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# MPAEA Newsletter

April 2014

## A Note from Kathleen Jameson, MPAEA President-Elect



Happy Spring! I hope you are having warm, wonderful weather in your corner of MPAEA territory! It is beautiful here in Reno, Nevada. I would like to introduce myself to all MPAEA members. I am Kathleen Jameson, President-Elect from Nevada. I have been a MPAEA board member for several years. I currently also serve on the Board of Directors of Nevada Adult Educators. I recently retired from my position as Director of Adult Education for Lyon County School District in Nevada. It is my honor and privilege to serve MPAEA as President-Elect. My term will begin at the conclusion of the upcoming MPAEA annual conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to be held April 27-30, 2014.

I encourage you to attend our annual conference if at all possible. There is still time to register for this conference – Transforming Adult Education, Exceeding The Limits. It is shaping up to be another excellent conference for adult educators. MPAEA and the New Mexico Adult Education Association have worked very hard to host an adult education conference with many strands, varied topics, and presentations, which bring educators of adults together.

I would also like to take a few moments to tout the benefits of being a MPAEA member. MPAEA membership offers you opportunities for professional and program development, networking, information-sharing, and planning with other educators of adults. MPAEA publishes the MPAEA Newsletter, and the MPAEA Journal of Adult Education.

Members are eligible for awards given annually at our conference. Several annual scholarship opportunities are available for members—a \$1000.00 scholarship for graduate studies in adult education is offered and up to eight \$250.00 scholarships for teachers are offered to implement creative ideas for the classroom. The annual MPAEA conference offers professional development opportunities for members and attendees. Currently, all MPAEA members are also members of the Commission of Adult Basic Education (COABE). This relationship is made possible by the MPAEA membership status of being a large group member of COABE. MPAEA membership is priced at a very reasonable fee of \$40.00 per year for an individual and just \$20.00 per year for students.

I look forward to meeting many new faces in Santa Fe, New Mexico. If at any time you have any questions or concerns with MPAEA, please drop me a line at [Jameson.kathleen@yahoo.com](mailto:Jameson.kathleen@yahoo.com).

## I Always Wanted To Be Somebody, Now I Realize I Should Have Been More Specific

**By: Troy Christensen, Vice President  
Bridgerland Applied Technology College,  
Northern Utah Pathways Director,  
Motivational Speaker, and Consultant**

For most of us, our occupation becomes a major part of our identity. In our mind “being somebody” is an inherent and important part of who we are or who we perceive ourselves to be. We are constantly striving to have our true self reflected in what we do. Thus, our occupation is closely tied to our self-esteem and our success. To become “somebody” requires preparation and careful thought and planning. Associated with that planning is training and education; however, education that doesn’t lead to a “job identity” can be detrimental to our success, self-esteem, and happiness.

Education and the needs of the workplace have a direct relationship. When that relationship is altered, the economy suffers; but more importantly, individuals and families suffer the devastating effects of unemployment or underemployment. Figure 1 shows the ideal relationship between the types of training and the needs of the workplace.

Figure 1

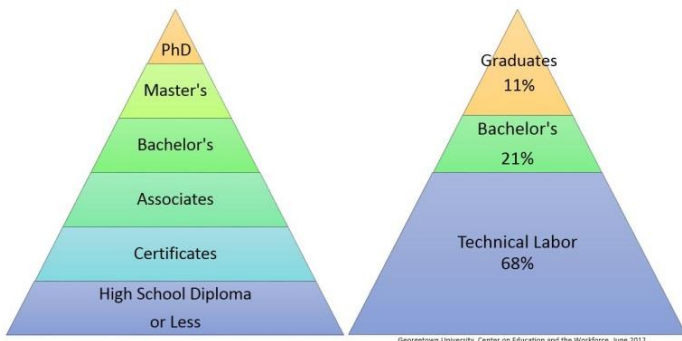
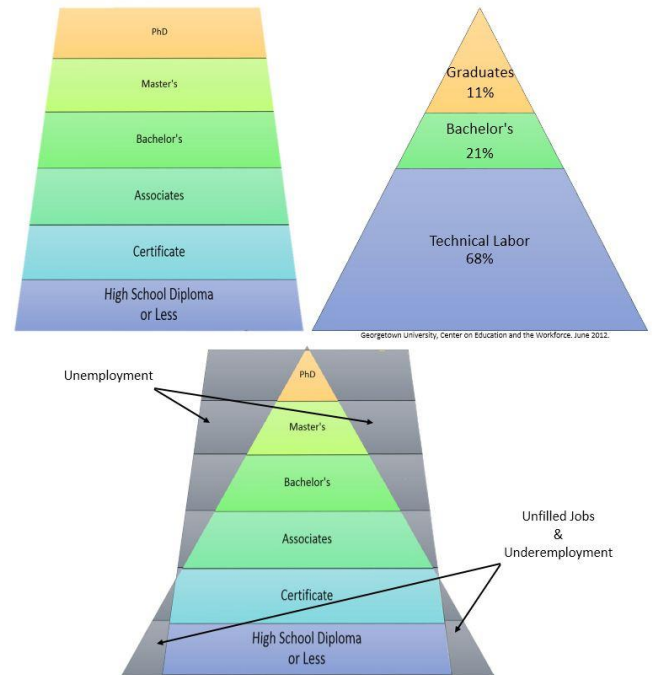


Figure 2 illustrates what happens when we as a society attempt to promote the importance or prominence of one type of

education over another and, in turn, increase the percent of the population obtaining that education.

Figure 2



A few interesting consequences of “pushing” more degrees not related to workplace needs:

- 1) Unemployment always increases, and it increases to a greater degree than underemployment.
- 2) Unemployment is a drain on the economy and on individuals—unemployment hurts all of us.
- 3) Underemployment directly impacts our personal wellbeing; and though it affects the economy in less tangible ways, underemployment certainly is a drain on the economy.
- 4) Both unemployment and underemployment have serious emotional consequences that affect all of society.

The common goal should be to provide a livable wage at every level and to match the abilities of the workforce to the needs of the workplace. Achieving this goal equates to a vibrant, thriving economy. This creates value

at each level and can then reward individuals for more effort, knowledge, and expertise. This in turn encourages individuals to continue along the path of training and education until they reach their full potential within the market. If upper levels of education are saturated, there is no tangible incentive or reward for success; and individuals who want or need to achieve more have no pathway to do so. Ultimately, this phenomenon leads to the old saying, "If everyone has a bachelor's degree, no one has a bachelor's degree."

Some key points for successfully aligning the triangles:

- 1) Exit and entrance points should exist all along the education triangle. There needs to be pathways that individuals can access to expand their potential when life changes happen, as they most surely will.
- 2) Education needs to be specific, relevant, and economically valuable. Education is no longer about learning how to learn or filling our mind with information—it is now about application. Today's youth can find anything on the internet. They know how to gain information but can't apply that information to a real-life situation. Learning is already taking place through exploration; now they need to learn how to apply all the information literally at their fingertips.
- 3) Education needs to be constantly and consistently flexible to meet the rapid technological advances and market demands of the workplace.

Thus, education needs a total transformation, not just a reformation. As one CEO of a large corporation said, "I'm tired of having students come to me with an attitude instead of a skill."

Currently education focuses on thinking and seems to lack relevant application. Yes, thinking is important, but integrated, directed, applied thinking is the need of our present economy. Educational "Red Tape" needs to be a thing of the past. A workforce's quick response to industry need is the key to a vibrant economy.

Educators can help students find their way through the ever changing mass of information with what I call the 4 E's of education:

1. Exemplify – live the principles you teach.
2. Energize – teaching is about movement and energy and enthusiasm.
3. Empower – unleash a student's possibilities and potential. Empower them with tools, resources, and creative application.
4. Encourage – inspire and encourage continually. This creates optimism, resilience, and resolve.

So, what does it take to "be somebody"? It takes directed thought, skillful application, and specific training. It takes careful observation of economic needs. And finally, it takes a reformation of attitude—attitude toward education and attitude toward work ethics. We need to recognize the value of each occupation by its integral part in the overall economy as well as its contribution to the economic and emotional wellbeing of each of us. We can no longer afford to view technical training as a consolation prize—it is the prize! Every worthy work is valuable and needed, and we need to train accordingly. We need to value each person for their contribution and potential. Being "somebody" has little to do with title, knowledge, or background and everything to do with contributing. "It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice."

# Thanks to Frank X Gordon School

**Student Essay By Wendy Pekara  
Maricopa County Adult Probation  
Phoenix, Arizona**

As a teenager, we always think the world is ours and that we have an unlimited supply of time to complete our education. A lot of us take for granted those years in life that we are required to go to school. Reality eventually smacks those of us who have taken it lightly right in the face. Many people choose to take different paths in life. Some go through the education system in the correct amount of years and graduate when they are "supposed" to. Others choose a different direction and end up not graduating. A lot of the people who choose the not graduating direction live to regret it. I was one of those people.

When I was in high school I decided that I'd rather rebel against my mom than do the right thing and attend class. The decisions I made in my senior year have always haunted me. I was supposed to graduate in 2003. With time gone by I learned that it's never too late to do things the right way. Choosing to go back to school is one of the best decisions I ever made in my life.

Once I had come upon the decision to go back to school, I had to figure out how to go about doing so. My husband and I did some research online to find a school that would be the right one to lead to my unfulfilled dream of graduating. After careful consideration, we decided Frank X Gordon was the school for me. Frank X Gordon is a school that prepares you for taking the GED exam.

I was nervous as I went to the registration for the school. At registration you are required to take five tests in science, math, reading, writing, and social studies. The tests help the instructors determine your skill level for each subject and allow them to know if you are ready to take the GED exam. Unfortunately, right at the start, I wasn't ready. I was very disappointed in knowing that my skill level wasn't quite where it needed to

be to take the GED exam immediately. It was right then and there, though, that I told myself I'm going to get the GED and nothing will stop me. At the end of the registration night, I was given all the information I needed about the school. Classes would be held from Monday to Wednesday. I was told that in order to pass the GED exam I would need a total of 2,250 points. Now that I had all the information, it was time for me to get to work.

At the beginning, the preparation classes weren't easy for me. I felt like I didn't remember anything I had previously learned in high school. It was overwhelming because I started thinking how am I going to re-learn all of this in a short amount of time in order to take the GED exam?! I went to classes each day they were held. I'd be there at 9:30 a.m., leave at 4:30 p.m. Then I'd go home and eat dinner with my husband and as soon as I was done eating, I was back looking over the school materials the rest of the evening. The majority of my evenings wouldn't end until 1 or 2 in the morning. I was dedicating myself to achieving this special goal. This process, my journey, lasted a total of 6 months. All my hard work and efforts paid off because on December 15th, 2013 I was given the news that I had passed the GED exam. I was finally going to get the high school diploma that had eluded me for 10 years.

I must confess that during my 6 month journey to the GED, I was very nervous, anxious, stressed, and scared out of my mind. There were times that I doubted myself, but I kept going thanks to the support of my teacher and the never ending love of my family, especially my husband. I knew I couldn't give up, even though there were times when I wanted to. After receiving my diploma, I felt extremely accomplished. I know having this diploma leads me to my next step in life. I'd like to get a college education.

I know none of this would be possible without Frank X Gordon School giving people the opportunity to complete their high school education and pass the GED exam. This school allows people to continue on with the rest of the goals they have set for their lives.



## THIS QUESTION IS FOR YOU

By Lindell W. Rhodes

In my February article, I asked (among other things): Schools seem to have inherited the mission of shaping individuals for the good of society... what should we do and why has the burden become a teacher's responsibility? AND as many teachers, psychologists, and sociologists hypothesize, we must implement new ways of improving the traditional classroom instruction. If we do not change our instructional practices, our society will be in great peril. We will not be able to keep a majority of our population in the classrooms or properly educate the few who remain in our schools.

One of our members L.D. Bullock responded.

Dear Mr. Rhodes:

I don't think that our society should be obligated to keep a majority of people in classrooms. I have known many students who didn't want to be in the classroom. Laws mandated their attendance. However, in the classroom they detracted from the learning environment for other students who wanted to be there. They behaved badly and achieved nothing for themselves.

I don't know what can be or should be done with unwilling students. They might have to find their own way to their future. Some might need to be free of the institutional setting and might have more success as a result. Most will probably do what they were going to do anyway without a formal education.

Back in the classroom, the remaining students will learn faster without the distraction of the misbehaving, unwilling students.

## GED Provides Additional Time for Math Reasoning

Letter from Randy Trask,  
President GED Testing Service

Dear Colleagues,

One of the many benefits of the 2014 GED® program and computer-based testing is our ability to access much more data and more quickly than ever before. This enables us to better analyze information including how long test-takers spend on each question, and, when needed, adjust parts of the program to more quickly respond to test-taker needs.

Based on our analysis of the first six weeks of testing, it has become clear that many test-takers require additional time on one subject test—Mathematical Reasoning. In order to ensure test-takers can fully demonstrate their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, we are adding time to the Mathematical Reasoning test.

As of Friday, February 21, 2014 the standard time allowance on the GED® test - Mathematical Reasoning will be increased by 25 minutes for a total time of 115 minutes.

### Important Notes About This Change:

- Test-taker fees will not change.
- Test-takers with existing math appointments will have their testing sessions automatically updated with the new time.
- Test-takers who have already taken the Mathematical Reasoning test are eligible for a free retake whether they have passed or not.
- The GED Ready™: The Official Practice Test (Mathematical Reasoning) time will increase as well. An additional 13 minutes will be added.

In addition to these items, there are more details available for GED Administrators™, testing centers, and test-takers to ensure that this adjustment happens smoothly. See the attached guide, Math Test Update Feb. 2014, for more details.

This analysis also revealed that GED Ready™: The Official Practice Test is a powerful and accurate predictor of student success on the GED® test. More than 95% of test-takers who scored in the “Likely to Pass” score range of GED Ready™ went on to pass that subject of the GED® test.

Please review the guide, Math Test Update Feb. 2014, and refer any questions about this update to your Program Manager. We are also scheduling two conference calls for GED Administrators™ on Friday, February 21 to answer any questions you may have. You will be receiving the invite for these calls shortly.

## I Could Not Fix the Brakes, So I Made the Horn Louder

**By Troy Christensen, Vice President  
Bridgerland Applied Technology College,  
Northern Utah Pathways Director,  
Motivational Speaker, and Consultant**

An elementary school teacher was teaching art to her six-year-old students. They were all busy drawing pictures. The teacher noticed that one girl, who normally didn't pay much attention in class, was extremely focused and completely absorbed in her drawing. This intrigued the teacher, and she made her way to the girl's desk to ask what she was drawing. Without looking up, the girl said, “I'm drawing a picture of God.”

Surprised, the teacher replied, “But nobody knows what God looks like.”

The girl responded, “They will in a minute.”

Children are not inhibited by adult insecurities and expectations. This confidence diminishes as we age, and consequently, as adults, we often don't connect with success or happiness. We may focus on immaterial concerns rather than

identifying an underlying problem. In other words, we improve the horn, but avoid fixing the brakes.

In education we have new programs, initiatives, and expectations thrust upon us continually. Such distractions can contribute to unhappiness and a lack of success. However, we can still achieve success despite distractions by following a few important principles. I call these principles the Ten Keys to Success and Happiness.

1. Perfect your communication
2. Set and live your standards
3. Have a clear and positive perspective
4. Learn to like work
5. Learn to be satisfied when the situation is such that you can't easily change it.
6. Learn to enjoy people
7. Say the cheerful, humorous thing
8. Have a hobby
9. Accept adversity as valuable
10. Meet your problems with decision

Space limitations in this article will not allow me to cover all ten steps, but I will comment briefly on the first three.

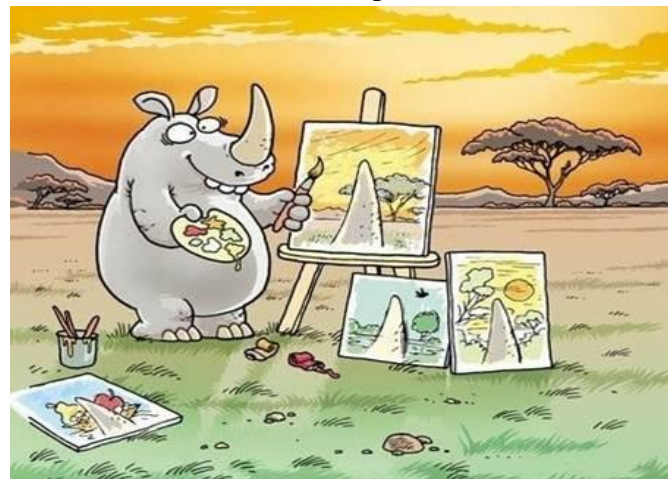
First, communication is an essential ingredient in everything we do. Every relationship is made better or worse by our communication skills. The Bible addresses this concept. James states that “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” He continues for several verses offering great insight into communication, but his main point is that communication skills are intrinsically tied to our own perfection, successful relationships, and happiness. One key element of great communication is listening. Listening increases our ability to be disciplined and caring. Steven Sample said, “The average person suffers from three delusions: (1) that he is a good driver, (2) that he has a good sense of humor, and (3) that he is a good listener.” We can all work on our ability to listen.

Second, by establishing standards for yourself, you establish purpose and meaning in your life. There are several methods to help people set standards. One method is to identify and follow what I call “Rules of the Day.” The following are a few examples from my personal “rules”: (1) Find someone doing something good or appropriate and

acknowledge it. This helps us see the good in people and society, and subsequently our happiness soars. (2) Express appreciation, written and verbal. This improves perspective. I am amazed at how a small thank-you note can touch hearts and lift both those who receive and those who write the note. (3) Be happy, smile, laugh, and joke. Appropriate humor makes life enjoyable, even during the roughest times. "Laughter is like changing a baby's diaper—it doesn't permanently solve the problem, but it makes things more acceptable for a while."

As I identify new things to incorporate into my life, I adjust my personal rules. Take time to think about "who" you want to be and how to get there through daily activities that create new behaviors. I also endorse the "Six-Second Rule." Simply put, if you have a correction, criticism, complaint or something negative to say, you have six seconds to do it. Plan your time well! Far too much time is spent "driving home" a point to make sure people understand what they did wrong, why it is wrong, and what needs to be corrected. We usually are all too aware when we have "messed up," and we don't need to have our mistakes belabored. Acknowledgment of a problem is needed and appropriate; however elongated shame creates animosity and discord. The six-second rule is the best way to create change, correct a problem, and build relationships.

Third, having a positive perspective changes how we see the world. The picture below illustrates



what I refer to as the "Rhino Principle." He is painting the beautiful things around him, but one distraction seems to take center stage in each piece

of art work. Sometimes we allow one aspect of our lives to dominate and distort our view and miss the beauty around us. We define ourselves by this "horn" and can't seem to get beyond it. Bad things happen. Don't let them take over and ruin your view. Keep an optimistic and positive perspective, and you'll see beyond the "horns" that could easily distort your view of the world.

The secret to happiness and success is that we are moving upward on our own pathway, not being pulled down a path by something or someone else. If we want to be happy, we need to take control of ourselves and move upward. We can fix the brakes and not just honk louder to compensate for distractions, insecurities, and unrealistic expectations. As we work on improving ourselves, we'll be happier, more successful, and better at finding the keys to enjoying relationships and life.

I have always appreciated the following anecdote: A woman stops to visit and share a small treat with another lady in her neighborhood. They have a delightful visit; and as the woman rises to leave, she says, "I shall come again, for I like myself when I am near you."

Ward Cleaver once told "the Beaver," "As you go through life, try to improve yourself instead of prove yourself." Improvement is the key to a successful and happy life. Lowes home improvement centers have it right with their slogan; "Never Stop Improving."

## Nevada Board Member

### Alan Pierce

Nevada is proud to introduce its newest board member, Alan Pierce, who will replace President Elect Kathleen Jameson's position on the MPAEA Board of Directors. Alan is an adult educator in corrections from central Nevada. His unique position in Correctional Education will be a welcome addition to our diverse board. He brings many years of experience to MPAEA. Please welcome Alan to MPAEA.

# Nevada Approves Multiple High School Equivalency Assessments for 2014

By Brad Deeds



Last October, the Nevada State Board of Education approved multiple High School Equivalency (HSE) assessments to be used throughout Nevada starting January 1, 2014. The new tests will provide the basis for awarding a Nevada Certificate of High School Equivalency by the Nevada Department of Education.

The Board voted to approve the new computer-based GED® as well as two alternative assessments, the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET™) from Educational Testing Services and the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC™) from CTB/McGraw-Hill, as Nevada's official HSE tests. The HiSET™ and TASC™ will allow for either computer- or paper-based testing. The new GED® test is offered only via computer outside of correctional facilities.

All three assessments cover the same content areas and allow test-takers to demonstrate proficiency in the academic skills expected by employers and postsecondary institutions. Successful completion of all three assessments will lead to the exact same Nevada state-issued HSE Certificate.

In order to ensure accessibility and affordability for all Nevada students, test centers must offer, at minimum, a paper- and a computer-based HSE assessment. Therefore, test centers offering the GED® must also offer the TASC and/or the HiSET™ to ensure student access to a paper-based testing option. Most Nevada test centers have elected to offer all three tests.

The HSE test centers, which include Nevada community colleges and school districts, agreed to a two-tiered pricing structure for HSE testing next

year: the cost of the GED® will be \$95, and the TASC™ and HiSET™ will both be priced at \$65.

Last year, over 4,000 Nevadans earned a state-issued Certificate of High School Equivalency, but Nevada still has nearly 300,000 adults without a high school diploma or its equivalent. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, those who have a high school credential earn \$181 more per week than those without. Additionally, Americans with a high school credential have an unemployment rate of 8.3%, compared with 12.4% for high school dropouts.

For more information on HSE testing in Nevada, please visit: <http://nvedu.org/17>

There are multiple pathways to your State of Nevada Certificate of High School Equivalency

## Journal of Adult Education

The Journal of Adult Education provides you, as practitioners and researchers in the field, the opportunity to share your experiences, knowledge, and skills with your peers across the region and around the country. I encourage you to consider putting your work in writing and sharing it with your colleagues. Submit the following:

- Submissions from practice
- Research manuscripts
- Book reviews

Click this link for publishing guidelines:

<https://www.mpaea.org/docs/JAEAAuthorGuidelines.pdf>

[Karen Kaminski, Ph.D.](#)

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# ENMU-ROSWELL INSTRUCTOR RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

An ENMU-Roswell Adult Basic Education (ABE) instructor, Nancy Alvarado, has been selected to receive the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award. Alvarado teaches English as a Second Language (ESL) and also serves as an instructor for the New Mexico Youth Challenge Academy. She is also an ENMU graduate. Alvarado will be honored at the upcoming COABE/Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education conference in Pittsburgh, PA on March 17 in front of a crowd of more than 3,000 attendees. "This is a very coveted and prestigious national award. She truly deserves this honor," said Hilda Pacheco-Peebles, ABE director. Pacheco-Peebles nominated Alvarado for the award. Alvarado received the Chaves County Teacher of Character Silver Award in 2009.

Nancy has always had a love for languages. Nancy's first language was English, but she has also had a burning desire planted deep within her to speak Spanish. As a young teenager, she started learning to speak Spanish from her friends, along with taking some Spanish classes, and practicing Spanish with her father (who spoke enough Spanish to communicate as he worked with workers in the fields.)

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Nancy found herself on welfare. She had five children, and knew that she would have to get an education to be able to provide for them. She started college, preparing to go into the field of early childhood education. As one of her electives, she decided to take a Spanish class. In that Spanish class, she found the passion that had almost burned out with the trials of life--the love of languages, and the fire inside her was ignited again. From that point on, Nancy determined that she had to work in a career where the Spanish language would be used, and not

only be used, but be used to change people's lives. She continued her education, received her bachelor's degree, and passed the Prueba, New Mexico's test for bilingual fluency.

As soon as Nancy graduated with her Associate's Degree, she came to the Adult Basic Education Department and begged for a job. There were no openings at the time, but Nancy wouldn't give up. She called every week to find out if someone had quit or a new position had opened. Week after week, we explained to her that there were no openings. Finally, one day after trying to explain to her that we didn't have an opening in ESL, Nancy called me and said, "Hilda, if you don't have a job for me, then I'm coming anyway. I am on my way back to your office, and I want to volunteer." That is just what she did. What do you do, if you can't get rid of someone, you eventually have to hire them. We were very impressed when we saw Nancy working with our ESL students, but we were even more impressed with her passion to help her students to learn. We hired her when the next opening became available, and neither we nor Nancy have ever looked back. Today, she is not only teaching Spanish speakers, but teaching English to students from all over the world. She has expanded her teaching to include reading and writing (her second love) for the GED®. In her most recent class of New Mexico Youth Challenge Cadets, 90% of her students passed their reading test, and 84% of her students passed their writing test.

Nancy says that next to her Lord, and her loved ones, her classroom is her joy. The number one rule in her classroom is that all stress, all problems, all negativity is left at the door. No one is ever allowed to say, "I can't." She values each and every one of her students. She has quoted over and over again the lesson that she learned from her college Spanish instructor who always said that many times people consider other people stupid, because they do not speak their language or have low literary skills, but that this is far from being true. Nancy realizes that each one of these students brings a multitude of intelligence and experiences to the classroom, but they are just not able to express or demonstrate them, YET!

In 2009, Nancy's student's nominated her for Teacher of Character, and she won the Silver Award. The Silver Award is given to only five teachers in the whole district, from Pre-K all the way through the college level. One of the young ladies who nominated Nancy was from Thailand. She has since returned to Thailand, but when she e-mails Nancy, she always starts her message out with, "Hi mama."

Nancy is also the SE representative for NMAEA-New Mexico Adult Education Association. Their vision is to fully support and represent the Adult Education community in New Mexico and to strengthen the statewide adult education community including students, practitioners, and interested supporters through advocacy, leadership, communication, collaboration, and mentoring. She has done a wonderful job representing New Mexico Adult Education.

Nancy's oldest daughter made the comment to her the other day that she didn't think that there was anyone who could really say that they enjoyed getting up and going to their job in the mornings. Nancy told her that she could. She said that she didn't ever think that she could have a job that was more rewarding than hers.



**Mountain Plains Adult Education Association**  
**2014 Conference • April 28-30**  
**Preconference April 27**  
**Eldorado Hotel & Spa • Santa Fe, New Mexico**

<b>SCHEDULED PRESENTERS INCLUDE</b>	Literacy Information and Communication System (LINC5) National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs (NAASLN) National College Transition Network U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE)	
<b>TRACK THEMES INCLUDE</b>	Adult Education Advocacy College & Career Readiness Instruction/Implementation College Transition/Career Pathways Distance Learning	English as a Second Language Serving Native American Populations Technology in the Classroom Testing (BEST, GED, HiSET, TASC, WorkKeys, etc.) Workforce Development & Training (including I-BEST)

**Conference Links:**  
[Preconference Schedule](#)  
[Concurrent Sessions](#)  
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Registration now open at [mpaea.org](http://mpaea.org)

