

Mat-Su Learner



Mat-Su Regional Adult Basic Education

- * Study for the GED
- * Learn English (ESL)
- * Prepare for College and Career



Nine Star Education &
Employment Services
"Developing Alaska's Workforce"

Located in the
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Hard Work and Citizenship



Congratulations to Isaac, who passed his naturalization test this week! Isaac has been working so hard building a drywall business for the past ten years that he's had little time to devote to English studies. He can text back and forth with clients and coworkers just fine, but the citizenship test requires writing full, grammatical sentences about U.S. civics. When he joined our program, Isaac immediately dove into his studies, sacrificing work hours to prioritize learning. He went through the citizenship study materials twice, practicing his writing and memorizing political and historical facts that the average Joe might not even know.

Writing was the biggest challenge: Isaac hadn't had the opportunity to go beyond elementary school in Mexico, so written literacy in English was more than a matter of translation. Adult education and literacy programs are the prime resource for adults who need to fill in these kinds of gaps. As Isaac's example shows, our services can immediately empower.

Isaac came to the U.S. ten years ago and worked long hours in restaurants for several years to support his family. When house and apartment construction started to boom in Eagle River and Wasilla, Isaac told a friend who was out of work in Utah to come up and take advantage of the labor shortage. He lent his friend the money to relocate, and when a job ran short on workers, Isaac filled in—mostly to ensure the recoup of his loan!

He soon made connections in construction, apprenticed for a few years, and started taking his own jobs under the union, hiring out labor as a subcontractor. Isaac has now built his own house in Wasilla with all the special touches and updates he learned about through his career.

It's a long road to citizenship in the U.S. for someone without privilege. Isaac sets a strong example of how hard work, patience, and study can lead to life-changing rewards. --JB

The Instructor's Reflection...

The Essential Role of Adult Education

50 years ago the Adult Education Act of 1966 passed Congress leading to today's national network providing education and literacy service to over 2.5 million American adult learners annually. This act gave adults a second chance to raise their literacy skills and continue their education beyond high school because that was deemed to be in the national interest.

Adult education bills had been intermittently introduced in Congress beginning in 1918, since the demands of World War I revealed how poorly prepared for military service many recruits were, but none passed until the era of civil rights. At a time in our history when "literacy tests" were sometimes employed to limit access to the ballot box for black Americans, ABE became a civil rights tool in teaching many how to pass those tests.

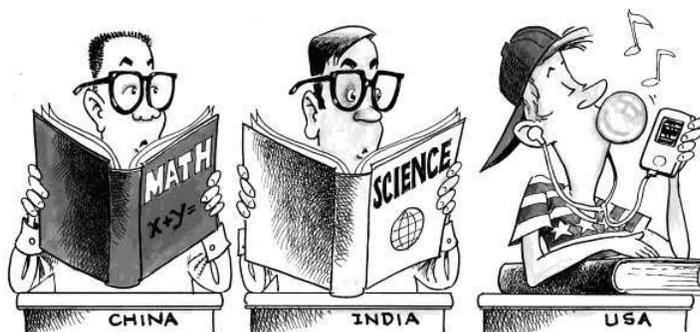
By the end of 1964 several political developments made it conceivable that adult education, with its anti-poverty focus, could at last get attention on Capitol Hill. A special task force report, "One-Third of a Nation" brought new attention to the critical connections between low literacy, national security, and poverty rates. With passage of the historic Voting Rights Act of 1964, state literacy tests to thwart voting by Blacks declined and ultimately disappeared.

On March 1, 1966 ABE was established in the U.S. Office of Education. It was the foundation of an educational service that continues to be urgently needed: "Research shows that today 93 million Americans over age 16 lack the literacy and skill levels needed to function effectively in a globally competitive, economically challenging world."¹

At a time when politicians regularly cite American decline in both national (NAEP) and international (PISA) K – 12 test scores, adult education can help address failed public school outcomes and create bridges to high school graduate equivalency, and to post-secondary career pathways.

--Donn Liston, M.Ed

Study habits...



¹ Samuel Haperin, Senior Fellow & Founder, American youth Policy Forum:
http://www.naepdc.org/news_views_clues/2014/halperinabe40th.pdf