that will impact our free time, finances, and professional development.

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**LATE
FALL
2004**
volume 4

Highlights of a national household education survey

by Kimeiko Hotta Dover

Participation in adult education is prevalent and has been increasing over the past three decades, according to the National Households Education Surveys of 2001 conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education. Key findings of the study included:

- Participation in adult education has risen from 40% in 1995, to 46% in 2001.
- More women than men participate in adult education—49% of women and 43% of men engaged in some type of educational activity.
- More adults aged 50 or younger participate—adults 50 and younger participated between 53-55%, compared to 41% participation for adults aged 51-65 and 22% participation for adults 66 and older.
- Prior educational attainment is positively related to adult ed participation—about 22% of adults who had not completed high school participated, compared to 34% with high school diploma or equivalent; 48%

with some college education and 66% with bachelor's degree or more.

- Employment is related to participation. Employed adults were more likely to participate (54%) than unemployed (25%).

WHAT IS "ADULT EDUCATION"?

The following seven formal and informal learning activities were considered adult education:

1. English as a Second Language
2. Adult Basic Education / General Educational Development
3. College or university degree programs
4. Vocational or technical diploma programs
5. Apprenticeship programs
6. Work-related courses
7. Personal development courses

The study found that the most common adult education activities were work-related courses (30%), personal interest (21%), and college or university courses (4%).

Source: <http://adulted.about.com/cs/studiesstats1/a/participation.htm>

Adult learning patterns offer valuable insights

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On the other hand, reliance on other opinions (and not doing the work of discovering our own personal likes, dislikes, and preferences) instead of our own may result in disappointment when the learning experience is not what we expect. A word to the wise is to seek out others' opinions, but to balance them with our own preferences.

PATTERN FIVE

Adult learners tend to appreciate—and continue learning—in courses where they feel they have a significant contribution to make to the discussion.

What this means is that when we develop courses, regardless of whether they are online or traditional in nature, they will be more successful when there are activities that allow students to take on leadership roles. For instance, a class might have an adult learner lead an online

discussion; act as a virtual tour guide; provide examples from their workplace; and so forth.

IMPLICATIONS

For us as educators, the next step is to know how to appreciate and work with these patterns as they show up in our adult learner population.

RESOURCES

Cross, K. Patricia. (1992) *Adults As Learners: Increasing Participation and Facilitating Learning*. Wiley, John & Sons.

Knowles, Malcolm, Richard A. Swanson, and Elwood F. Holton III (1998) *Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development: Science & Technology Books*.

Tight, Malcolm. (2003). *Key Concepts in Adult Education and Training*: London, Routledge.

From the President

Happy holidays, MVAEA!



by *Evan Bensley*
(Iowa), MVAEA
president

The MVAEA board met for its fall retreat on Oct. 28 at the Northeast Community College Center in South Sioux City, Neb. We covered a host of items on the agenda!

The board has agreed to try a “consent agenda” approach prior to the next meeting. Kansas and North Dakota are two adult education associations that use such a format for their meetings.

Using the consent agenda, board items would be submitted in writing a few weeks before we met. Each board member would have the opportunity to review the material and be prepared to discuss it at the meeting.

We believe this format will increase our efficiency at board meetings and provide us with more time to brainstorm over ways in which to improve MVAEA.

To that end, the board has scheduled a “brainstorming” session at its next face-to-face business meeting on Jan. 20-21. We plan to hold our regular meeting on Thursday afternoon and continue with the brainstorming session the following morning. The board would like to look at ways to improve what MVAEA has to offer potential and current members. We need to examine the direction in which the

MVAEA is headed. Members of the board believe MVAEA has to position itself to meet the needs of its membership as the role of adult education evolves.

At times, it appears that our target group isn’t as clearly defined as it is for some states within our association, such as those who are specifically focused on ABE/GED. However, other associations include a vast array of adult educators. Iowa is a good example of the evolution of adult education, especially since many of its community colleges have divided their continuing education departments and placed them under a variety of occupational areas of responsibilities.

Web-based education and distance learning have also presented a unique challenge and opportunity for adult educators. The MVAEA board is committed to improving our organization, and the board welcomes insights from its members on new and innovative ways to improve MVAEA.

My term as MVAEA president is nearly over, as we are rapidly approaching the holidays! As I write this article, I am sure many of you are planning holiday activities. An extended holiday break can provide a great opportunity for reconnecting with our family and friends.

As Missouri Valley Adult Education Association president, I would like to think of each of you as a close friend. I wish every one a happy holiday season.

POSTSCRIPT FROM EVAN

If you have time to do a little research, you may want to check out the magazine entitled, *Adult Learning*. The Fall 1998, Volume 10, Number 1 issue contains the Agenda for the Future on Adult Education. This manuscript contains much information regarding the direction adult education is going. I consider it an important document for every person involved with adult education.

DO YOU NEED SOME MONEY???

Apply for the 2004–05 MVAEA Development Award

by Michelle Hanson (Missouri), Development Committee chairperson

The due date to apply for the 2004-05 MVAEA Development Award is fast approaching. If you have a new and innovative project or research you are conducting in an area related to adult education, make sure to apply.

JUDGING CRITERIA

When submitting your application, please respond to these seven key criteria:

- Description of the activity
- The purpose of the activity
- How the activity is to be implemented
- The need for the impact of the activity on adult education practices
- The anticipated outcome of the activity
- A general description of the budget
- Any innovative aspects of the activity

Each item of the criteria is judged on a five-point scale. Applications will be judged by a panel of your peers on a point system based on the seven criteria. The application earning the highest number of points receives the grant.

EXPECTATIONS

The award winner will present at the next MVAEA conference and present a brief description of the project and submit an article to *Happenings in the Valley*. One copy of the final project is to be presented to each of the

Association's state representatives. At the end of the project year, a check will be sent based on a reimbursement form submitted to the Development Committee chair, which is then forwarded to the IALL Treasurer for payment.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Allowable expenses include materials and resources needed to carry out the project, materials to reproduce the final project, and travel to and from the next conference.

Upon completion of the project, the winner will need to disseminate the knowledge gained to other MVAEA members through an article for the MVAEA newsletter, a project paper for the archives, and a presentation at the 2006 annual MVAEA conference.

DEADLINES AND OTHER DETAILS

Applications are due **Feb. 1, 2005**. The award recipient will be announced at the March conference in Overland Park, Kansas, on March 16-18, 2005. *Only MVAEA members are eligible; all applicants are encouraged to attend the conference.* The recipient will have until MVAEA's 2006 spring conference to complete the funded project.

If you are interested in applying, please submit an application found in this newsletter or at www.mvaea.com. If you have questions, contact Michelle Hanson at 660-886-6958 or mhanson@marshallschools.com.

When evaluating potential Development Fund recipients, emphasis is placed on projects that are new, innovative, practical, replicable, and/or just plain good for adult education. They may address professional development, program administration, classroom applications, or any other adult education concerns.

PAST PROJECTS funded have included...

Monographs on Adult Learning in Minnesota
Incorporating Adult Literacy Skills with Movement Therapy
Adult Special Needs in a Rural Setting
Adult Education Video Production
The Enabling Professional
Monograph: Indian Adult Education
LD Information Brochure
Empowering Your Staff: Leadership on the Reservation

ESL Drivers Tutoring Aids
Effective Teaching Inquiry
Literacy & Oprah Reading in Reality Book Club
Teach the fx-260 for the GED Math Test 2002
Study Proposing Education on Citizenship Through Internet Accessible Locations
Literacy Central
Caring Non-Custodial Fathers: Enhancing Father-Child Relationships
Spanish Newspaper: *El Herald*

Development Fund Application Form

CONDITIONS OF AWARD

- This 2004-05 Development Fund Award will be announced at the annual MVAEA conference in Overland Park, Kansas, on March 16-18, 2005.
- Each recipient will have up to one year to complete his/her project and will receive up to \$1,500 for expenses upon submission of an itemized statement at the conclusion of the project.
- A summary narrative, findings or conclusions, and any handouts or created materials will be submitted to the MVAEA Board for review and shall henceforth become the property of MVAEA.
- A short article summarizing the project will be submitted to *Happenings in the Valley* for publication.
- Recipient will submit a proposal to present a session about the project at the following MVAEA annual spring conference.
- Recipient must be a 2004-05 member of MVAEA and continue membership in the Association through 2006.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The application shall consist of the completed form below and a brief description or discussion of the following elements:

- Description of the activity
- The purpose of the activity
- How the activity is to be implemented
- The need for the impact of the activity on adult education practices
- The anticipated outcome of the activity
- A general description of the budget
- Any innovative aspects of the activity

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

To apply for the Development Fund Award, or to learn more, please contact: Michelle Hanson, MVAEA Development Committee chairperson, by phone at 660-886-6958, by fax at 660-886-3092, or via e-mail at mhanson@marshallschools.com.

DEADLINE

Please return completed application form by **Feb. 1, 2005**, to: Michelle Hanson, 900 West Vest, Marshall MO 65340.

Title of Project _____

Location of Project _____

Applicant Name _____

Organization/Institution _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (Work) _____ **(Home)** _____

E-mail Address _____

Information for Second Applicant (if applicable)

Applicant Name _____

Organization/Institution _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (Work) _____ **(Home)** _____

E-mail Address _____

Please attach 1-2 sheets in response to the application requirements appearing above.



STATE NEWS

KANSAS

www.thekaea.org

submitted by Kathy Petz and Karen Ulanski

Are you ready for the big event? March 16-18, 2005, marks the annual KAEA conference, which will be held in conjunction with the Missouri Valley Adult Education Association conference.

Together We Can Make it Happen is the theme for the 2005 event, which is now in the planning stages. Organizers Kathy Petz of Hutchinson and Karen Ulanski of Paola invite you to visit KAEA's Web page often for the latest details. For now, here's a summary of conference information:

When

March 16-18, 2005

Where

The Doubletree Hotel
10100 College Boulevard
Overland Park, Kan. 66210-1462
Phone 913-451-6100
Fax 913-451-3873

Registration

Regular and late registration prices are being finalized, and a registration form will soon be available online.

Presentations

If you would like to submit a presentation proposal for the conference, please complete the Call for Proposals form available at www.thekaea.org. The form is available in html and Microsoft Word.

NORTH DAKOTA

www.dpi.state.nd.us/adulted/index.shtm

submitted by Deb Cisco

The North Dakota Adult Basic and

Secondary Education Teachers held its annual conference in Minot this year. Several speakers and breakout sessions were available for those who attended.

Plans are already underway for the conference next year. We are also beginning to plan for 2006, when North Dakota will host the MVAEA annual conference.

Two new programs are available to help North Dakota residents study for their GED.

One program involves preparing for the GED via Internet. Students study at home when they can and work with an online instructor for help. This program has seen success as a pilot program last year and anticipates more students throughout the state this year.

The second program is in the beginning stages, but it will enable students to prepare for the GED via video conferencing. Bismarck and Minot have been named as the two host sites to start this program. It is hoped that this can be worked into a statewide program in the coming years.

MISSOURI

www.maacce.org/

submitted by Michelle Hanson

The Missouri Association for Adult Community and Continuing Education (MAACCE) board meet Sept. 10 at the Tan-Tar-A Resort in Lake Ozark, Mo. The Conference Planning Committee met the previous day to work on plans for the 2005 summer conference. The theme for the conference will be *2005 MAACCE Mardi Gras: A Celebration of Life Long Learning*. It will be held at Tan-Tar-A Resort at Lake Ozark on June 22-24, 2005 with preconferences scheduled for June 20-21.

The deadline for the Missouri Hovland Development Fund Award is March 4, 2005. If there are any MVAEA members who are also a member of MAACCE and have a project they think might be worthy of this

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award, please submit an application. You may print off an application from the MAACCE Web site— http://www.maacce.org/docs/MAACCE_Development_Fund_Award.doc).

MAACCE is submitting a conference bid to the COABE board to host the 2008 COABE educational conference. Since the COABE national conference is the year before the Missouri MVAEA conference, Kansas City is being considered to host both conferences. This will make travel more convenient than hosting the conference at the Lake of the Ozarks.

The week of Oct. 10-16 was declared Community Education Week for the state of Missouri, while Oct. 14 was recognized as Community Education Day for the nation. In addition, Oct. 14 was also declared Lights On After School Day.

The Department of Corrections (DOC) has incorporated the use of a work place essential skills curriculum in the GED classrooms. All students with 36 months or less on their incarceration are expected to complete the program. They have also been teaching employability skills/life skills on a regular basis in all of the DOC schools. The GED program continues to be their major thrust. The GED pass rate for the DOC schools remains the highest in the state GED program.

IOWA

www.iowall.org

submitted by Shari Kiple

IALL's 2004 annual fall conference brought the Association's members to Des Moines on Oct. 13-15 for a wonderful time of sharing and networking. Congratulations to Connie Glandon and the members of this year's IALL Conference Planning Committee! You did a remarkable job! The conference hosted 76 attendees, including eight new members.

Highlights included tremendous speakers and useful concurrent sessions. For summaries, visit www.iowall.org and access IALL's newsletter, *Quarterly Exchange*, which offers 16 pages of information on the conference.

Congratulations to the recipients of IALL's awards, which were also presented at the fall conference. Dale Amunson (Iowa's MVAEA representative) received the Distinguished Service Award-Emeritus, while Connie Glandon, IALL's new president, was given the Distinguished Service Award. Evan Bensley, MVAEA's current president, was honored with the MVAEA Award.

submitted by Bill Burdick, IALL president-elect
MVAEA members, mark your calendars! You are invited to attend the 2005 IALL fall conference, which will be held on Oct. 12-14, 2005, at the Sheraton in downtown Iowa City. What can you expect for next year? We will have another conference that is filled with high level presenters, enriching topics, extremely high quality networking opportunities, and yes—fun. For more information, please contact Bill Burdick at 641-422-4183.

SOUTH DAKOTA

www.sdall.org

submitted by Kim Olson

South Dakota Association for Lifelong Learning was given the opportunity to take part in the 24th annual "Christmas at the Capitol." The theme for 2004 is *Sentimental Days of Christmas*.

This year's celebration highlights 93 trees decorated by businesses, nonprofit organizations, communities, and governmental offices from throughout the state of South Dakota. The South Dakota state homepage (<http://www.state.sd.us/governor/trees2004/>) provides a wonderful visual presentation of all the beautifully decorated trees in the Capitol, where the trees are on display until Dec. 27.

MINNESOTA

www.mnmacae.org

NEBRASKA

www.acean.org

MVAEA

Happenings in the Valley is published by the Missouri Valley Adult Education Association to provide news, information, and assistance to those interested in continuing education and lifelong learning.

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CONSULTANT'S

O by Sharon Luhring, membership services consultant

R Please join us in welcoming three new members to the Missouri Valley Adult Education Association. You may wish to update your 2004 MVAEA Membership Directory with their contact information:

E
R
Judi Dunn
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Cornerstones Career Learning Center
159 Fourth Street SW
Huron, SD 57350
Phone 605-353-7175
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Les Lang also has new information:

Les Lang
16504 East 27th Terrace
Independence, MO 64055
Phone 816-668-8722
E-mail lang@pars.net

Coming Soon

January 20-21

MVAEA Board Meeting and Planning Session

January 25

Deadline for *Happenings in the Valley* (PLEASE NOTE: This has been extended from the original deadline of Jan. 20; it is the last issue prior to MVAEA's annual spring conference)

February 1

Last day to submit a proposal for the MVAEA Development Award

March 16-18 in Overland Park, Kansas

MVAEA Leadership Academy and Annual Conference

Be sure to check out these "insightful" sites!

http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/states_experiment_drag-drop_Intermed_State15s_500.html

A quick and fun site that puts your geography knowledge to the test!

<http://www.shopping.com>

With pictures, products, and prices all in one spot, this site will help you find what you need and be sure you're getting the best deal

<http://www.operationhomefront.net/>

An organization dedicated to supporting the country's military personnel and the families that are waiting for them to return home. This site helps you find out how you can help by sending a care package before the holidays or in the new year.

ON THE WEB

resources
you can
put to work
right now

Missouri Valley Adult Education Association – Membership Application

Membership Category (check one)

Individual (\$35) Life (\$300) Student (\$15) Retiree (\$15) Institutional* (\$120)

*For institutional membership, please attach a list of up to four persons who will be part of the membership.

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____

Organization Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-mail _____

Please submit form and dues, payable to MVAEA, to Sharon Luhring (please see page 7 for contact information).