



Information from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubns/2006/adulted/index.asp>

## A LESSON ON ENGLISH

### Adult Education in the U. S. A.

*The March 2008 issue of ALOE gives information on the educational system for children up to graduation from high school, and the April 2008 issue outlines the secondary education system (universities and colleges, both undergraduate and graduate). This issue covers adults who attend school.*

Traditionally, it's children who attend school in the United States. Yet according to a **U. S. Department of Education 2005 Statistical Report**, 44% of people living in the U.S. participated in adult educational activities that year. Obviously, school is not "just for kids." Here is information from the report.

#### **REPORT: Participation in Adult Educational Activities**

Over the 12-month period ending in spring 2005, **44% of adults** reported having participated in formal adult educational activities. *(This percentage does not include full-time enrollments in college/university or vocational/technical credential programs, as they are counted separately.)*

- More adults reported having participated in **work-related courses or training** (27%) than any other type of activity.
- Participation in other types of adult education include the following:
  - ⇒ **personal-interest courses** — 21%;
  - ⇒ **part-time college or university degree or certificate** programs — 4%;
  - ⇒ **ESL** (English as a second language) —1%;

- ⇒ **basic skills/GED** preparation classes (for high school dropouts who want to complete high school) — 1%;
- ⇒ **part-time vocational or technical diploma, degree, or certificate** programs — 1%;
- ⇒ **apprenticeship** programs — 1%.

#### **REPORT: Reasons For Participation**

Adults were asked a series of questions about reasons for participation in specific adult educational activities

- ESL classes, basic skills/GED preparation classes, work-related courses or training, and personal-interest courses. The majority of ESL participants reported having taken ESL classes to either improve the way that they felt about themselves (95%) or to make it easier to do things on a day-to-day basis (93%).
- A larger proportion of adults reported having taken basic skills/GED preparation classes to improve the way that they feel about themselves (78%) than for purposes of helping children with school work (28%), getting a new job with a different employer (55%), getting a raise or promotion (45%), and meeting requirements for public assistance (18%).



Sara and Jarda Tusek with Klaus

*"A Lesson on English" is a series of short lessons created for people who want to become fluent in conversational English. The lessons are practical and useful for students learning English in a traditional classroom setting or on their own.*



May 2008  
Volume 2, Issue 5

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### REPORT: Reasons For Participation (continued)

- Among adults who reported having taken formal work-related courses or training within the previous 12 months, a larger proportion of these adults reported having taken the courses or training to maintain or improve skills or knowledge that they already had (95%) than for purposes of learning new skills or methods that they did not already know (83%), helping to get a raise or promotion (19%), getting a new job with a different employer (10%), getting or keeping a state, industry, or company certificate or license (42%) or because they were required to participate (63%)

### REPORT: Type of Provider

Providers of adult education are usually either public or private institutions. Public institutions are often supported by local, state and national governments; private institutions get support for individuals and interested organizations.

- Among adults who were enrolled in ESL classes, basic skills/GED prepa-

ration classes, apprenticeship programs, work-related courses or training, or personal-interest courses over the last 12 months, the type of instructional provider reported most often for one or more of these activities was a private business, company, or hospital (40 %).



- For ESL participants, a larger proportion of adults reported that these classes were taken at an elementary school, junior high, high school, or adult learning center (46%) than reported that these classes were taken at other types of providers (17%) with the exception of postsecondary institutions (37%).
- For basic skills/GED preparation participants, a larger proportion of adults reported that these classes were taken at an elementary school, junior high, high school, or adult learning center (43%) than reported

that these classes were taken at post-secondary institutions (25%).

- Among participants in work-related courses or training, more adults cited a private business, company, or hospital (52%) as the instructional provider than any other provider type.
- Among adults who reported having taken personal-interest courses within the previous 12 months, the provider type of a community or religious organization or nonprofit institution (52%) was reported more often than any other provider type

Bear in mind that, for this survey, formal adult educational activities were defined by the presence of an instructor, whereas informal adult educational learning activities taken for personal interest did not have an instructor.

This means that the multitude of informal foreign language conversational groups, book clubs, political forums, religious seminars and health-related groups that meet to exchange information are not counted in this report.

Yet even excluding these common kinds of adult education, 44% of those living in the U. S. take part in adult education, making it a significant part of the American educational system.