PD participants create new lessons for Lesson Bank

By Leta Ann Martin
Morehead State University Adult Education Academy

In September, the Developing Your First KYAE Skills U Lesson Bank Lesson PD session was offered by KYAE Skills U and facilitated by Susie Roberts. The purpose of this blended PD was to assist instructors with the resources needed to create and implement lesson plans applying KYAE Skills U Lesson Planning tools. This PD led to the contribution of five high-quality lessons to the bank, three math lessons and two RLA lessons. We encourage you to give these new lessons a look! To access these lessons, type in the name of the lesson below the search icon located on the Lesson Bank home page.

We invite you to view and make use of these premium lessons:

• Gender Pay Gap – Melissa Rolph
• Welding Terminology, Joint and Weld Types, Diagrams and Symbols – Sherraine Williams
• Parts, Percents, and Wholes – Athena Brandow
• Using Proportions to Solve Direct and Inverse Variation – Brian Thomas
• Playing with Pythagoras – Allen Thomas
• Using Proportion to Solve Percent – Derek Mullins

Below are comments from a couple of participants in the Developing Your First KYAE Skills U Lesson Bank Lesson PD, featuring brief descriptions of the lessons they created.

“This professional development opportunity was wonderful in that the process of creating lesson plans that will matter to our students was practice-based. In fact, everything about the PD ended with positive take-aways which will be useful to my teaching. I not only gained something out of it, but feel as if, by contributing to the KYAE Skills U Lesson Bank, I am contributing to our profession as well as finding a convenient and effective vetted resource whose materials I don’t have to adapt from K-12 classrooms. The lesson I created introduces GED students to the welding field for those interested by showing they are already equipped (or could easily become equipped) to pursue a career in this field. This lesson also teaches strategies for finding meaning in job-specific vocabulary.”
– Sherraine Williams, Muhlenberg County Adult Education Skills U

“The lesson will use proportions to help solve applications involving direct and inverse variation. Also, students will continue to build their knowledge of different measurement abbreviations. These skills can be very important in technology and health fields. The lesson will expose students to scenarios that can really be applied in these fields. Also, there was an emphasis to develop a working solution using estimation methods to ensure reasonableness of the solution. The PD led by Susie Roberts made it fairly easy to build and publish a lesson on KYAE Skills U Lesson Bank, and it was comforting that the lesson was reviewed before it was published.”
– Brian Thomas, Skills U at SkillTrain, Daviess County

What’s inside:
2 • Local program news
3-4 • Best Practice Alert
5 • ELP Standards help
AND MORE!
Local program awarded $5,000+ donation for GED® scholarships

On January 9, Mary Newton, program director of Jessamine County Adult Education Skills U, was invited to attend the meeting of a group called 100 Women Who Care. Christi Hack, who works at Jessamine County Public Schools (the adult education program’s fiscal agent), is a member of the group and was planning to nominate the Jessamine County Adult Education Skills U GED® Scholarship Fund to be a recipient of the group’s quarterly donation.

Once all nominations are submitted, three organizations are drawn, and the member who made the nomination stands and speaks about the why she thinks that agency should be funded. At that meeting, the GED® Scholarship Fund was one of the three chosen.

“Christi did a fabulous job speaking about the need for GED® scholarships in our community,” Mary says, “She also shared from the heart, telling about her dad who was a GED® holder and what it meant to her family. I talked about the lasting financial impact that ripples for generations when a family can earn a self-sustaining wage and shared some inspirational students. In the end, the group chose to fund us – to the tune of over $5,000!”

Mary says, “This will provide approximately 48 GED® scholarships … Thanks to Christi and the group, no one will be turned away from taking the test due to an inability to pay.”

Local program reaches audience in innovative way

Hardin County Skills U used its free booth at the Chamber-sponsored Health and Human Services Expo to promote the benefits of its services to individuals’ fiscal and physical health – while engaging attendees and promoting keeping active minds through the creation of tangrams.

By Diane Kelley, program director

Hardin County Skills U, as a member of the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce, uses every opportunity provided by the Chamber to get the word out about Skills U.

Our program participates in the annual Chamber-sponsored Health and Human Services Expo; we receive a free table as we are a non-profit. It is a great opportunity to present the Skills U Profile, which shares the relationship between education and fiscal and physical health: Low-skilled adults are three times more likely to live in poverty and four times more likely to be in poor health.

Our Chamber asks each booth to provide a service or activity. We focus on how keeping an active mind is healthy; one way to keep an active mind is by doing tangrams. The participants are given an opportunity to attempt one of several tangrams options.

If they are able to successfully complete a tangram, they earn a Skills U book bag, planner, memory stick, pencil and pen. Those who at least attempt it receive a pen. Tangrams are used in our Skills U classroom to help students understand properties of shapes. It is also a useful tool to help students learn persistence (not to give up so quickly).

One of the best comments I heard at the Expo was, “I guess my advanced degrees are not helping me now!”

If you are not a member of your local Chamber, I would suggest you consider joining, as there are many benefits beyond networking.

Long-time adult educator to retire

Kay Combs, program director of McCracken and Graves Counties Adult Education Skills U (fiscal agent, West Kentucky Community & Technical College), is retiring after more than 20 years of service in the adult education field.

Kay says, “I’m taking early retirement and a position at Midway University working with graduate students. This will be close to my home in Georgetown, so that will be helpful.”

“It has been a privilege and a blessing to spend my last couple of years in adult education at WKCTC,” she says. “I began working in adult education in 1996 as an adult education coordinator in 11 Head Start centers in seven counties. I hope I have been able to have done some good for students, staff and those in adult education. I am excited about my new journey, but will not forget my ‘roots’ in adult education.”

KYAE Skills U is grateful for Kay’s many years of service and wishes her the best in her future endeavors!
Program shares processes and practices that foster student success

In each issue of News to Use, we will be sharing a “Best Practice Alert” – something that a local program is doing that can be replicated in other programs.

This issue’s Best Practice Alert comes to us from Vicki Jude, assistant program director, and Donnie Osborn, instructor, KEDC/Martin County Adult Education Skills U. The director of Martin County is Tessa Love, who is also director of Carter, Elliott, Greenup, Lincoln, Menifee and Mercer counties (fiscal agent, Kentucky Education Development Corporation, or KEDC); five of these counties (including Martin) were Top 25 programs and/or Programs of Excellence in the 2016-17 fiscal year.

As you read about the best practice, you will note that replicable actions are on the left in green and are accompanied by specific, supporting information and anecdotes to the right.

• Include goal-setting and learning plans in the orientation process.

• Review and discuss TABE assessment results in a one-on-one setting.

• Develop personal connections with students.

• Include students in decisions about their learning process.

• Administer GED Ready® test early in the process; use the prescription report to inform CCRS-based instruction.

• Before GED® testing, provide a short “boot camp” session that addresses most-missed questions on specific module(s).

As of January 19, the Martin County KAERS report indicated that the program was at a 110.5% GED® completer ranking (with 20% of GED® completers at NRS Level 3) and at 72% of its GED® attainment goal for FY18. The Martin County Adult Education Skills U program has established several processes that Vicki and Donnie say are contributing to these results.

Here is an outline of their process for GED®-seeking students:

• A student comes in and participates in the orientation process, which includes the completion of a Student Education Plan (SEP) and College Career Coaching Form, which is implemented in all KEDC Skills U programs, Donnie says. He says, “The SEP has a section that establishes long-term goals (i.e., post-secondary, GED®, job, etc.), short-term goals (TABE, Ready test, etc.), and steps that will help you reach those goals (attend class, complete homework, keep a positive attitude). The CC Coaching Form provides a template for establishing a more detailed plan to allow students to achieve their goal of entering post-secondary or finding employment.”

• As part of the orientation process, the student completes the TABE assessment. Then, the student participates in a one-on-one review of their TABE results. Donnie and Vicki expressed that they don’t think the TABE assessment is necessarily a good indicator of an individual’s GED® readiness (particularly in math), so during this one-on-one session, they discuss with the student what they feel their skills are, regardless of what the TABE indicates. Vicki shared that this one-on-one session is crucial to the student beginning to establish a personal connection to the staff, and, as she says, “If students have a personal contact, they will come back.”

• Based on the student and staff’s discussion and decision, a GED Ready® test may be administered in one or more subject areas.

• If the student takes a GED Ready® test and doesn’t pass, the prescription report is used to design a course of study. [Donnie shared that the instruction provided by their program is CCRS-based, and that they frequently use (and have contributed to) the KYAE Skills U Lesson Bank.]

• Once the student passes a GED Ready® test, the student then participates in a 1-1.5-hour boot camp that focuses on and addresses the most-missed questions on that particular GED® module.

Retaining students – and helping ensure that those who must “stop out” don’t become drop-outs – is a priority for Vicki and Donnie. To help keep students from falling through the cracks and help ensure completion, the staff regularly runs KAERS reports to keep an eye on student progress and attendance. They pay extra close attention to those who have completed one or more sections of the GED Ready® test, via a narrative they create called “Who’s On Deck.” Additionally, they (and all KEDC programs) send weekly activity reports to Tessa to keep her apprised of programmatic progress.

CONTINUED, PAGE 4
Stay in contact with students; make use of social media to help do so.

Donnie stressed the importance of staying in contact with students to keep them going and encourage them to come back in. They have discovered that Facebook is a great way to help maintain this student contact. Martin County Adult Education Skills U maintains two Facebook pages, each of which has its own purpose:

1) One page, which they refer to as a “fan page” is a business page, which provides them to connect with their community members (partners, etc.), who are able to “like” and “follow” the page and show support of the program.

2) The other page, which they refer to as a “friend page” is a personal Facebook page that provides staff the opportunity to send messages to students.

Celebrate student success.

Vicki and Donnie shared that Facebook is one way that they celebrate student success, and they think this recognition and celebration is integral to helping keep students engaged and motivated. In their center, they have a “wall of success,” and, Donnie says, “A lot of times, people will come in and say, ‘I want my picture on that wall.’” Donnie says that the local paper also runs their student success stories.

Develop local partnerships that help eliminate potential student barriers.

Adult education students often face many barriers, and Vicki and Donnie shared how they help eliminate as many of these barriers as possible. Donnie discussed, how, as a rural site, transportation can be a significant barrier. To address this issue, they offer instruction at satellite sites and make use of distance learning opportunities, such as Fast Forward. Donnie says, “The majority of my students (access Fast Forward) on their phones. I have had several students that do not have access to Internet at home. For those students, they utilize the local public library. Martin County libraries have installed a shortcut to Fast Forward on all of their computers to make this process easier.”

They also help address financial barriers that may impact students’ abilities to cover GED® testing fees. Through community organizations, they are able to offer testing scholarships. Additionally, they have a partnership with their local Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) office, wherein any person who becomes a member (for a $25 fee) will have the cost of their GED® test – and any retakes – covered by KFB. KFB also provide $25 gift cards to GED® graduates who attend the graduation ceremony.

Implement distance learning options.

None of the aforementioned activities are “one and done.” Instead, it is a continuous process. As Donnie says, “You have to keep working toward it.”

Remember that all of this is a continuous process.

Program director recognized as AppLE Award winner

Cheryl Botner, program director for Lee County Adult Education Skills U, was recently recognized by Forward in the Fifth, a non-profit education organization, for her “outstanding efforts and dedication in advancing education.”

Cheryl received the Appalachian Leaders in Education (AppLE) Award in the Adult Education category during a luncheon ceremony on December 14, 2017.

The AppLE Award publicly acknowledges individuals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to improve the lives of others and communities in a selfless and committed manner.

“Cheryl’s success is attributed to the trusting and caring relationship she builds with each student,” said Jim Tackett, executive director of Forward in the Fifth. “She first takes interest in people personally, then assesses how she can help them academically. This strategy will always yield the best results every time. She is a hero to many.”
New online module provides introduction to ELP standards

Can you guess how many languages are spoken in homes across Kentucky?

The graphic below (from the Kentucky Department of Education) indicates that, across the Commonwealth, at least 134 languages are spoken in our communities.

How many English Language Learners does your program serve each year? Whether it is one – or hundreds – it is important to be equipped to provide services to assist each learner to function in the workplace and the community.

What should every adult educator working with adult English language learners (ELLs) know about the new ELP Standards for Adult Education?

You can find the answer to that question and more by accessing a newly released online training module titled “Introduction to the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for Adult Education.”

This module is the first in a 3-part series (to include two upcoming additional modules) related to English language proficiency standards for adult education instructors, program administrators, professional development staff, and other key stakeholders.

This first module is a 50-minute online training module that focuses on:

- Why were ELP standards identified for adult education? Who identified them?
- How were the ELP Standards for Adult Education identified? Who is their audience?
- What do the ELP standards entail and why?
- How do the ELP standards correspond to states’ academic content standards?

The first module introduces an understanding of evidence-based considerations in selecting standards; goals, guiding principles, organization, and essential components of ELP standards; correspondence to state-adopted academic standards; and how to begin using these standards in classrooms. The second and third modules will be posted on LINCS when available. These modules can be utilized in a classroom environment through local staff development offerings, or by individual instructors.

We expect Modules Two and Three to be done by September 2018 and thus available soon.

Please contact Ronna Spacone at Ronna.Spacone@ed.gov or (202) 245-7755 if you have any questions.

(Please note that this learning opportunity does not fulfill the KYAE Skills UPD requirement.)

Carter County GED® graduate Bruce Tilsley, 55, dropped out of high school six months before he was due to graduate because of bullying issues. He says that dropping out has caused hardships ever since, as he has tried to survive and support a family. “There are no jobs that will hire you unless you have a diploma,” Bruce says. “Education is important if you want a good job. I feel so much better about myself inside, accomplishing something that I thought was not possible. So many opportunities passed me by, but now the doors of opportunity are open.” Bruce is now employed with the Carter County Board of Education Bus Garage, where he plans to remain a driver, and perhaps seek a part-time job in security. “I encourage the kids on my bus to work hard, get good grades, and tell them how important education will be to them one day,” he says. “I don’t want them to drop out of school and end up struggling in life like I had to do.” Bruce says, “At first, working on my GED® seemed hard, but once I began to engage in class activities, I realized there were others who needed help, too. I soon fit right in and relaxed.”

He says about his support system, which included his teachers, workplace, church family, children and wife, “They are proud of me, and I’m proud of myself.” Bruce’s advice to others who need a GED® diploma, want to advance in education, or follow through on another life goal, “If I can accomplish this, you can, too.”

Student Spotlight: Bruce Tilsley, Carter County

Student success stories run every Monday on Facebook. Submit your own via our submission templates!