



Business Access Community Update

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Person of the Year: You ...with a little help from the Internet

Last month, Time Magazine placed reflective material on the cover of its **Person of the Year issue** and bestowed the annual honor on a different kind of winner: You.

The Internet, the magazine argued, was the catalyst for a radical shift in empowerment and influence. "The world wide web is about the many wresting power from the few and helping one another for nothing... It's a tool for bringing together the small contributions of millions of people and making them matter."

That the Internet could become such place is no real surprise to those of us at Business Access. The most widely read content on our web site isn't about employment or training; it's the stories, notes, and recognition articles spotlighting our clients (Achievers).

Web sites that gave users space to express themselves are enjoying incredible expansion. **Myspace.com**, a social networking web site, registered its 100 millionth user last September. **YouTube.com**, where people can post their own videos, receives more than 65,000 new submissions each day, some of which occasionally make national news. **Wikipedia.org**, an online encyclopedia, claims more than 1.5 million entries in English, all written and edited by you, me, or anyone who wants to contribute.

Distance Learning; Engaging Students Improves Results

Virtual worlds (think **The Sims**) may well become the setting for future distance learning classes.

A recent New York Times article entitled "**The Ultimate Distance Learning**" featured **Second Life**, a website where corporations and universities buy an island and construct classrooms in a virtual world where students and employees create their own avatar (self-image) and take courses. Says one teacher, "...no matter how good a distance-learning class is, an inherent distance does still exist between you and your students. Second Life has really bridged that gap."

In general, distance learning communities are recognizing the need to engage their students. Best practices identified by **The Sloan Consortium** include posting pictures of students, posting portfolios of their work, making welcome calls, providing telephone help lines and tutorial access, and connecting students to instructors, mentors, former students and others.



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Keeping Achievers Connected

Our Achievers perform better when they are recognized and feel connected. Some of the ways we engage our clients include:

- Orientation Class
- Installation service
- Online Greeter
- Welcome Calls
- 30 day Quick Start Contacts
- Achiever News and Notes Content
- Achiever Recognition Content
- Achiever Stories
- Bulletin Boards
- Instant Messaging
- Achiever Progress Reports
- Hosted Chats
- Technical Support
- Surveys and Self-Help Tools
- Case Management Reporting
- Case Manager Auto Emails

Advocate Connection is Key to an Achiever Comeback

During Orientation, it was clear that Eucile, a Dallas TANF Achiever, not only had limited computer skills but also appeared to have limited ability to retain information. Though Eucile was highly motivated, her instructor believed she might require additional in-class training to complete the program.

Once home with her computer Eucile started slowly. Six weeks after orientation (and several tech support calls), she completed her first course in May, 2006. By mid-July she'd stopped participating altogether.

In late August, she responded to a low usage letter, telling BA Advocate Sonya Morgan, "I just don't think I can do it. You can come and get the computer."

Sonya convinced her to give it another try, but Eucile continued to have low usage. Work, a death in the family, and her teenage daughter were dominating her time. Still, our Advocates stayed in touch, and in early October, Eucile was finally ready to make a commitment.

She began completing courses and learned to use personal messaging to communicate with Sonya online. The occasional supportive telephone call helped, too. Eucile struggled to complete the last few courses but was able to do so at the end of December, earning a place in our January graduating class.

Eucile pushed her way through both internal and external obstacles. She's a real Achiever. (You can read **more** about Eucile and how a different mentor helped her in the past.)

Complete Tasks. Earn Credits. Go to the Store

Incentives work. In conjunction with **Arbor Education and Training** and the Business Access iJobs program, we are developing an incentive program where clients will earn credits for completing tasks such as a courses, resume, job application, etc. They will be able to use these credits to purchase items at an online store.

WIA 2007 Funding to Stay at 2006 Levels

Good news: In December, House and Senate members passed a year-long Continuing Resolution that will fund the 2007 House and Senate Labor-HHS bills at 2006 WIA funding levels. Those 2006 levels were slightly higher than those originally proposed for 2007. Read more **here** ...

Welcome West Central Texas

We welcome a new Texas Workforce Board, West Central Texas, to the Business Access community. The board plans to provide the In Home Learning Program to both TANF clients co-enrolled in WIA as well as WIA adult clients.

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#) .

If you have comments or suggestions, please [click here](#) .

Achiever says...

"I didn't think dropping out was a big deal at the time, but now, I do. If I can study on the computer (at home), it would be a whole lot better. With the kids' situation, going to class isn't easy. This is going to make a big difference for me."

Kashara, Dallas Achiever
And single-mother of three

Helpful Website

In The Mix at PBS.org has down to earth information and real stories about the issues teens care about.

Learn more about how the Business Access has helped Workforce:

[TANF Clients](#)

[WIA Adults](#)

[WIA Youth](#)

[Hurricane Evacuees](#)

[Incumbent Workers](#)

[FSE&T Clients](#)

[Dislocated Workers](#)

[Trade Affected Workers](#)

[People with Disabilities](#)