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ABSTRACT

This document consists of a booklet describing the Captured Wisdom project and transcripts of videos from the two CD-ROM disks. The booklet details how to get the most from the CD-ROMs with suggestions directed toward teachers, professional development providers, and administrators. Six Captured Wisdom learning sites are listed. The Captured Wisdom CD-ROMs present videos profiling seven innovative projects featuring successful practices that integrate technology into adult education instruction. The CD-ROMs also include the following information for each program: goals; content; learning issues; instructional activities; products and assessments; and resources. The target audiences of the individual projects include adult literacy students, speakers of English as a second language, and adult learners in General Educational Development programs. Transcripts of student and teacher interactions on the videos of "The Antarctica Project," "Home Countries," "The Mars Project," "The Restaurant Problem," "Intrepid Tales," "Creating Family Histories," and "Presenting the Whole Package" projects are included. (MN/CG)

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**Captured Wisdom™:
Integrating Technology into Adult Literacy Instruction.
[Booklet and CD-ROM Transcripts]**

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Captured Wisdom™

**Integrating
Technology
Into Adult
Literacy
Instruction**

3



Adult Literacy

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Captured Wisdom™:

Integrating Technology Into Adult Literacy Instruction

By Lynda Ginsburg and Jennifer Elmore

Introduction

Captured Wisdom is an interactive resource that informs educators about successful practices of integrating technology into adult education instruction. Innovative, replicable activities are shown, described, and discussed by front-line classroom educators and learners so that other teachers feel they have actually visited the class and chatted directly with the learners and teacher about their work together.

Adult educators often do not have rich informal opportunities to learn from one another and to share questions about teaching-related issues. “Student teaching” is a luxury not found in adult education, and, with part-time schedules and off-site classes, it is rare that teachers can arrange opportunities to visit colleagues’ classrooms and watch what’s going on.

This situation is of particular concern when considering the issue of technology because teachers cannot fall back on well-developed models from their own learning experiences. They may need support to effectively incorporate technologies into their instructional activities so as to enhance the quality of

struction while giving learners an opportunity to master the technology skills that are essential in our changing world.

What Is “Captured Wisdom”?

Captured Wisdom documents the ways educators and learners actually use technology in their classrooms as a tool to support instruction and learning in a variety of content areas. When used as a vehicle for professional development, *Captured Wisdom* is especially useful for stimulating teachers to think about the approaches of other teachers and the ways they might adapt what they see and hear for their own education contexts, learners, equipment, and curricular and instructional goals and plans.

Featured teachers were selected from recommendations garnered from postings on adult literacy e-mail lists, state literacy directors, presenters at conferences, and through word of mouth. We have attempted to provide variety in the kinds of activities shown, technologies used, and instructional content.

To develop the *Captured Wisdom* stories, we videotaped teachers and learners describing and demonstrating how they use technology in classroom projects. We then showed the videotaped segments to focus groups of adult educators. These educators wrote down questions they wanted to ask the teachers. They felt the answers to these questions would prepare them to use activities in their own classrooms. We grouped their questions into convenient categories—such as Instructional Activities, Classroom Management, Assessment, and

Technical Issues—and sent them to the teachers featured in the segments. Their responses were recorded and are included as companion segments on the CD-ROM. This development process ensures that the implementation needs and concerns of real teachers in real adult education programs are addressed.

The model for *Captured Wisdom* was developed by the North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL) for K-12 teachers and was extended to address the needs of adult literacy instruction by the National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL) under the North Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium (NCRTEC) project. Disseminated in videotape and CD-ROM formats, *Captured Wisdom* provides the adult education community with inspiration and insight into what technology can accomplish.

Getting the Most From *Captured Wisdom*

Adult education teachers, providers of professional development, and program administrators can use the *Captured Wisdom* CD-ROMs for multiple purposes. The educators and learners featured in *Captured Wisdom* provide inspiration, information, and guidance to enrich instruction and learning both with and without technology. Those who are just beginning to think about integrating technology into adult learning settings and those who use technology daily for educational purposes may well find that they are motivated by the enthusiasm, accomplishments, and wisdom captured in these stories.



Teachers can use *Captured Wisdom* as a part of their instructional planning and preparation to:

- *Discover new ideas for technology-rich classroom projects that have been successful with adult learners.* Teachers are always looking for creative ways to help learners achieve their personal and educational goals. Ideas that may be effective in K-12 environments often are difficult to translate into meaningful activities for adult learners or for the variety of adult education settings. *Captured Wisdom* provides more than short, written summaries of successful activities; the video stories and commentary inform and provide a sense of what both instructors and learners are doing during the projects.
- *Get answers to questions about how to implement a particular project from a teacher who has actually done the project with adult learners.* Once a teacher decides to use a particular activity with learners, he or she may feel unsure about where to start, how to adapt the project for particular learners, what preliminary activities are helpful, how to manage the classroom activities, what technology resources are necessary, and so forth. Teachers can find the answers to many of their questions by searching the questions and responses that accompany each *Captured Wisdom* story.

- **Facilitate collaboration among teachers to arrange multiclass learning projects.** Technology supports opportunities for teachers and learners to communicate and collaborate on projects with others in nearby communities or in far-distant places. Trying to develop such projects is sometimes difficult due to differing visions of the project and how the process will proceed. Teachers can use *Captured Wisdom* to help them show, articulate, and share their own visions of projects to colleagues and then explore the possibilities of collaborations.

Professional development providers can use *Captured Wisdom* to provide common focal points for observations and group discussions as a component of:

- **Technology integration workshops focusing on how technology can be used effectively to enrich instruction.** Helping teachers integrate technology into their instruction involves more than teaching basic computer skills. *Captured Wisdom* can be used to center discussions among teachers around questions such as, What is the teacher doing? What are the learners doing? Who is in control? What is being learned? Who is demonstrating the learning that has taken place? What evidence is being used to demonstrate learning? How could this project be adapted for my own situation?

Program administrators can use *Captured Wisdom* as a tool to help establish a shared vision of learning and instruction among multiple stakeholders as they:

- *Show funders what can be done with technology in classrooms.* Most funders recognize the importance of providing adult literacy learners with opportunities to use technology, but they may not realize that integrating technology into interesting classroom activities creates opportunities to acquire the kinds of technology skills that are most useful and usable. In addition, they will see that technology enriches instruction and learning in content areas.
- *Inform the organizational planning for staff development.* Instructors may feel that they are not prepared to integrate technology into instruction effectively, and they may not be able to identify the skills and dispositions they need to develop. By watching *Captured Wisdom* stories together, instructors and program administrators can clarify just what skills and levels of comfort would be needed for particular types of projects to be undertaken with learners and they can plan learning opportunities for staff members.

- **Encourage new teachers to observe high-quality adult education classes as part of their orientation program.** New teachers and tutors often have few opportunities to see how adult educators apply the principles of adult learning in classroom settings and use technology as an instructional tool. After watching a variety of classes and teachers and learning about some of the issues they encounter during instruction, new teachers will be better able to consider differences between childhood and adult learning and will be able to participate more fully in their own orientation.
- **Gauge progress on improving instruction during an internal program evaluation.** When assessing whether a program has progressed in the quality of instruction delivered, it is helpful to establish instructional goals and benchmarks that represent stages of progress toward those goals. Benchmarks are most useful when they are well defined and can be demonstrated. Video examples from *Captured Wisdom* are useful for clarifying goals and benchmarks of technology-supported instruction. The publication *Assessing Lifelong Learning Technology (ALL-TECH)*, available to download in PDF format at <http://literacyonline.org/products/ncaal/pdf/PG9801.pdf> is a useful companion resource to help structure a program's self-evaluation process and discussion on engaged learning and technology integration.

Captured Wisdom Learning Sites

Adult Basic Skills Development Department, Linn-Benton Community College (Albany, Oregon)

The mission of the Adult Basic Skills Development Program encompasses basic-skills instruction for adults. The program provides opportunities for students to learn necessary life and job skills, affords non-native speakers the chance to improve their English language skills, and supports students' efforts to obtain high school diplomas when they cannot complete their education in a traditional manner. A variety of classes are available to adults who would like to define and achieve personal goals and improve basic skills in communication, reading, computing, and critical thinking.

Adult Learning Center, Coney Island Branch, Brooklyn Public Library (Coney Island, New York)

The Coney Island branch of the Brooklyn Public Library contains one of five regional, library-sponsored adult learning centers. The Coney Island Learning Center offers free instruction in reading and writing to adults over 17, from nonreaders up to pre-GED level. Instruction is provided through the use of computer technology and volunteer tutors in a small-group format. Through its information resources and innovative programming, the Brooklyn Public Library has served the Coney Island community for over 80 years.

Centennial Education Center, School of Continuing Education, Santa Ana College (Santa Ana, California)

The Centennial Education Center is home to Santa Ana College's extensive continuing education initiatives. Learners attempting to develop language skills and/or earn high school diplomas have access to ESL/ABE/GED and High School Subjects instruction tailored to their learning needs. Learners at all levels are encouraged to use the technology resources available on site. Learners value the technological proficiencies they have acquired while practicing English or studying for the GED or high school diploma.

Central Illinois Adult Education Service Center and others (Quincy, Illinois)

Several agencies participated in the realization of a short-term, intensive class designed to help adult learners acquire workplace skills and enter the workforce. The initiative was funded by the Illinois Secretary of State's Literacy Office. Participating agencies in the first cycle of the project included the Central Illinois Adult Education Service Center, Adams County Department of Human Service, Adams County Welfare to Work Program, and Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials. The business partner in the grant was Adecco Employment Services. The classes were held in Quincy, Illinois, and employment opportunities were from the Quincy business community.

Division of Adult Continuing Education and Extension Services, College of Lake County (Grayslake, Illinois)

A diverse educational community, the College of Lake County is a nonresidential, two-year community college located in Grayslake, Illinois; it offers a wide range of programs and courses aimed at meeting the educational needs of people of all ages and interests.

Academic offerings include programs preparing students to transfer into four-year institutions as well as numerous career preparation programs. Other options include personal enrichment, basic adult education, and GED and ESL courses, as well as contract training programs for businesses within the community.

Rend Lake College (Ina, Illinois)

Rend Lake College is located in Ina, Illinois. Through its unique Partnerships in Education program, the college's Skills Center provides a variety of adult education services. The staff has developed and implemented an innovative, "hands-on" curriculum that builds on the life experiences of adult learners and blends math, reading, and writing with job skills such as completing applications and interviewing.



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North Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping schools—and the children they serve—reach their full potential. NCREL’s mission is to strengthen and support schools and communities so that all students achieve standards of educational excellence. We accomplish our mission through policy analysis, professional development, and technical assistance, and by leveraging the power of partnerships and networks. One of ten regional educational laboratories, NCREL serves a seven-state region of the Midwest that includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

NCREL also operates the North Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium (NCRTEC) and the North Central Mathematics and Science Consortium. NCRTEC helps educational communities integrate technology in ways that improve learning for all students.



National Center on Adult Literacy

The National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL) at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education was established in 1990 with a major grant from the U.S. Department of Education. NCAL's mission incorporates three primary goals: to improve understanding of youth and adult learning, to foster innovation and increase effectiveness in youth and adult basic education and literacy work, and to expand access to information and build capacity for literacy and basic-skills service provision. NCAL has pursued this mission by engaging in cutting-edge and high-impact research, innovation, and training in the areas of reading, writing, numeracy, technology, assessment, ESL instruction, and family and workplace literacy.

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Captured Wisdom on Adult Literacy #1

Story #1:

"The Antarctica Project"

Narrator:

Antarctica is the fifth largest and the southernmost continent. Its position at the South Pole, together with its elevation and ice and snow cover, generates the coldest climate on earth. So how did Susan Cowles and her class of adult learners at Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon, take a field trip to such a cold and distant place? Well, by participating in an electronic field trip, which then led them to many other activities, including several that helped their reading, writing, and their math skills.

Cowles:

The Live from Antarctica II Electronic Field Trip was a marvelous project that centered on... it was also once again, a National Science Foundation/NASA/PBS project. It centered on Palmer Station, Antarctica, which is one of the three United States year-round Antarctic stations. It's south of South America, south of Chile and Argentina, and there were three live satellite transmissions that we were able to participate in from Palmer Station. One of them showed a lot about the food chain in the ocean, a lot of science having to do with krill and other organisms in the ocean. It talked, also, about how scientists get to Palmer Station, the different kinds of survival training that they have to do to make sure they can survive if they get to a place where they really shouldn't be. And, then the second program, I think, talked a lot about penguins and penguin rookeries. We actually were, the people talking were perhaps one foot away from a lot of penguins, and in fact, they showed us-- they put radio transmitters on penguins. And then the third live transmission had more to do with ozone and issues of problems with the ozone hole over Antarctica and showed scientists in the field working on some plants. So, we were able to hear questions being answered by experts in the field. We were able to watch them actually go about their scientific investigations and also see how the scientists lived in [a] remote station in a very small site. There were activities, scientific activities and experiments that we could do in the classroom, if we wanted to, that went along with all the different objectives that were a part of this scientific expedition that was actually ongoing at the moment in Palmer Station. What we chose to do, primarily, was to use our writing skills to send and receive electronic mail from a scientist who was from the National Science Foundation and was spending a month down in Palmer Station, Antarctica.

The live transmissions are such an exciting part of electronic field trips. However, a lot of classrooms don't get live transmission, and so the programs are taped and can be used later in classrooms. A lot of places do that. Many of these programs are actually transmitted through the NASA feed, and if that NASA channel is available on cable in a particular area, then that's one way that instructors can gain access to that information or to that program. Also, in some states, or in some cities, PBS does actually show the live transmission of an electronic field trip, or does show a rebroadcast at a later time.

One of the activities that the students did as part of the Antarctica project was that they compared the South Pole with the North Pole on a variety of different topics and subjects:

the composition of the area, what flora and fauna can be found there, temperature ranges, and so on and so forth. And they used various sites on the Internet about the Arctic and the Antarctic in order to find that information. They also used hard print: encyclopedias and dictionaries.

Another activity that they found really very interesting was that they used some information about survival in Antarctica actually from the Antarctic resource people, and there is a lot of information that's available on that. They were given the guideline of how you could be in Antarctica and survive, and then in small groups, they were given a certain survival scenario:

Something's happened and you've take that Zodiac, that little inflatable boat, and you're off on a little island and the weather changes. What are you going to do? And so, as a group, they tried to do some problem solving, answer the question and come up with a survival strategy, which I had them discuss and then report back to people in oral communication. But they also did that in writing. And that could be done as part of a portfolio assessment as well.

Doctor Paula Penhale was the scientist for the National Science Foundation, who was corresponding with the students in this particular program, and she first sent a message of welcome to them, to their electronic accounts, and to me. The message also later appeared actually, in her journal on the internet base site, and she described what she was doing down in Antarctica. And she described basically the living conditions and the situation. The students then sent her questions about what they really wanted to know. One of the burning questions actually was:

How do fourteen women share one toilet, one shower stall and one sink when they're down there for a long period of time? So we learned a lot about that. Students asked questions that were, say, about her, about a scientist's education and training, because the students in this program are very interested in knowing how people get a variety of different sorts of jobs. They ask about the support staff there, how the support staff get their jobs down there. Say you wanted to be a cook in Antarctica at a station, what would you do? Some of the students asked specific questions about scientific research. Just a whole variety of things, and then they had their individual questions answered.

Student 1:

In that station, so I asked them about the bathroom, because there's only one bathroom, and they have to take two-minute showers. They just limit their time for the showers. Yeah, I thought it was neat to be able to send it clear over there and get a response.

Student 2:

We took and wrote her and found out about Antarctica and about the living there, camping, all kinds of stuff they did there, how they cooked. They only got a certain amount of food every six months; it came in on the ship.

This one is about the education part in the college. And here's Palmer Station right here and then go down. She's tells you, "This is Polly Penhale... responsible for Palmer Station, a small marine biologists' laboratory."

Cowles:

It's really hard to pick one benefit of a Live from Antarctica project. There were so many but I think the thing that really did it for all of us was that it just dissolved the classroom

walls. And we realized that with the changes in technology, what we were really seeing and experiencing in real time or through the Internet, which was something absolutely amazing. We learned a lot, not only about Antarctica, but we really learned a lot about modern technology. One thing, I think, adult learners-- and I certainly put myself right there-- I think we were able to appreciate the unbelievable nature of this live transmission, much more than say, younger kids, school age, who maybe take for granted a lot of the technology that people of my age remember. We remember when it wasn't there. And the programs actually showed us, too, in a nice little schematic of how the transmissions from the ship to the shore, to one particular satellite back to another to another, and how then it was finally fed to us at our particular site. And that was just an absolute marvel.

Cowles:

Students in adult literacy programs have often not been successful in a traditional classroom or in a learning situation where they have worked in isolation or where they have been given a workbook to work out of. Often adults are in programs for a whole variety of reasons, of course, based on their individual situation. But it often has an incompatibility with working in isolation or working just in one mode--the workbook, something like that. And so this kind of a program is really taking a new and a different approach in having adult learners work together and being able to use technology to work in context. I think having technology really frees and allows the instructor to do a lot of new and exciting things that are available on the Internet. And a lot of adult literacy workers are part time. They don't have much time for preparation. They may be holding down other jobs as well. And the beauty of using things such as the electronic-based field trip is a lot of information and suggested activities are really right there for the instructor to use. It doesn't take a whole lot of preparation time, and yet, they're activities that are something that adults really do enjoy using. The activities are often geared towards a middle school level, which is a skill level often for adults in literacy programs. But the activities are very appropriate to adult learners.

Student 3:

I've been in this GED program for about a month, and I find that having access to the computers is wonderful because I find that some of the assignments that we've done, the atlases and some of the information that we get out of the books isn't really up to date, and even some of the CD-ROMs seem a little bit outdated. But the Internet, the stuff on the computers has been fabulous, has been really helpful to me for looking up information. And it seems that there's a lot more information for me, and it's easier to find over the Internet or the computer rather than some of the older texts that are in the classroom. And I think it's great, and I'm glad I have the opportunity.

Cowles:

Another thing that is a real comfort to me as an adult literacy instructor is that I don't really have to be an expert on a lot of the things that we're doing here. I'm learning right along with the students in the classroom, and the materials that are available are so clear and so easily understood that it is something that as an instructor, I can come in and use without a whole lot of academic preparation or background on my part. I certainly have increased my level of scientific and technological literacy through a lot of these projects.

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Captured Wisdom on Adult Literacy #1

Story #2:

"Home Countries"

Narrator:

Twelve million immigrants came through Ellis Island between 1892 and 1924. At the height of its activity, the Ellis Island station could process one million people a year. Although now Ellis Island stands as a museum marking this remarkable time in history, hundreds of thousands of new immigrants still enter the United States each year, and many are determined to learn the new language of the country they hope to call home. In an effort to help these new learners speak, read, and write English, Suzanne Leibman of the College of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois, has incorporated technology into her adult learning classes. She hopes that her students not only learn English, but also acquire the skills to move on to other, higher-level classes.

Leibman:

This class is an intermediate-level class. What does that mean? They're not beginners, and they're not ready to go out into the world yet. They are all English-as-a-Second-Language learners. They all have academic goals for their future. They have varied amounts of education from previous education, so that we have people who have six years of education in the class; we have university graduates in the class. The purpose of the class is to help people start thinking about going to other college or university classes in the United States, or to help them practice a profession in the United States, where they'll need academic-style reading and writing skills. We use computers a great deal, because computer literacy is one of our goals. And we use a word processing application; we use some educational software; we use the Internet. I always have a significant number of students who have never turned on the computer before, have never touched a mouse before, so we start from the very, very beginning, showing people how to turn it off and turn it on properly, how to use the mouse comfortably. And we go from there to teaching basic word processing and computer skills, always incorporating some language learning at the same time, so that we'll have an exercise that might teach people how to save something on the computer and save it on a disk, but at the same time, they're practicing story-writing form, and they're practicing past tense. They're...But instead of using a canned piece of software that practices past tense in a workbook format, they're actually doing their own stories and their own writing with it. One of the last things that I teach them about the computer is how to use the Internet. They use it for several purposes: One, they use it to find other resources for their English on the computer, and we've set up bookmarks of some of their favorite spots to go to. But the part of the Internet that they are most intrigued by is using the Internet to get them in contact with life back home. So they've learned how to search for things about their own countries, and you'll see in class later today where people are going to do presentations about some aspect of their culture, and many of them use the Internet to find picture resources, to find information about their country that they're going to bring to us in class. One of the advantages in using the Internet, besides that it's here and it's spiffy and it's fun, is that they can find information in their first language, which you usually can't find in the public library, or even the academic library over here, so they have those various resources. The Internet, because it can bring in newspapers from home, can also bring in touches of home to help people

connect in a way that a public library can't, and I have my famous anecdote about the student who found all the baseball scores from all the leagues in Taiwan through the Internet. And that's something you don't find in the newspaper here, and as he said, "Now, anytime I feel homesick, I can come in here and I can connect." And that's really exciting. The other exciting part about that project is the fact that they discovered this themselves. When I first introduced them to the Internet I had this project of, you know, look for the best stuff, or practicing English on it, and immediately... well, they did what I asked them to do, and they found nice stuff, but immediately they said, "Okay, I can look up my country, and I can find things, and I can show people who the popular rock stars are." And they began showing each other about life in their country, and pictures. That brought real live communication that you can never plan for in class quite as well.

One person found pictures that she downloaded and either she'll be able to show us directly on the computer or she'll have print shots that she'll show us through the overhead, or distribute in the class, so that they use pictures and graphics that they find. Sometimes they find information that you'll hear incorporated in their report. One woman who will be presenting today will be talking about a wedding in India, and different states of India have different customs. So she knew some things, but didn't know other things. She was able to find on the Internet someone else who had reported on their family's wedding and she was able to look at their pictures and see how things were the same, and things were different in different parts of India. So they use it to find that kind of information as well.

Student 1:

We are in the U.S.A. just one month ago... so we was very interesting to use the computer because we can do our research without going outside so we can use this opportunity and so we tried because we know something about Italian food because we are Italians, but some picture we don't have, so it was a very interesting use of computers.

Student 2:

It was interesting to translation into English (laughing).

Student 1:

So we found these, then we read what was inside, and we use our knowledge about these letters... and so we wrote exactly the recipe we wanted to give to other students.

Student 2:

Then we have also the Italian map, of Italy, because some, maybe they don't know where exactly is our town, because our town is not famous like Milan ... We found a lot of maps, and so it was beautiful because then they can understand where we are [from] in Italy.

Student 1:

It's because we didn't bring many pictures about our country so it is the only system to show other people where we come from, where we live. So... other students sometimes have pictures so we can see where they live.... We don't have [pictures] so... I think it's a good idea to use [the computer].

Student 2:

Hello. My name is Stefania. Her name is Magdalena. And we come from Italy. And Italy is divided in 20 regions. And our region is called Basilicata. And Basilicata is near Naples

and is a mountain region. We live in Potenza, which is a mountain town near Naples.

Leibman:

I think that having the computer is a great motivator for students. People are excited about having learned it. I get comments in student's journals that they never thought they could use a computer, and now here they are doing whatever it is we are doing.

Do you use this technology with students with less education? We've used it with "pre-beginning" students who are students with very low literacy and education in their first language and in English. Obviously, we don't teach them the Internet on the first day. We start out with real low-level writing skills, identifying themselves. That's the advantage to people who may have trouble holding a pencil but it's nearly as much trouble hitting a key. And they get something that looks good afterwards, and when you have low literacy skills, having something that looks good is really important to you. It's something that you can go back in and can change. It's something you can blow up in big print and your teacher can post all over the walls. So having the technology, I think, is a great benefit for people with low literacy skills. Plus, there's the... again, there's the excitement in saying, "I can conquer this very modern "sophisticated" piece of technology."

Student 3:

There are in Mexico many cities with colonial history...If you want more information about...but if you really want, you can go to here [pointing to icons of Mexican cities on computer screen]. This is a beautiful place, Zacatecas. Look at this. They just use this place to transport the water by the city, you know, so the [place] is really strange because it has a lot of mountains around, so they need to make some construction that helped to transport the water from far away to another side of the city. In another city, has stone, you know... it is really, really difficult to build there. So it's because they just... [use] this form to transport the water. I know Zacatecas, and I love this place. But it's different when another people from another countries and from another cities and maybe from Mexico, but they come from another states... they can ... they can find it... and they can say, "Oh, my God. I will go to Zacatecas; it's beautiful!"

You know, I went there, but now I can see it again, and I'm here, and I'm an American, you know, and I can talk about it and I can show them, and it's great!

Leibman:

The first obvious benefit is this is a growing academic tool. And students need to be able to feel comfortable with that tool as they go into college classes where there will be a lot of things they will be uncomfortable [with]. If you feel like you have control over something, that'll make the next hard part just a little bit easier. It's hard to do two hard things at one time. So that's one benefit. There's the excitement in it. Many people come into learning a new language with a great deal of fear and a great feeling of... discomfort and nervousness, and embarrassment. We'll hear people say, "I feel like a kid again, I feel dumb, I feel mute." And when you can do something like use a computer comfortably, it gives a boost to your self-confidence. When you feel more self-confident and comfortable, you learn a language more easily.

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Captured Wisdom on Adult Literacy #1

Story No. 3:

"The Mars Project"

Narrator:

The planet Mars is the fourth planet from the sun in our solar system, the next one beyond Earth's orbit. Because of that proximity, it has been the topic of many a science-fiction film, all of which keeps the idea of possible life on this red planet in the back of our minds. But what do most people really know about Mars? And how can such skills as reading, writing, and math be integrated into a lesson to help adult learners get the most out of studying this mysterious planet? Well, Susan Cowles and her adult-education students at Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon, did it by participating in an electronic field trip, which then led them to many other activities.

Cowles:

This is a class of between 15 and 20 adult learners who are part of a job opportunities and basic skills program. It's a multi-level class. It is a modified open-entry, open-exit, in that students are coming in about every four weeks. They... as with other adult-education programs, their attendance can sometimes be erratic for a variety of reasons. So it isn't a consistent, year-long class that a teacher might expect in a K-12 program.

The students in this program are here to update their skills in reading, critical reading, writing, and math. They also may be working towards the GED, or the certificate of General Educational Development. So they're required for that test to be able to pass a lot of sub-tests in science, social studies, and writing, math... and there are a lot of skills that they really need to work on. I think the way to learn those skills is always to do that in context, in the context of a real-life situation, or in the context of some interesting situation. And so, I really like to use these electronic field trips, such as this "Live from Mars," as a basis on which to find out some interesting information, to have some fun, and also to be learning those math, writing, and reading skills.

Student 1:

I'm going to look up this bar, the "Mars Today" [pointing to computer screen]. Just...look one up, here's one... the upper-left panel diagrams... and look up any information on Earth and Mars through 1996. I'll click here, and it'll help me a lot in looking up Mars, and instead of looking for the dictionaries and stuff, I just click on Mars, and it helps me get faster and stuff. It's my first time looking at computers.

Cowles:

On an electronic field trip, such as the one "Live from Mars" that we've been involved in, is a great on-line opportunity for students to go through the classroom walls and out into the real world. Usually, an electronic field trip involves a Web site, with a lot of online activities that students and teachers can use. It also involves, usually, a field trip to a remote site, with live satellite transmission, and some interaction that's possible between learners who are watching the site and the activities that are going on there.

In the case of Mars, we haven't actually gone to Mars, of course, but a little while ago, we

went to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, via satellite with one of these electronic field trips, and we listened to the different scientists who were talking about their plans for the landing of the Mars Pathfinder in July. We watched a lot of rocketry examples and Rover simulations. This "Live from Mars" program is a part of the Passport to Knowledge series that is put on by NASA and the National Science Foundation and PBS, and it is possible to get all these materials online at no charge. Students use technology in this project in a variety of ways. They have access to the Web sites on the Internet, and so as they're trying to find out information about Mars, for example, comparing Mars to Earth, they're looking at a lot different sites on the Internet where they can get up-to-date information.

Student 2:

Right now I'm looking at Mars, and it's coming straight from Arizona. I didn't know Mars had a symbol until I started looking on the computer. I didn't know all the planets had different symbols at that time. Anyway, I found out the distance between Mars is one and a half the distance between the Earth and the sun. On here you have it in metric... okay... so, of course if we want it in miles, we have to look it up to find out the proper procedure to look up between meters and miles.

Cowles:

Students can actually get today's weather on Mars if they want to. There's a lot of raw scientific data there on site. Another thing that students can do with Internet-based resources is that they can send e-mail messages to the experts who are involved in these projects, and then they can receive answers via electronic mail to those questions.

It's possible also, then, to get the Teacher's Guide with all of these wonderful activities just right here from the Web site itself. There are activity sheets, student activity sheets, that can be printed out and they're just ready to go. But this is an example of a Teacher's Guide activity, 1.1B, "Rockets and Payloads," that gives the objective, it gives all the materials you need for a science team of three or four students. You need the balloons, and the balloon pump, fishing line, paper clips, paper cups, straws, and tape. The Engage [section]... it tells you how to... it's a standard teacher's lesson plan, really, is what it is. The procedure... and then all sorts of other connections that you can have, and this one suggests that you go online and find information about the Mars Pathfinder, or the Mars Global Surveyer to find more information, or to read, once again from the experts, their field journals or their biographies, and then of course the students could construct questions, e-mail questions, that they'll ask experts if things aren't clear to them.

Then this experiment, students learned that there's an equation, there's a second law, Newton's second law of motion:

force equals mass times acceleration. Now if you would just... have that in front of you... what a problem, doesn't ... It's not too clear to me! But by doing this experiment, and by changing the variables, by changing the weight of the payload on the balloon rocket, that we were able to discover that relationship. This opens up a wonderful opportunity for a variety of great activities. For example, we have, in this classroom, been studying Newton's laws of motion, three laws of motion, and this is directly related to rockets and rocketry. And so we have been conducting experiments here, which are a part of the Teacher's Guide and suggested as a part of this package. We've been conducting experiments with balloons to test payloads, and to figure out, well, how do rockets actually take something out of the Earth system and into another dimension?

They were given information about a mystery site on Earth, and this was something that they worked together-- in pairs or teams, I think. They were given a description of the biome; they were given a description of the flora and fauna of that site, of the soil, of the temperature at a particular date, the wind speed at a particular date-- this was all raw data from a particular site. Then, they were supplied with five possibilities of what that site really... where that site really might be. And then they had a very few days to work and figure out which one of those five sites would they actually choose as probably following along most of the parameters that were given by the "Live on Mars" people. This was, as I say, very challenging. They used CD-ROMs, they used Internet-based sites, they used atlases and maps, and then they tried-- mainly by a process of elimination-- they tried to figure out what was their best site.

Student 3:

One of the clues on our mystery site, it had the temperature on the exact date, so I used a process of elimination. So I went over to the computer and I tapped in the National Weather Service, so I could find out ... the archives, the back weather temperatures, you know. So I could look up what the temperatures were on those days. That way I could use a process of elimination, and I wanted to get closer to what I was looking for.

Student 4:

We got the sites, down from Mars, and we had to go with the flora and fauna and the latitude and longitude with each one. We had to find the mystery sites, and which one was directly our mystery site, and that had, like the descriptions on here, and they had to fit, and if they didn't fit, then it was the wrong site. And we had... I had to go search through the Internet, and... otherwise I wouldn't be able to find all the information on the things that we needed for our mystery sites, and then that way we could match it up, correlate it, make sure it was the right, and what was the wrong. And if we didn't have the technology of the computers searching through the Internet, we would have been here with... all day long with atlases, and almanacs forever. It would have just took forever. I mean, it is like, really quick. We were over there, for, like, about... for less than an hour, a lot of stuff started printing out. We could put whatever we wanted in there, and it was just like... it was just coming out of there, and it was like... we could just match everything up. Otherwise, we would be there forever.

Cowles:

Students in this program have a variety of levels of literacy skills; and of course literacy is broadly defined, not only to be able to read, but to be able to compute, to write, and to have scientific literacy and technological literacy. So, students are able to work on all those forms and definitions of literacy by using technology in this classroom. And because they're able to relate those skills or use those skills in a context, working with a subject matter that is of interest to them, and usually something that they've defined for themselves as something they want to learn about, then the motivation level is far higher, and they see a reason for learning. They also say to me that if they had had this kind of instruction when they were in school before, where something was reality-based and made sense to them, they probably would have stayed in school, and they're hoping that the same thing is happening for their own kids in school now.

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Captured Wisdom on Adult Literacy #2

Story No. 1:

"The Restaurant Problem"

Narrator:

The restaurant industry is one of the largest employers in the country today. And even though many people think of servers and cooks when you mention working for a restaurant, the industry offers many other occupations, from managers to cleaning help to accountants. As part of Lyndy Girten's adult learning class at the Rend Lake College Skills Center in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, students learn all facets of the restaurant business, including how technology can be part of this ever-growing industry.

Girten:

This is a G.E.D. classroom preparation. Our students are sixteen years of age until they can't get around anymore. I think I personally have had individuals who were in their late sixties in my class. We have tutors available in the classroom. These students work Monday through Thursday, four hours a day, which is a total of sixteen hours in our classroom. Not all of that time is... when we do have a problem, such as the Restaurant Problem, not all of that time is spent just on the Restaurant Problem.

We try and look at what's happening in the real world, and then we try and match that up and integrate that with the kind of skills that a person will need in order to pass the G.E.D. For example, the Restaurant Problem:

The Restaurant Problem is an integrated, problem-based learning situation. At the beginning of the problem, each student is given a package of information that has to do with a fictitious restaurant that's going under. And they are employed by a fictitious CEO to investigate the restaurant:

payroll sheets, employee behaviors, record-keeping practices, whatever. And then go through the different problems, determine which ones are the ones that they can do something about, make recommendations for how to solve certain problems. Work with the computers to line up the schedules, to figure payroll sheets. We plug in to all these fictitious activities, academic skills that will help them pass the G.E.D., and skills-- life skills, I guess you could call them-- that they can in turn take to the work situation that they might find themselves in.

[To student] I'm hiring you to be in charge of this restaurant, and the restaurant's having serious problems. I'm giving you fifteen hundred dollars to start with, and I expect you to figure out, basically, what the problem with the restaurant is, and what some possible solutions are, and then pick some of those solutions and work 'em up.

Student 1:

How many employees?

Girten:

These are the timesheets that your employees have turned in for a week, and I got to be honest with you, Chico, I think they're cheatin'. I think some of them are cheating; maybe on purpose, maybe accidentally. But your job, should you decide to accept it, is to review

what their hours are, figure up according to their hourly rate what their pay's going to be each day. Now, you're going to have to work on some manager stuff too, so if you're the person in charge, you're the manager and you've got some folks who are smokin' in the boy's room, or something, this may not be helpful to the restaurant, this may be putting a bad light on things, so here are some situations that I want you to look at and think of from a manager's point of view. What would you do about it?

These are some complaints, customer complaints. And then I want you to write something out, Chico, I need a nice paragraph. Remember, all... you're going to remember about writing paragraph. You have to have a main idea to answer the question, then you have some sort of details to support whatever it is you said. So make it real, as though this person came to you with this problem, and you were going to deal with it as the manager. And then the restaurant has had a complaint also, and this is the complaint, and I want you to deal with that complaint. If you want to write a nice little letter, give him a nice little gift certificate, or whatever people do.

Student 2:

We received a letter from a man who was at a restaurant and had bad service. His reservation was lost, and he waited thirty minutes for a table. So we're writing a letter to him telling him how our restaurant was sorry for his wait. We're giving him two gift certificates for-- four gift certificates for his family, and telling him how our restaurant is going through a change and that's why his service was not satisfactory.

Student 3:

Tracy is an eight... eighteen-year-old part-time college student who has had only baby sitting jobs before this waitress position. She has been working at the restaurant for four months now. She lives at home with her mother, drives a brand-new Camaro, and wants to move to Bloomington when she finishes the local college. Tracy frequently requests the weekends off so that she can pursue the social life. If she isn't scheduled to be off on weekend nights, she usually doesn't show up anyway. So that's why I'm firing her, 'cause she don't want to show up when she ... when I need her. And... and I need my waitresses when I ... when I need to work. So I wrote her a letter, and I told her my situation, what I wanted her to do and that, and then I told her if she couldn't comply with my ... with my agreement with them, then there was no... there's no alternative to letting her go, so, I fired her.

[Reading] "Dear Tracy:

You want the weekends off, but if you are scheduled to work, you should work. Come in, not take off when you feel like it. Therefore, I feel like I can't use you at my restaurant. Maybe it would be better if you could find a job where you would not have to work on weekends. I can't tolerate your frequent absence. You're fired."

Girten:

This particular time the Restaurant Problem has an interesting twist because... usually the problem runs from a week to two weeks. We've tailored it down this particular round to fewer days than that, but the culmination of this problem is going to be that we're going to a local restaurant, set up already, and we're going to be evaluating the services of that restaurant:

the employees, the cleanliness, the food quality, and such as that. And we're also going to be developing for them prototypes of menus that they have agreed to consider, and then

we're going to let them select one that they like, and then we're going to mass-produce them for them, and they'll really use them in their restaurant from now until forever. It's a brand-new restaurant in town, and they have... haven't had a lot of... time to... time or money, as a new business starting out maybe, to really get into the public relations, marketing kind of things, so they're really excited. We're partnering with this restaurant as a community effort, and our students are getting some valuable experience in... in working with the graphics and word processing on the computers, and they're going to get usable product at the end, and... and it'll have wonderful implications, and inspire lots other students to come along and read that, that these menus were made by the G.E.D. classroom in Mt. Vernon.

Student 4:

I'm making a menu for Let's Eat Smoked Bar-B-Q. We're in a competition in making one for the restaurant. They'll pick one... and they're gonna put our names on it, and use it for... in the restaurant. This is their menu they started out with, and we made it... we're going to make it a two-piece... this is the... going to be the inside of it. And then we're going to have the desserts and the drinks on the back of it. The hardest part was finding the best print on it, and making sure they could, you know, read it, and... the funnest part was finding the pictures to go along with it, things like that.

Girten:

I've seen a good response in this kind of... classroom situation. They like working on things that are practical, that they can associate with their own lives, and they can see the value in knowing how to do this. And as far as working on the technology end of it, they get a lot of self-esteem and... and a real boost in their confidence, which is going to spill over in everything else that they do for me. Being able to use the computers, and being able to communicate with one another, on what are you doing, or how did you do that, and we'll work as a team almost, and to cooperate, and collaborate. They like this freedom of not having to sit in one spot and start at the top and work until you get to the bottom. They like the flexibility and the freedom, and putting their own ideas into something, and the end product, being slightly different from their neighbor's, but in the same ballpark.

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Captured Wisdom on Adult Literacy #2

Story No. 2:

"Intrepid Tales"

Narrator:

Commissioned in 1943, the U.S.S. Intrepid served the United States Navy for thirty years. The Intrepid is best known for participating in the largest naval battle in history during World War Two. But what does this aircraft carrier have in common with an adult learning class in New York? Well, Stephanie Thomas' class at the Coney Island Learning Center at the Brooklyn Public Library used a visit to the Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum to launch a project that helped them improve their reading, writing, and research skills. And it all comes together with the help of technology.

Thomas:

We were in between projects, and the group was ready to start a new project, so we do what we usually do, which was to brainstorm for... like, a half an hour, with lots of different ideas that people had, and one student came up with the Intrepid. He had driven by it many times and said, "I'd really like to visit that," and everybody else said, "That sounds great to me!" So it was an amazing consensus. Usually it's much more difficult to get a consensus about a project, but... so that is the first step, the agreement that we were going to do this as a project. And what they're doing is actually putting it into a booklet form, which is probably the hardest part of the whole piece. Using the computer as a way to sort of pull all information that we've gathered into different places and putting it into a book form so that they have it, and other people can read it if they want.

There were four students here today, and they were each doing pieces and putting the book together. James was working on... getting information off of the Internet so that we could put it into the book, the informational, or pieces, like the hours and the fees, but also the quiz, and other... there was a knowledge based... like four or five pages of... just information about the Intrepid that we're also going to put in there. So he was doing that; he was getting on the Internet, and to the Web site and printing that off. Tara was... who's our expert at scanning, 'cause we did this on one other project, and it was quite difficult, but we've mastered it, and particularly Tara's even better at it than I am. So she was doing the scanning of the pictures, which would... that we took on our trip, so that we can... so people can see what we saw on the trip, and also putting in little captions that they all wrote about, that it describes the... the pictures, so that's what Tara was doing.

Student 1:

The project that we're working on, U.S.S Intrepid, we had come together as a group, and we discussed about going on a trip. So one of the other students, which is Carroll, decided that we go on the Intrepid, so which... I never heard of the Intrepid before, so our teacher, Stephanie, said that we're going to get a lot of information on the computer. What we did when we came back from the trip is we write about what we had saw down there, and everything; we put it... in our own writing, and then we get a chance to go on the computer, type it in, and do spell check.

We had to go draw a lot, with the pictures and stuff on the computer. So my role today

that I did on the computer is:

I scanned some of the pictures that we took on the Intrepid, because we was planning as a group, putting it in a book. I learned how to type; how to do spell check; how to save my work on the computer; how to make it like different colors; the writing, how to make it capital; you can go from one writing to the next, which was really good. And the scanning on the computer was a whole new process for me.

Student 2:

What I did for the project is a piece that I write. The thing that I... go on the Intrepid and see... that's what I write about. And there's a form of writing skill... you have to put down... put it down on the paper, you put... what you, in your mind, what's on the paper, what you see, before you go back and put it in the computer. And that gives me a motivation to... how to write about things that people... could take it, and read it, and enjoy what I [wrote] it, what I [wrote] about.

Student 3:

It was the first time I ever been in an aircraft carrier. I had seen one, but haven't been in one. When I went on... I was walking on a bridge or something like that. It was so big, and what I saw... so many airplanes I've never seen in my whole life: the Japanese, the Russians, and the American airplanes... that they use in World War, in World War II, and in Vietnam.

Student 1:

These are the pictures that we took on the trip. These are just two. Actually, we took a lot of these pictures, and these are the ones that I'm scanning. We're gonna put one to the top, one to the bottom, and the back of each picture we write just a little piece as a group, what we did, what we saw, you know, so we write it out to the back. What we're gonna do is type these in the computer, put it to the bottom of each page, so that when we put together the book and someone go to read the book, they can see exactly these pictures that we took. Who was in it, what we saw, the information that we get from here. It's gonna be... here [pointing to page], so all of this is gonna scan in, as well as typed, and this is going to part of the book.

Thomas:

I have to give the library and the literacy center a lot of credit, because they had the vision really to see how important technology is in the learning process, even for people who have limited writing and reading skills, and that they're really encourage... encourage everyone to incorporate that in their learning process. And I know from the beginning the staff said, "Stephanie, you could always stay and, you know, get on the computer and see what's there." And I'd say, "Yeah, that'd be great, I'll see ya" (laughing)... and it took, you know, just some... kind of... gently, over time, encouraging, like... "Look what somebody did on the computer today," or... "Look what I found here," and also... through time, and also... some of the students who were doing work on the computers, I would go and see, and I'd say, "How'd you do that?" and they would show me, and then I started to feel a little bit less intimidated, like I didn't have to be the expert; I could just be a learner along with them.

This was something that they were all interested in doing, and they led and directed it really. I was just... along to steer a little bit here and there, but really it was their project. So I think their excitement from it was genuine; it wasn't imposed by me. There were a lot

of rewards in this project, because everybody sort of did something that they hadn't really done before, almost everybody.

One person wrote, like, three pages of... to her piece, which was... you know, usually she writes a paragraph or two, sometimes a page, but she actually wrote three pages, and that was... that was an accomplishment. Another student used a different font than he ever had before, and experimented with colors, something he had never done before, so that was exciting. On this quest for information, about a particular place that they'd seen, and wanted more information about, so that, in and of itself, just going on the trip, and... and thinking about it, and writing about it... met the neat ideas they had, and their desires for this project.

What's really great about the center here is that, you know, usually there's an encouragement to put an end... the project into an end product, so that not only can students have it to take with them, but that other people can gain information not only about the Intrepid in general, but about a type of project like this, and usually there's an introduction that I do with a project that talks about how, we thought of the idea, and sort of the whole process of it, so that anybody... I think that they're available for anybody who wants to take them out and look at them.

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Captured Wisdom on Adult Literacy #2

Story No. 3:

"Creating Family Histories"

Narrator:

The family in a person's heritage are often very important to many people. But often when you move and settle into a new home in a new country, it can be hard to communicate to others about who you are and where you come from. That's why, as part of Susan Gaer's adult learning classes at Santa Ana College in California, the students are combing the learning of their new language skills with the use of technology to produce Web pages about a very important topic: themselves.

Gaer:

This is a Beginning One class; it's the first level of ESL that we have here at Centennial. There is a literacy and transition class that some students who have literacy problems go through prior to coming to Beginning One, but most of the students here do not speak English at all, but can read and write in their native language. Three-fourths of the students are Spanish-speaking, and the other fourth is Vietnamese, mostly in this class.

I have two goals for this class:

One is to improve their family life, and to help them with their children; the other one is to help them progress in their work skills. A lot of my students are housewives here, the women are housewives, and I would say probably three-fourths of the women are housewives. However, they do have children and they really want to know more than their children know as far as English skills and technology skills. So I teach both English and technology in the class.

The class that you'll be observing today gets into the curriculum, after personal information, in the very beginning level. We talked about family relationships, and we talked about name and address. All the students will be taking a picture of themselves, using a QuickCam camera, which is a little camera, and they will be then writing a story about themselves, or their family. And the stories will then be printed out for them to take home. Actually, we use portfolio assessment, so I have folders for each student, and I put a copy in their folder. They'll take a copy home. And then I will put a copy for them on the Internet and give them the address so they can send it to their family back in Mexico or Vietnam, to view the story as well.

When I teach how to use... I call it the using the right tool for the job. Every job has tools in it, and no matter whether you have computers, or a video camera, or a tape recorder, it's still a tool. And the process that I use is the same... for all students. I also train teachers and use the same process. I will start by demonstrating the process the students need to go through to take the picture. One of the students goes to the board and takes notes. As I go through, I tell him what to write. The student writes it on the board, and the rest of the class copies it. They are then divided up into groups, and each group has a chance to practice using their notes. I teach them about the keyboard. I teach them, you know, the keys on the keyboard, like the shift key, the tab key, the backspace key, the delete key. I

teach them how to turn on and turn off the computer, and they must demonstrate they know how to do that appropriately before we learn any other computer programs. And I start out by giving them a series of questions, which they answer. With the answers to those questions put in order, they create the story. So then they go to the word processor, and they just learn how to open it and type in their story. Once they are able to do that, I teach them some basic formatting, like center, bold, and I teach them how to change the font size, if they can make it look bigger, and they get really creative sometimes with the fonts. By the time they leave my class, you don't even notice who's at the computer, and who's in the classroom, because it's such a seamless interchange of students going back and forth, using the computer when they need to, and using their desk when they need to.

(Classroom background noise, many students talking simultaneously)

Student 1:

[To other student] When did you come to Santa Ana?

Student 2:

I came to live in L.A. one year.

Student 1:

Are you married or single?

Student 2:

I'm single.

Student 1:

What are the names of your parents?

Student 2:

My father's name is Minh Nguyen. My mother's name is Quan Do. They died in Vietnam.

(classroom noise, students speaking simultaneously)

Gaer:

Insert your disk. Insert the disk. Insert your disk. Okay, what can we do? What do we do now?

Students:

Type.

Gaer:

Type. Type. So, number four is what?

Students:

Type.

Gaer:

Type. Yeah, type your story. Excellent. We have to find our disk, right? Our disks? Where is our disk?

Student:
Inside.

Teacher:
Inside the computer, right. How do we find it here? We have to click on this:
down. Remember the arrow? What's the arrow? What way?

Students:
Down.

Teacher:
Up or... ?

Students:
Down.

Teacher:
The down arrow. And what are we looking for here? What letter?

Students:
(calling out answers) E, O, A...

Teacher:
A, A, A, A.

Student 3:
When we need [to] learn something about the computers, they wrote in the blackboard the directions. For number, number one, we are going to do... this thing, number two, number three... When we read that direction, and she was... she will ask [do we] understand all the directions, then we go to the computers, and she was... behind us... always seeing if we understand the directions, all the directions.

Student 4:
There was just beginning classes we... you learn English and vocabulary grammar and everything, but in this class, she start teaching computer, and it was very interesting, and I really like it, to learn about Internet, PhotoShop, and other programs. I realized I really like computers, and that's what I'm going to study:
computer. And that class helped me a lot, in how to write, sometimes to speak English, and that's when I started growing up in my vocabulary in English.

Student 5:
The computer help me... to [learn more]... you can [find] anything you want, you can... practice typing, to practice verbs, grammar, and the computer helps you to... in English because you can... you can, you know, [write] anything you want... be able to look smart, and looking for e-mail, e-mail grades... for information... you need to click in your number... your family, and you're going to see the names of... all the names there, so... My name is my Rose Ybarra. This is my history. This, she is my sister, I didn't put all my family in the picture, because I don't have any, any pictures [of] my family together. And my family live in Mexico.

Gaer:

There are various benefits of using technology in the classroom. It gets across a lot of different learning styles for students. Students with literacy problems, who have trouble writing with a pencil, can hit the keyboard much more easily. Their work looks beautiful when they finish, and [it] gives them pride in their work. And I think that they keep more time on task when they're using computers.

Lots of times they're copying things from their notebook into the computer, and in order for them to type what they have in their book... when they make a capital letter, and they'll do it with a pencil, it's just like they do it subconsciously, but when they're on the computer, they're thinking about those things, because they actually have to hit two keys. In my experience, completion of the product ensures me that the student has grasped the language that I'm trying to teach. They all do it to different levels. In my class I have a variety of different levels, even though it's Beginning One, and so they all can complete the product at different levels. I think it's important that you teach students what's available in the workplace, and not focus on educational software so much. Students learn how to use the computer in the process of learning their language.

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Captured Wisdom on Adult Literacy #2

Story No. 4:

"Presenting the Whole Package"

Narrator:

In business today, your success can be directly related to how you present yourself and the skills you have when applying for a job. And more and more those skills include the use of technology-related tools. So in an effort to improve job-seekers' skills with technology, Crystal Hack and David Baker with the Central Illinois Adult Education Center in Quincy, Illinois, are working with their students to use technology effectively to present themselves and their skills.

Hack:

The students in the classroom are all T.A.N.F. clients, which is Temporary Aid to Needy Families. They are... they have to be some type of welfare recipient. It was a... put out there are a chance to get some skills, brush up on some skills, get a chance to work on the computers that maybe they wouldn't get anywhere else, and it was free. The second day we got right into PowerPoint. Because, why? Why would you dive into PowerPoint first? Because it's something that you can produce, and look at, and it looks really neat, and interesting, and actually it looks quite, you know, "techie," and it's something that doesn't take that much to teach someone how to do all these really wonderful things.

Baker:

The very first PowerPoint project we did was an "All About Me," where you kind of told everyone else about you, and was ...left somewhat open-ended for them to go in many different directions, and the reason we did it that way was because we wanted them to take off in whatever direction they had, and when the question came up, "How do I do this? How do I do this?", we answered it, and pretty soon we had some people who really, really knew what they were doing, that were... it was great, because they were helping the other students out at that point.

Hack:

And another thing I think with the "All About Me":

We gave them a topic that they didn't have to research. I mean, who knows more about them than they do? And so, it wasn't something that they really needed to, "Oh, well, not only do I not know about this software, but this topic they've given me is just..." I mean, they know about themselves, so all they had to do was take what they know and put it on, you know, their PowerPoint presentation. After that very first day of dealing with PowerPoint, they wanted to be on those computers. And they wanted to go above and beyond just putting the words down: they wanted to use clip art; they wanted to use Word Art; they wanted to put sound in there... I mean, it was just amazing!

So, it was a hooking tool, and a self-esteem tool, and maybe even a communication tool, because we want them to put that in their portfolio as an example of what they can now do on the computer, and use that to sell themselves to an employer. The resume writing, of course, that's going to go in and be a part of the portfolio, as the spreadsheet examples that

they've done to show that they have spreadsheet experience.

Baker:

One, their fear is gone of computers, and two, if they go into a new situation where they're using some new software, something they've never seen, something we haven't shown them, well, we've shown them a variety... we've used both Windows and Macintosh computers, out of necessity, not because we did on purpose, but they've seen both of those environments, and they've seen all these different kinds of applications. So I think it's given those overall kind of computer skills that they'll need, so they can transfer those to other applications when they... when they're faced with them in the workplace.

Student 1:

I got into this project really to... update some skills that I didn't have before, and I had been out of work since May 1 of last year, so I'm really kind of rusty. Some, you know, haven't worked in a long time. I came from a history of working for years and years of steady work in the same job, for nine years, and then out, you know, because of lack of work. So I had to, like, reinvent myself and learn new skills, and this class has been a great opportunity to do that. You want to know, "Are you presenting a good package to that company?" "Are you able to take on this responsibility in today's workforce?" I've never worked with PowerPoint before, and I have family that, you know, I'm just into computers, and I got to show them a thing or two.

Student 2:

My skills, when I come into the classroom, were nothing. I knew nothing about computers. I didn't know how to turn them on. I didn't know how to turn them off, nothing at all. And now, I can probably say I can go in and I can present a presentation on the PowerPoint, and I can do a spreadsheet, and that is enough to boost your self-esteem right there, to, you know, to be proud to do that stuff.

Student 3:

Our PowerPoint presentation on "All About Me," we can also put that into... we printed it out also, to put into our portfolio, so we're also learning how to do a portfolio, which will help us, too, when we do go to get a job... We've got the portfolio with us, and, you know, that shows your employer right there that, you know, that you did, you do know that stuff, instead of just telling him, you know, "I know PowerPoint," you know, you can show it to him and present it to him.

Student 4:

Well, I'm a single mother, so, trying to get back on your feet being a single mother, back into the work field's hard. So this is more or less... learning new job skills on computers, and learning a little more about myself, of course. And my goals is, really, to have a better job so I can get me and my kids... provide for me and my kids, the things we need. I haven't been on a computer since I was in high school. That's been a little over twenty years, so... for me it's like a new learning experience. And what with my kids being on computers at school already. So it's like we can learn together.

Student 5:

One of the jobs I'm looking at, you have to have computer knowledge. The Macintosh, the [Windows] 98 spreadsheets... I've just put an application in, and most definite thing they want is know if you can do spreadsheets. If you can't do spreadsheets, then you can't, you

know... apply for this job, so, a lot of things that they have shown us... I mean, then you can't say that you're perfect at it right now, but what they've shown us is things that you need out in the work force if you want to go into secretarial... or even to... customer service, you have to have this experience now. "All About Me" portfolio is about yourself, things that you feel that you have accomplished. My portfolio's going to have... my slide show, which would be a copy of my of...my... like I said, my achievements, all... just about me... my education, and my work history... my resume, my cover letter, and then I will probably put, like, my certificates in, and then references. I want to go into secretarial, but I've worked with a lot of money, so I know there are some openings in teller... in bank tellers, or secretarial filing. That's where I'm going to go. I'm not going to go back into hard labor now that I know that, you know, I can do something different.

Student 6:

That when I went about putting together the "All About Me" project, it seemed to be almost like a closing of history for me, like this was then, and it opened up into a second part which said, "This is what I want to be." I think the most rewarding thing would be the building up of self-esteem. The communication skills are great, but without the self-esteem, you wouldn't be able to get up there and use your communication skills in the first place. So I thought a portfolio was just for someone high up on the social ladder, on the business ladder, I never thought it would something that I could use personally. But when you have all your computer work in it, your copies of what you've done, your resumes... all the things that you've done yourself personally on the computer, and you have basically your work history all at your fingertips, it... it's a miracle. It just... it saves so much time, and so much energy. You take this one folder in and you could... you design it the way you want it. That way you're basically putting on a presentation for a prospective employer as you're going through this portfolio with them.

Student 7:

I'm a fast learner. I work well with others, willing to do what needs to be done to be successful. I'm willing to work to meet employer's expectations.

Student 8:

My future educational plans:

I plan on going to college and majoring in business. I have basic computer experience and would like to know more about it. I'm a fast learner, and I would like to learn new things all the time, and you can never learn too much. I also like to set goals and work out a plan to try to achieve them so I can be successful in life.

Baker:

It's becoming more and more of a common thing is to take a portfolio with you as you apply for a job, because it... the employer then doesn't have to just take your word for it that you can do this, and I think you wow him a little bit by opening this up, and "Yes, I can do this, and here's where... how I've used this in the past." One way that we did deal with the people coming in a different levels that I think was effective, is after that initial overview, that we did of... this is how... this is what PowerPoint does, and here's a few of the key things, we gave them that time individually to work on it, and although it made us run around like maniacs sometimes from computer to computer to help people, I think that helped us because the people were able to work at their level, and we did a lot of things where people partnered up, and... as we said, people started helping the other students a little bit more.

Hack:

We sit in this room and we talk this talk, and... but I want them to get out there and be able to walk the walk when they leave here. And one of the biggest challenges was to salt-and-pepper the technology in there to keep Ôem hooked and interested in learning, but to drive home the points that, yeah, this is good, but you have to have all these other things in your complete package that you present to an employer so that you can be retained on a job.

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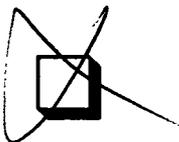


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