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## **SUMMER START**

Submitted by Alex Ansah-Arkorful, Bronx EOC Lab Coordinator

During the summer of 2004, the Bronx Educational Opportunity Center (BEOC) embarked on a “Summer Start” program, a plan to use the ATTAIN Lab to prepare and build on the knowledge of its students for the upcoming school year. As an aid to the GED classes, the ATTAIN lab helped twenty-five of the thirty GED students pass their GED state exams and move on to vocational programs.

During the previous school year, the students in some of our programs were given a chance to better their knowledge by “doing some lab time” in the ATTAIN lab. It was found over the trimesters that some of the students had a hard time adjusting to the amount of information being poured into them in their specialized programs. The ATTAIN lab therefore, was used—amongst other things—as a supplement to programs, allowing students to work at their own pace in advancing their knowledge for what was to come in their classes. The majority of the students during the school year passed their classes and moved on to their areas of interest. Their time in the ATTAIN lab was a great aid to them, providing extra help outside of the classroom.



Lab Coordinator, Alex Ansah-Arkorful, assisting a Bronx EOC student

Consequently, this past summer was seen as a time to give the prospective BEOC students a head start in their upcoming programs. Two classes were conducted for students seeking entry into a variety of programs. Some needed to better their TABE scores in order to enter vocational programs, while others needed to complete the prerequisites for the classes in which they intended to enroll. Among these were students who needed their General Equivalency Diplomas (GED).

Among the twenty-five students who passed the GED are the stories of two students who worked in the ATTAIN lab last trimester and this summer. With his admission into the CUNY City College of NY, Oukpedjowe Ouro-sama became one of the students who through the BEOC, with the help of the ATTAIN lab, is heading for a college degree. Sam, as he is known, came into the BEOC with an interest in the Administrative Medical Office Specialist Program. His TABE test results were not up to par for that particular program. Therefore, he was placed in the Vocational Academic Preparation Lab (VAPL), which is an instructor-based workshop style program, with objectives that include improving the TABE (reading and math) scores for gaining admission to programs of choice.

Sam is finished with his Administrative Medical Office Specialist Programming, has been granted entrance into CCNY and will be pursuing a BA in Business Administration this fall. He took the vocational program in order to have financial stability and support while advancing in his education.

Jose Alicia, came to the BEOC to pursue his GED. He was in the previous trimester’s class, but was not ready to take the GED exam by the trimester’s end. He decided to join the “Summer Start” group to work on his math. On August 10th, he was given a chance to take the state exam, which he passed and is now learning to become an auto mechanic.

There are more success stories to come as the BEOC ATTAIN lab is being used continuously. With the aid of the ATTAIN project, the BEOC is not only graduating summer students from specialized programs, but also moving others on to specific vocational programs. The use of the ATTAIN lab has proven to be an invaluable asset to the Bronx Educational Opportunity Center’s students.

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# *Software Enhancements*

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The ISI Development Team is continually updating and revising the current courseware, as well as developing new courses. Minor fixes have been made on courseware issues reported by practitioners. New courses have been introduced in all of ISI's learning areas: remedial academics, assessment, entry-level job training, and life skills.

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## *Health Care Worker Series*

In the three basic health care courses, there has been continual addition and upgrade of media and content. New lessons covering Blood Borne Pathogens, AIDS and Alzheimer's disease have been added to all of the three health care courses:

- 1) Nurse Assistant Program
- 2) Home Care Aide: a subset of the Nurse Assistant Program is limited to the home environment.
- 3) Health Care Worker: relevant to working in hospitals and nursing homes.

## *Advanced Reading Comprehension*

This course contains reading comprehension passages for grades 12 and up. It was created through the transfer of the higher level material from the College Remedial Reading course. The presence of this advanced content in the remedial course created obstacles for users below the grade 12 reading level. The Advanced Reading Comprehension course is appropriate for integration into more advanced programs such as college prep or advanced test preparation.

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## *PILOT COURSES*

**Please Note:** The following courses are available to you under a "pilot license" and are still in development:

Adult Basic Skills Assessment Mathematics, Reading, and Language  
Developmental Mathematics, Reading and Writing  
Child Care Worker Levels I, II, III  
Parenting

We encourage you to utilize the pilot courses and, as always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions.

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## *Adult Basic Skills Assessments*

### *Developmental Reading*

Seventy-eight new passages have been added to this course covering grades 1.2 to 3.9. The course now covers grades 1.2 to 7.7.

Contains 12 assessment modules in math and reading. Given that many ATTAIN labs are located in centers providing academic remediation to participants with reading and math levels below 4th grade, these assessments were developed to measure functional levels at the 0 to 4.0 levels. Eventually, in addition to score, assessment results will indicate grade level. Indication of grade level is also being planned for Basic Assessment Math and Reading, which test for grades 4 and up and are oriented towards basic skills required for employability.

### *Child Care Worker Levels I, II, & III*

Additional media and audio readback support have been added to these courses.

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## New Developments to Look for in the Upcoming Months...

- An Adult Vocabulary Development Course covering 300 basic core vocabulary words will be available to all ATTAIN labs.
- The Office Skills series content, media and graphics will be revised.

### NEW PILOT COURSES COMING SOON:

- Customer Service Representative will be updated and expanded in three initial areas:
  - Hotel and Hospitality
  - Travel and Tourism
  - Banking
- A new course called Fatherhood
- Two new Health Care courses:
  - Patient Care Technician
  - Medical Assistant
- New comprehensive courses in Employability Skills (Hard and Soft Skills)

## ISI Management System

The ISI Development Team has worked diligently to enhance the Management System with features that will make the product more efficient and easier to use. Effort has been made to detect, correct, and eliminate bugs. There has also been continual review of the reports for accuracy, reliability, and ease of use.

### New Feature

The Management System has a new feature which allows administrators to add third party software to the ISI Manager. Please contact your ISI Trainer for training on this new feature.

## W.E.B. DuBois Students “The Best of Both Worlds”

Submitted by Linda Thompson, Lab Coordinator

Ms. Catherine Hartnett, the principal of W.E.B. DuBois High School, the faculty, staff members and Mrs. Linda Thompson, the ATTAIN lab manager, are helping students prepare for the 21st century workplace. The students have the best of both worlds. Not only can they excel in academic programs, but with the new Employment Skills course, they can prepare themselves for the 21st century workplace.

The Employment Skills course utilizes ATTAIN Lab ISI programs such as Introduction to Office Technology, Customer Service Representative, Office Skills, and Working With People to help prepare students for the world of work. Students learn useful skills and hold weekly discussions on the concepts they learn while studying selected ISI curricula, the Internet and the Computing Core Certification (IC3) program.

In addition to learning employment skills, students also learn essential computer skills that are in great demand in the workplace. For DuBois students, the Employment Skills course serves as a well-rounded introduction to the tools of the workplace. Students are encouraged to maintain an average score of 80 and above in the Employment Skills course. They will all prepare a resume and emerge from the Employment Skills course at DuBois High School equipped with a strong foundation in workplace technology, customer service, office skills and working with people. Look out workforce: DuBois students are on the rise!

# New ATTAIN Labs

**Niagara Falls  
Housing Authority**  
744 Tenth Street  
Niagara Falls, New York

**Berry House Development  
NYC Housing Authority**  
1742 Richmond Road  
Staten Island, NY

**Gay Men's Health Crisis, Inc.  
The Terry K. Watanabe  
Volunteer and Work Center**  
119 West 24th Street  
New York, New York

**Henry Street Settlement**  
301 Henry Street  
New York, New York

**Sullivan County BOCES**  
22 St. John Street, 3rd Floor  
Monticello, NY

**Roswell P. Flower  
Memorial Library**  
229 Washington Street  
Watertown, New York

**Ogdensburg  
Boys and Girls Club**  
610 Patterson Street  
Ogdensburg, New York

See our next issue of  
ISIItems for exciting news  
and information about these  
new labs.

## **ATTAIN INTEGRATION WORKSHOP**

Submitted by Rochester EOC ATTAIN Lab Managers, Dan Ferrante and Alicia Ward

To kick off the 2004-2005 academic year, the Rochester Educational Opportunity Center (REOC) ATTAIN Lab Managers, Alicia Ward and Dan Ferrante, presented an ATTAIN Integration workshop for campus faculty during Convocation Week. Their presentation provided information and instruction for integration of the ISI & third party software into overall course curricula.



Dan Ferrante instructing REOC ESOL Faculty member, Pat Chakalis

In 2002, the REOC instituted as a graduation requirement the completion of a core curriculum in the ATTAIN lab consisting of lessons from the ISI Customer Service, Working With People, and Life Skills courses. This requirement, which serves as an introduction to the ATTAIN Lab, was not initially applauded by all. Some faculty felt burdened by the assignment which brought with it tracking student progress, applying grades, and monitoring the lab. For the first two years, without full-time lab assistance, ATTAIN Lab attendance was not always a welcomed part of the academic week.

The ATTAIN lab managers have established increased lab usage as a primary goal for this academic year. At the integration workshop, their PowerPoint presentation provided faculty with background on the ATTAIN Project and project goals and highlighted software targeting academic and vocational instructional areas. Afterwards, workshop attendees had a chance to practice using the ISI and third party software. Alicia predicts, "that as faculty become more knowledgeable of the instructional tools and gain confidence in running the software, they are sure to integrate lessons into their weekly instructional plans."

Without full-time support, many faculty members were unaware of the full potential that the ATTAIN Lab presented for software integration into the curriculum. The presentation was a welcome step forward for many REOC faculty members. ESL Instructor, Pat Chakalis, said after the workshop, "I was one of the biggest opponents of the ATTAIN Lab, and this presentation changed my mind. I see some new ways to use the ATTAIN Lab."

Other faculty members who were familiar with the ATTAIN Lab found the question and answer session period that followed to be helpful. Many of them were excited that the duties they performed under an unsupervised ATTAIN Lab were now passing on to the full-time coordinator, Dan Ferrante, whose response to many questions was simply put as, "That's why I'm here." Dan added, "My goal is to bridge REOC faculty into using and enriching their curriculum with ISI software. This is a unique integration of curriculum and software, and I want to make it work."

By the close of the ATTAIN Integration Workshop, several faculty members commented that an expanded ATTAIN Lab workshop should be added to the courses offered during the upcoming REOC Professional Development Day. They asked for a follow-up workshop with more hands-on time. And, in response, Dan and Alicia have begun to prepare another presentation to do just that!