

Beginning ABE Group:

1 facilitator, 6 participants (2 left early)

Major issues the group wanted to discuss: computer programs, math curriculum availability, lack of practice time outside of class, learning disabilities.

Computer Programs:

- Read Naturally: used with great success. Four components of reading (alphabetic, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary). Must be purchased. Works well with ABE and ELL. ([readnaturally.com](http://readnaturally.com))
- Rosetta Stone: used by several teachers. Problem: broken disk replacement. ([rosettastone.com](http://rosettastone.com))
- Lexia Strategies for Older Students (SOS): especially good for alphabetic.  
(<http://www.lexialearning.com/products/strategiesolderstudents.php>)
- Marshall Adult Education: website with stories for fluency, comprehension, vocabulary. Can be printed out. Many levels.  
(<http://www.marshalladulthoodeducation.org/> - click on reading skills for today's adults)
- Passkey: many areas of study, goes lower, quite work-intensive for the teacher. Have to pass, fail, reassign students frequently.
- Lifetime Library: excellent program, but difficult for the lower level.
- Thoughts on computer programs:
  - Students may "kill time" on computers; programs like Read Naturally and SOS can keep them on track. Teachers can track their progress easily.
  - Lack of online usage for students in corrections. They are starting to make online testing available. Perhaps this will extend.
  - SMARTBoards are being introduced, but without the internet they are not as useful as they could be.
  - Thoughts on computers and low level math: computer can be too distracting.
- Thoughts on computer skills vs. other skills: computer skills need to be worked on for any employment.

Soft Skills

- Extremely important for life, jobs, etc.
- Phillip Roy curriculum is a good resource.  
(<http://philliprooy.com/product.asp?ProdID=29&CatName=ADDITIONAL%20LIFE%20SKILLS%20MATERIALS> ????)

Specific Challenges/Thoughts from Corrections

- Can't get hours for soft skills classes.
- Need more licensed teachers.
- Tutor offenders can be very good long-term tutors, especially if they are serving a lifetime sentence.

Thoughts on Learning Disabilities/Retention:

- Hard to tell if students have a learning disability, a language transfer problem, "fried" brains from alcohol or drugs, or some other barrier to reading. Repetition seems to be the key.
- Progress is a big concern in this group, especially for non-corrections teachers.
- Some test-specific resources that have worked well.
  - MLC: Reading for Life. Downloadable here:  
[http://www.themlc.org/Reading\\_for\\_Life\\_Lessons3.html](http://www.themlc.org/Reading_for_Life_Lessons3.html)
  - Reading Basics (Contemporary): connected to the TABE
- Persistence/Population: seem to be a smaller number of native speakers in these classes – where are they? ELLs sometimes seem more eager to persist. Attendance contracts have helped to some extent, though in corrections, students may disappear for a period of time if they get in trouble. One site has a volunteer-led life skills class for those who cannot make progress in the two-year period. Corrections has the task of motivating students to persist after they get out of prison – hard to compete with need for jobs.

Key needs identified:

1. Internet availability in corrections – even if it is just a couple of educational sites.
2. Longer classes, more class time.
3. Low level, adult focused curriculum.
4. Math curriculum designed around very low reading ability.

Special thanks to Gayle for being the notetaker!!

Other promised resources:

Longman Press (or Pearson): True Stories series – Sandra Heyer  
Pearson ESL: What a World!, What a Life! – Milada Broukal