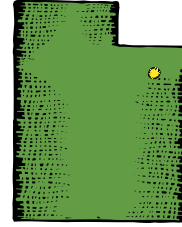


# A+ Success Story



## Lowering Barriers for Adult Learners

Graduation Rate Reaches 100 Percent Among Program Participants

One student works in the oil fields. Another, a shy, young mother, would be the first in her family's history to earn a high school diploma. A third, out of school for years and had never done well in math, needed to graduate high school before he could enter the military.

They all came to the Union High School Adult Education Program offered by the Duchesne County School District in rural northeastern Utah, and all of them graduated.

Adult education is often a puzzle of disparate pieces. "We have had students from 16 to 65," says Carolyn Davis, adult education coordinator at Union High School. Achieving educational objectives for adult learners, embedded as they are in the complexities of adult life, demands appropriate teaching skills, flexibility, a focused curriculum, and the right tools.

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— CAROLYN DAVIS, ADULT EDUCATION COORDINATOR

### At a Glance

**School Location:** Roosevelt, UT

**Challenge:** Create a successful, flexible graduation program for an extremely diverse range of students.

**Solution:** Internet browser-based implementation of the *A+nyWhere Learning System* to best serve students' challenging schedules.

**Result:** A customized graduation program aligned to Utah State standards that facilitated 12 students receiving regular degrees and 33 passing their GED tests – a 100% success rate.

"We use the *A+nyWhere Learning System*<sup>®</sup> (*A+LS*<sup>™</sup>) courseware in two ways in our Adult Ed program," says Davis. The student can earn credits and receive their Adult Education Secondary diploma or they can prepare to take the GED and receive their Adult Education Completion Diploma from the state. We have *A+LS* online, with our courses taught through the browser. We've found the system to be very reliable. Our students always begin with 12 hours onsite, at the school. They can then continue onsite, or study offsite, at home, or at work. Testing for grades is always done onsite."

“I wanted an educationally sound program,” continues Davis. “I wanted the students to say that they had learned something in Adult Ed, not just that they had earned fast credits.”

*A+LS* courseware, developed by The American Education Corporation, came to Duchesne County School District with a recommendation from Utah’s statewide Adult Education Coordinator, who had used it and liked it. Adult education must address the full range of student requirements, from remedial to advanced, and *A+LS* does that. Its instructional design is research-based, following a proven sequence of Assess, Prescribe, Instruct, and Report. And its curriculum content is guided by recognized national standards from organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Core Knowledge Foundation for Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science. Both the instructional design and the curriculum content of *A+LS* are continually evaluated and updated. The extensive curriculum, containing over 5,400 lessons, is kept aligned with standards in all 50 states, and the GED components are 100 percent aligned with the current GED test.

### Focus on Learners

Davis and her online instructor, Jen Guzel, started with the native capabilities of *A+LS* and fine-tuned

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the system to fit their own teaching style and the needs of their students. “Jen added our own review lesson after every fifth or sixth lesson in the *A+LS* curriculum,” says Davis. “We use the *A+LS* end-of-lesson essay questions as they come. The students answer all of them. And Jen also added our own 50-question comprehensive test at the end of each course. Most of our students must pass everything at 80 percent. For Special Ed students, we can make adjustments.”

“I’ve worked with several online learning systems and reviewed others. They can be cumbersome. As a teacher, in terms of ease of use, I think that *A+LS* compares favorably.”

— JEN GUZEL, ONLINE INSTRUCTOR

As the online teacher who uses *A+LS* every day, Jen particularly values the option to customize the system while keeping the focus on the students, not on the courseware. “I’m originally a math teacher,” says Guzel. “I’ve worked with several online learning systems and reviewed others. They can be cumbersome. As a teacher, in terms of ease of use, I think that *A+LS* compares favorably.”

Course Assessments and Adaptive Assessments are important parts of *A+LS*. Course Assessments consist of a pre-test before a lesson to evaluate a student’s preparedness and a post-test after the lesson to determine how well the student learned, and how well the lesson was taught. Adaptive Assessments dynamically evaluate the student’s performance during an assessment. *A+LS* then adapts to the student’s ongoing progress, presenting more difficult material when the student is successful and less difficult

material when the student is not successful. It's a strategy that avoids constantly presenting the student with failure. Instead, it makes progress a habit.

"By using GED Adaptive and pre-tests," says Guzel, "we've found that, after going through the *A+LS* prep lessons, students do pretty well on the actual GED test." She adds, "Last year we had 33 students get their GEDs and 12 complete regular degrees."

*A+LS* technology makes barriers less daunting. "The student who worked in the oil fields had a job that was very demanding," says Davis. "They work overtime. *A+LS* allowed him to do schoolwork whenever he could. He did very well."

The shy student with a young child at home, who earned her diploma through Duchesne County's online Adult Ed program, had few other alternatives. "It's the only way she could have gotten it," says Davis. "Her whole family showed up at graduation. It was really neat to see that."

And the student with the math block, who wanted to enlist in the military, might well have never over-

come his own internal barrier. "He was really worried about it," says Davis. "With *A+LS*, Jen could work closely with him. When he finished, he said, 'I can do math.' I have to give some credit to the learning environment, because he had never been able to do that in a traditional classroom setting. He had a real feeling of accomplishment. He did get his diploma. And he did know math."

"We like to brag about them," says Guzel.

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## About The American Education Corporation (AEC)

Early recognition of the national trend in school accountability, combined with an understanding of the impact of the Internet on education, has allowed AEC to become an industry leader in e-learning solutions. Few education companies offer the systemized combination of formative assessment, proven instruction, alignment to standards, and data management and reporting capabilities of AEC's comprehensive courseware and learning management system.

The *A+nyWhere Learning System*<sup>®</sup> (*A+LS*<sup>™</sup>) software program is an e-learning solution ideal for schools searching for more efficient ways to improve their instructional processes. The *A+LS* courseware program consists of an award-winning instructional management system supported by significant core curriculum content for grades K–12 and adult learners delivered through a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), or the Internet. The research-based curriculum content is in the subject areas of Reading, Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Writing, and Social Sciences. This curriculum is linked to state standards and combined with valuable formative assessment tests designed to guide instruction throughout the school year — as well as give school administrators the data they need to ensure maximum student performance.

**Would you like to learn more about the *A+nyWhere Learning System*?**

**Give us a call at 800.480.3935 to arrange a custom product demonstration with Backbone Communications, your local licensed product reseller.**

**You can also check us out on the web at [www.BackboneCommunications.com](http://www.BackboneCommunications.com)**

**A+ Success Story Union High School Adult Education Program, Utah**