Letter from the President

Dear MPAEA Members,

I want to say hello and welcome everyone to MPAEA. We just finished a very successful conference in beautiful Boise, Idaho this past April. We were so fortunate to have wonderful presenters, vendors and of course attendees. It was my pleasure to work with everyone and get to meet some new friends. Thank you for presenting, sponsoring and attending.

As the new president for MPAEA this year I will be looking forward to working with everyone to continue to help our organization grow and assist our state members with their continued successes. It is such a wonderful opportunity to share lifelong learning experiences with one another. The different components to adult education is far reaching and always changing.

I would like to invite the board members to contemplate on which committee you might like to participate or even chair. When we work together, our results are phenomenal. Let’s share our talents and provide opportunities of growth and development for our individual states, members and our regional organization.

I look forward to seeing you again at the summer board meeting in beautiful Salt Lake City July 27 and 28, 2016. The meeting will be at the Radisson Hotel Salt Lake City Downtown. The rooms are $154 per night.

Sincerely,

Dianne E. Jolovich, MTD, MPAEA
President

MONTANA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE:

SUZETTE FLETCHER
Boise River Science, Engineering, and Water-Learn, Go Outside and Experience  
Session Leader: Kevin Laughlin

The session room was the beautiful Boise River. The session presenters were engineers and experts in their field. I decided to attend this session to learn more about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) in action. The format was intriguing. And I was not disappointed. This was experiential learning at its best.

The rather cold and blustery day did not take away from the entire experience. It started with an overview of the critical role that the Boise River plays in the economy of the state of Idaho. It is used as a critical water source for irrigation for nearby farms and businesses. The engineers then proceeded to explain how they use math, science, and technology to maximize the use of the water such that they were able to create a waterpark that provides recreation to the city of Boise without taking any water away from the river. The whole concept preservess the integrity of water rights while at the same time, provides a source of recreation not just for the city, but for water wave enthusiasts all over the world. I learned about wave design, how the expansion and depression of the water bladders can shape the waves being produced. One type of wave is suitable for kayak runners while another type was more suitable for surfers. This provides a safer venue for the wave runners to practice their skills. I didn’t even realize that the waves could be controlled in such a manner. It was truly a marvel of the forces of technology and math at work.

Next, I learned about the overall design of the Esther Simplot Water Park that is slated to open August of this year. The design incorporates the contours and the dynamics of the river into its overall planning and will provide a haven for Boise residents in the summer.

The next phase of the session was the kayaking experience. First, I was given a short orientation on water safety, correct paddling, and the best way to board the kayak. Then it was off to the water, as we launched the kayaks into Esther’s Pond. There were seven participants in the session. We were the first pioneers in this venture as the city is investigating the feasibility of various recreational opportunities in the future park.

Paddling out there in the pond was a wonderful culmination of this session. It allowed me to experience nature first hand, to get some needed exercise, and to learn new concepts. As an educator, it was important for me to realize the importance of providing other venues for my students. Learning happens not just inside the four walls of a classroom but in other venues as well. This venue of learning was quite effective as it truly engaged the mental as well as the physical side of learning.

This was such an interesting session. Having an Experiential Track in the conference gave the MPAEA conference a unique flavor that is distinct from any other conference I have ever attended. I am so glad that I was able to be part of this experience.

I have attended other conference sessions since the river session. They were amazing and edifying sessions. However, my most vivid memory is my conference on the river. It was a first-hand experience with STEM and nature that I will remember for a long time. Now, my challenge as an educator is to find and implement opportunities like these for my students so that they can benefit from experiential learning. I don’t have the benefit of this wild and beautiful Boise River. But I have our beautiful Arizona desert to convert into a learning lab. Thanks to MPAEA and Kevin Laughlin for organizing this session, the conference, and for providing this model of learning.

Submitted by: Lily Beth Brazones, MPAEA member, Arizona
Doug served two terms in the California Department of Corrections for drug related charges. He began to change his life at the Idaho Correctional Institution-Orofino by preparing for and passing the GED® tests. He continued on this path of change at the Idaho State Correctional Institution by attending continuing education classes. Upon his release from prison, Doug began the long, arduous task of pursuing higher education by attending Boise State University as a non-traditional student. He received both a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in Material Science and Engineering.

After serving his terms, Doug returned to the Idaho prison system to speak to inmates about life and education after prison. He has been an invited guest at the Idaho State Capitol to share his experiences as they relate to substance abuse, incarceration, and the educational needs of those within the prison system and on parole. His story is dramatic and relatable to inmates preparing for release. Doug has given hope and inspiration to many inmates and has provided insight into the system for professional groups and state legislatures.

His consideration for inmates has impacted others personally; his efforts to continue his own education, to educate the public, and to advocate for services have prompted Idaho to select him as the MPAEA Learner of the Year.
The “ADD Brain”
Organization and Implementation
Strategies that Work
Session Leader: Mrs. Heather Erickson
Bridgerland Applied Technology College in Utah

The presentation was about understanding the pain and frustration involved for individuals struggling with learning or behavior issues due to Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

Some of the challenges that people with ADD go through include:

- Failure to pay attention to details
- Unable to keep attention on tasks
- Inability to finish tasks or follow instructions
- Having trouble organizing activities
- Avoiding things that require long periods of mental effort
- Losing things or misplacing them
- Being easily distracted
- Forgetting things in daily activities

The presenter used her own personal story to introduce the subject. She compared her brain to a fast-moving, non-stoppable car, the Ferrari. Through counseling, consultations, and research she realized that in order for her to survive this “Ferrari”, she must replace it with her own reliable “machine” that she could stop at any time. She recognized her disability and struggled to overcome it. She became an organizer, dividing her time into sections and organizing her daily activities based on the sections she created. By doing this, she became more confident in her abilities; she gained her self-esteem back. She is now prepared to work harder and accepts failure as part of the process.

As a result of her lecture, I became more aware and better understand how the “ADD Brain” works. I can apply her strategies with my students who have ADD. Her analogy was impressive and comprehensible to me. I would recommend this training to anyone interested in learning how ADD affects the brain and affects behavior, as it was an eye-opening learning experience for me that I can apply to my work with students.

Submitted by Mina Ghorbani, MPAEA Member, Nevada
Motivating Incarcerated Students

This year I will be completing my 10th year as a secondary education teacher and my 6th year as an adult educator. After working for 30 years in the Information Technology field, I decided that I needed to change my focus to a career that would make a difference in the lives of those I worked with.

I received a scholarship from the Troops to Teachers program that was created through the Veteran’s Administration allowing me to go back to college to earn my teaching degree. After receiving my credentials, I had to find a teaching position. I thought that this process would be easy, but it was very difficult with many doors to try to enter to even get a job interview. A week before school started, I was able to secure a position at Brighton High School teaching electronics and basic mathematics.

After four years working with high school students, I felt I could still do more. An opening at South Park Academy at the Utah State Prison opened up and a friend who worked there encouraged me to apply. I was hired soon after my second interview.

The student body is a very different dynamic than your regular high school class. The ages of the inmate students range from 17 to 70, many having dropped out of school at an early age. They have been told that they will never graduate or have a chance of bettering their situation. Part of the rehabilitation is to complete their mapping. This could be life skills class, or to complete either a GED or a high school education. Utah is one of the few states in the Intermountain West that offers a High School diploma.

The biggest hurdle I have found is convincing the students that they can do the work. You have to be positive and cheerful every day. You have to be flexible working with the ongoing gang conflicts and constant lock downs. You have to love what you do as an educator. To motivate, you have to coach and coddle and encourage. I try to learn each student’s first name as quickly as possible. I never refer to them as inmate, but as Joe, or Bob.

We also have to work with special needs students who have struggled with learning all of their lives. For those students who have trouble reading, I enroll them in a Reading Horizon program to help get them to a proper reading level so they can do high school work. We also have the challenge of instructing ELL students, some who never attended a formal school. Students who have a limited English speaking ability all deserve to be taught.

This past year, our focus was to get all of our students a level gain in the TABE testing areas of Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics. Most of this year’s graduates are at a High School level 1 or 2. As a faculty, we feel we have helped our students obtain a sense of accomplishment in knowing that they can do the work they thought was impossible. When a student receives a level gain in their weakest TABE score, they are rewarded with a candy bar. Our former principal, Dr. Lory Curtis helped make this simple reward possible with the warden’s permission. They want to earn that candy bar!

Another reward we have incorporated is a movie showing for those students with an 85% or higher attendance level. This has slowly helped bring our attendance levels up.
Motivating the Incarcerated (Continued....)

Our state legislature passed a bill allowing early release for certain accomplishments in their mapping. High School graduation or a GED will remove four months from their sentence. Many of my students have young families, and want to do whatever it will take to make their stay at UDC as short as possible.

My six years as an adult educator has been life-changing. I have grown to love and cherish my time instructing these men and helping them on the way to achieving a goal they never thought was possible. At graduation, I am able to meet many of their families and tell them how much their loved one has accomplished. The students have taught me humility and made me appreciate what freedom means.

Our prison will be moving in the next four years. I am not sure what that will mean for our high school classes. South Park Academy will no longer exist as it is now. I am honored to have been a part of its wonderful history of serving our inmate population.

Submitted by Paul G. Braman, MPAEA Board Member Utah
Dealing with Millennial Students and Beyond

You may have heard instructors talking about how students have changed from the students in their early years of teaching. They may have positive or negative statements about the characteristics of today’s students. You may have heard these students referred to as “millennials”. You might ask, “What do they mean by “millennial” students and how do these student fit into the educational framework in general?”

Millennial students are put into a category by the decade they were born, much like the baby boomers were in a group. Depending on which graph you look at, there are several different classification charts to represent these decades of students. Those born within the time frame of 1900 -1945 are known as “traditionalist”; 1946-1964 are the baby boomers; 1965-1980 are the generation X; 1981-2000 are generation Y or millennials. These different generations were influenced by the events that occurred during their youth and factors that shaped their educational background. The affluence of parents, technology advancements, and strong economic growth had lasting effects on how students view education and career building skills.

So, let’s assume that you are an instructor who is dealing with millennials. How do you change your curriculum and presentation to engage them in the educational process? Millennial students grew up with technology and computers. The cell phone is a link to their very existence. The following is a list of some changes that may enlist more responses from students and help them to be more successful in the educational path they have chosen.

- Try to insert technology into what you are teaching. Use the internet as a resource for research and discussion. Make sure students understand that just because it is on the web, it does not make it true. You may also need to teach them how to document the validity when using these types of resources. Photoshop can change what is posted and some of it is very well done.

- Millennials believe that “doing” is more important than “knowing”. Give them many hands-on experiences that will apply to your curriculum. You may need to be creative as you think about what to “do” or “apply” with the concepts you teach.

- Millennials don’t value accumulating knowledge for knowledge sake. They want to know what to do with the knowledge. What you know is not as important as what you can do.

- Instructors need to demonstrate to students that they have “real” experience in the area they teach. If you teach science, you need to demonstrate your skills completing lab projects or relating experiences you have had in your field. Just verbally giving content will not engage students for long.

- Millennial students use “Nintendo logic”. This means that you don’t read directions, but just jump in and experiment until you find a solution. This is just like interacting with the Mario Brothers without directions except for the basics of turn it on and move. They believe that there are multiple outcomes to a problem.
Millennial Students and Beyond (Continued....)

- Millennial students are multitaskers and want to do many things while trying to study. Give them variety and try to structure study time in small chunks. This could be a set study time each day for 15 minutes. However, they can’t skip days; it means EVERY DAY.
- Millennials do not like delays. If they email or text you, they want a response back quickly; not the next time you are in your office. This may not work for your schedule, so tell them in advance how and when you will respond.
- Most students like to have a friendly rapport with their instructors. This is also true of millennial students, but they may think of you as a friend instead of just a friendly instructor. It is important to keep a clear line between friend and instructor while they are in your class. Millennials are much more relaxed in the way they interact with people and authority figures. You should keep your Facebook and web presence as personal information and not open to students. It becomes very hard to fail or discipline a friend.

Millenials may prove to be a challenge to your typical methods of instruction. They can also challenge you to step out of your comfort zone and use a more creative approach in your instructional methods. Education is all about changing the framework in which you are currently comfortable. Everything we learn, see or hear alters and enriches the brain connections and memories we retain. There are few experiences in life that offer a greater reward than being a good teacher or learning from a good teacher.

Submitted by By Dr. Sharee Anderson

IDAHO AWARD OF EXCELLENCE:
MELODY CLEGG
Take-Aways from Boise

The Mountain Plains Adult Education Association put on a wonderful conference in Boise, Idaho in April this year.

With our growing uncertainty about the mandates of WIOA and how it will impact the way we conduct the business of Adult Education, it is helpful to understand some of the economic issues facing us nationally and the intentions of the US Departments of Labor and Education in implementing the act. A number of conference speakers helped us to understand these issues.

Keynote speakers, Craig Shaul and Bob Uhlenkott from the Idaho Department of Labor, presented us with numbers warning us that the look of jobs over the course of the 21st century is vastly changing. Over forty-seven percent of jobs today will be able to be automated in the next 20 years. White House economists presented this forecast to congress: there is an 83% chance that workers earning less than $20 per hour today will lose their jobs to robots. Robots and computers will do many tasks now done by humans in next 50 years.

Low wage earners will see stagnant wages, decreasing job opportunities and higher education costs if they wish to obtain additional credentials to pursue better-paying jobs. Our society will be characterized by an even wider gap between rich and poor. The Pew Research Center in surveying experts said that they are concerned that the rise in technology “will lead to vast increases in income inequality, masses of people who are effectively unemployable, and breakdowns in the social order.”

Shaul and Uhlenkott furthermore told us that the hottest jobs are abundant, fast growing, and well paying, but will require new skills. We will need a much more digitally enabled workforce. More jobs are showing up in service because of our ageing population: health, retail trade, leisure/hospitality, professional and business services. Jobs in the service sector today are at 60%, up from 36% in 1960.

The new taskforce will need more of what educators call soft-skills: interpersonal capabilities, creativity, and emotional intelligence. The successful middle skill worker will train for competencies that are a combination of technological and human skills.

Mitch Rosin from Aztect spoke about the changing global job market in his presentation, “Developing Human Capital in the Age of WIOA.” In 1950, 80% of jobs were unskilled. Jumping forward to 2010, we saw a flip showing that 85% of jobs were skilled. Today, over 61% of employers say it is difficult to find qualified workers to fill their vacancies. The result of this worker shortage and skills gap has and will have a severe economic impact if it is not addressed.

Our current K-12 educational system is not in a position to help turn these numbers around. Rosin’s data show that 1.2 million high school students are dropping out each year. That is 6,800 students every day.

Rosin gave us alarming data regarding the changing relative place of the US in the world economic market: from 1980 to 2011, China increased its share of the world economic output from 2% to 14%; India from 2.5 % to 5.7%; and the US fell from 25% to 19%. At the same time our percentage of the world’s college graduates has been declining.

**Rosin gave us “food for thought” from the concerns of economists:**

“John Russo, of the Ultra Scientific Analytical Solutions, can’t fill job openings in a state where the jobless rate is close to 11%. Of applicants, he says, ‘I honestly think there’s a large swath of unemployable. They don’t have any skills at all.’”
Boise Take-Aways (Continued…)

Keith Stokes, Executive Director of Rhode Island Economic Development, says, “We held on to...low-wage, low-skilled industries for too long, and we didn’t make the strategic long-term investments in education.”

Penny Prizker, a Chicago business executive who is advisory board chair of the Aspen Institute’s skills gap campaign, tells us, “If we don’t address this skills problem, American businesses will lack the world-class workforce needed to compete at the global level.”

Cheryl Keenan visited the conference from the Division of Adult Education and Literacy, US Dept. of Education. She addressed the economic problems from a national education perspective.

Cheryl talked about the findings of the PIAAC study by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in 2013 comparing the US with other developed nations. The fact is that the US is falling behind the rest of the developed world. According to the data for 16 to 65 year olds, 1 in 6 adults scores low in literacy, and 1 in 3 adults in this country is low in numeracy. The World Education Organization ranked the US number 21 in numeracy and 16 in literacy out of 24 countries in assessment of adult skills.

At this time, two-thirds of our low-literacy adults are employed, but we know that 60,000 working adults are making less than $16,000 a year. She also sees the skills gaps, “There are plenty of job openings, but not enough skilled people to fill them”. These impacts on the economy, poverty, health, and crime are severe, especially for our Adult Education population.

With these issues in mind, Keenan turned our attention to WIOA. She told us that Adult Education teachers will be an important part of the solution. AE teachers are the experts in remediation. AE teachers are special and are committed to students. Our new College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) are ready to push students beyond high school equivalency levels. AE teachers will need to raise levels of academic instruction so that all students will have access to the preparation they need to enter credit-bearing courses without a need for remediation.

But basic skills can no longer be taught in isolation. We need to turn our focus to critical thinking, digital literacy and self-management skills. Instruction will look like it has never looked before with flipped classrooms, contextualized instruction, concurrent and integrated academic skills and career technical instruction, and a broader use of technology including smart phones and open educational resources. WIOA is upon us with the expressed purpose to “better align the workforce system with education and economic development in an effort to create a collective response to economic and labor market challenges on the national, state, and local levels.” It is now important to help our AE teachers with the support they will need to make the response expected of them.

Submitted by Karen Linquist, MPAEA Member, New Mexico
Call for Submissions - Journal of Adult Education
Karen Kaminski, Ph.D. Editor

The Journal of Adult Education is a refereed journal intended to serve as a voice for the translation of theory into practice. Mountain Plains Adult Education Association (MPAEA) is a professional association dedicated to the application of theory to practice in the learning-teaching transaction for adults. Authors are encouraged to submit clearly written research articles, technique manuscripts, and book reviews which have the potential of stimulating thought, discussion, and inquiry.

The Journal of Adult Education accepts submissions in the following categories:
Research Articles. Address concepts, theories, and research findings of particular interest and significance to adult education professionals.
Technique Articles. Describe examples of innovative practice and procedures in relationship to recognized principles of adult education research and practice.
Book Reviews. Describe the content of a book, evaluate the book’s success in accomplishing the intended purpose, and give a recommendation based on the book’s relevance and benefits to adult education professionals.

Access full guidelines for submission: [https://www.mpaea.org/?page=publications](https://www.mpaea.org/?page=publications)

MPAEA/ILLA 2016 Conference

The Idaho Lifelong Learning Association is to be fiercely congratulated for their outstanding work on this year’s conference. I was impressed by the depth of content and the diversity of presentations. While I benefit greatly from attending my own state conferences, travelling out-of-state always exposes me to a broader range of practices and information. We can learn from the struggles and solutions of other states – for example, Colorado has now adopted the HiSET and the TASC in addition to the GED®. We don’t have to reinvent the wheel; we can look to our colleagues. Meeting teachers, directors, and learners from across the nine-state MPAEA region is so valuable. We all work to support the development of an evolving workforce and a changing demographic in a region that is large and dynamic, complete with urban centers and small, rural communities. Our environments are just as diverse – community colleges, libraries, community-based organizations, jails and departments of correction, to name a few.

Something I loved about the Boise conference was the variety of speakers. We heard from representatives from the Idaho Department of Labor, the College of Southern Idaho, the Idaho Dept. of Corrections, the US Department of Education, the University of Idaho, and the University of New Mexico. Their theme of responding to data intentionally and creatively gave me a positive outlook on the changes we face in our field. With information, we gain the knowledge we need to re-orient, refresh, and regenerate in order to keep providing excellent and relevant service to our learners. Thanks, ILLA & MPAEA! See you in Salt Lake City, 2017.

Submitted by Karen Bowen, MEd, MFA, Colorado Board Member
Legislator of the Year Award – Lance Clow

Lance Clow has served as the Idaho State Representative for District 24, Twin Falls, Idaho, since 2012 – present. During his tenure, Lance has received several gubernatorial appointments and serves on the following boards: Idaho Public Transportation Advisory Board, ESPA Comprehensive Aquifer Planning Committee, and 5th District Magistrate Commission. After advancing his leadership from the Twin Falls City Council to the Idaho House of Representatives, he continues to find that hard work and study are needed to assure that his district is properly represented. He realizes that these are values and habits necessary to assure that he does NOT fail to be prepared for the new challenges of the legislature.

His areas of Emphasis are:

- **Education** – Providing lifetime educational opportunities for future generations is a proven public expectation and a state mandate.
- **Economy** – Jobs and financial security depend on a strong economy through private investment with a fair and balanced tax policy.
- **Expectation** – Citizens have an expectation that their representative will consider the intended as well as the unintended consequences of legislation.

Lance also served as a Councilman and Mayor for 24 years, worked as a banker in the areas of lending, marketing, and consumer compliance for 20 years; and as a personal Financial Advisor for 19 years. Lance gives credit to his parents for never letting go of their vision that their two boys would go to college. They taught him respect for the importance of hard work and study. Lance takes pride in the fact that by working his way through college, he earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics from California Lutheran University in 1969 and achieved several academic honors.

Lance Clow is a fine example of a legislator who will continue his lifelong learning, as well as provide lifetime educational opportunities for future generations and assure that it remains a public expectation.