

The Lifelong Learning Center (LLC) is an adult basic literacy education service offered through the Missoula County Public Schools Adult Education Division. The LLC prepares students to pass high school equivalency exams, succeed in college classes, and re-enter the workforce by providing reading, writing, and math instruction at multiple locations throughout Missoula, Montana.

The LLC uses EdReady for the majority of their math instruction. The center previously used Plato courseware, but found that adult students prefer EdReady since the instruction was created for older students. Additionally, The LLC serves students with varying skill levels and educational goals, so they appreciate that the EdReady diagnostic provides a personalized learning path for each student.

IMPLEMENTATION

Every student who enrolls at The LLC begins by taking a short Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) that assesses the student's educational skill level in reading, math, and language. Upon completion of the TABE test, students are given an EdReady account. The material each student studies in EdReady will depend on his or her educational goal.

Some students at The Lifelong Learning Center are focused on completing the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET), honing their skills for workforce re-entry, or preparing for short-term training. For this group of students, their TABE results are used to assign which math concepts (TABE E, TABE M, TABE D, or TABE A) they are required to study in EdReady.

By contrast, students who are focused on college readiness use a series of college prep goals in EdReady that align with the courses offered at the University of Montana. This sequence helps students to be confident they are learning the math they need in order to be ready for college. All college prep students begin by studying pre-algebra EdReady materials. The EdReady diagnostic removes any concepts the student already knows from the study path. This compresses the learning experience for busy adult students.



DETAILS

WHO WAS SERVED: Adults with math skill levels ranging from third grade to college prep

WHEN: Rolling enrollment, August 2014-present

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: ~700 students each year

IMPLEMENTATION: Guided use in a lab or independent study at home

INSTRUCTIONAL APPLICATION: High school equivalency, college success, or career prep

“A beautiful part of EdReady is that you get to listen to presentations and worked examples. We have some ESL students who either are pursuing HiSET or are just trying to improve their English and math skills. Being able to actually practice the listening piece is vital and really helps build vocabulary. It’s really rich for ESL populations.”

—Renee Bentham, Department Chair,
Missoula County Public Schools Adult
Education Division

All students are encouraged to come to the lab classroom for at least the first 12 hours of EdReady use so that the instructors can provide tips for working through the materials and minimize any technology frustrations. The lab is staffed with an instructor and often a tutor, and the computer monitors are positioned so that the instructor can see what each student is doing and provide support when needed.

RESULTS

In the 2016 program year, The LLC categorized 205 students with math as their Primary Area of Instruction. Of those 205 students, 22 students (10.7%) increased at least one Educational Functioning Level during the 2016 program year (EFL is the National Reporting System for Adult Education). Comparatively, in the 2014 program year prior to implementing EdReady, there were 210 students categorized with math as their Primary Area of Instruction, and only 14 of them (6.6%) increased one Educational Functioning Level. Comparing these two program years, students using EdReady performed significantly better when retesting their math skills. There was a 62% increase from 2014 to 2016 in the number of students who improved at least one Educational Functioning Level.

An increase of one Educational Functioning Level means the student has improved anywhere from one to three grade levels in math. Renee Bentham, Department Chair for the Missoula County Public Schools Adult Education Division said, "Adult Basic Education programs are funded to assist students with making academic progress. That progress is measured in part by a post test in their lowest EFL skill area. Making an EFL gain means they have made progress, which contributes to them reaching their educational goals and to our program's continued WIOA funding."

WHAT'S NEXT?

The LLC will continue to use EdReady for the majority of its math instruction. Bentham shared, "EdReady is our 'go to' curriculum. It allows us to individualize and provide instruction to meet the needs and goals of each student." The LLC will begin encouraging students to use EdReady to work on their math skills from home in order to minimize the time between learning sessions. The ability to track the amount of time each student spends in EdReady outside of the classroom allows The LLC to credit students for attendance hours, which Bentham hopes will help the adult students attain their academic goals even faster. ■