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***U.S.A. Learns* – A Web site where adults can study English, improve their literacy skills, or study for the G.E.D.**

On August 10, 2007 President Bush announced his plans for immigration reform. The last of the 26 points in his plan called for the launch of a "Web-based Portal."

26. The Department Of Education Will Launch A Free, Web-Based Portal To Help Immigrants Learn English, And Expand This Model Over Time. Knowledge of English is the most important component of assimilation. An investment in tools to help new Americans learn English will be repaid many times over in the contributions these immigrants make to our political discourse, economy, and society. (*Improving Border Security and Immigration Within Existing Law,* " <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/immigration/>)

A prototype of the portal is currently being built by the University of Michigan in partnership with the Sacramento County Office of Education. After a field test in Winter-Spring of 2008 it will be ready for regular use in September of 2008.

In Fall of 2005 the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), awarded Michigan and Sacramento a contract to develop a number of technology resources for adult education. The contract called for exploring the feasibility of building a Web portal where adult learners could find instructional materials on subjects ranging from learning English to preparing for the G.E.D. To better understand the design features a portal should have, a prototype is being built first. The prototype will contain learning materials in three areas: a beginning-level English course, a mid-level English course, and activities for improving reading, writing and life skills.

The prototype should be complete on January 31, 2008. It will then undergo several months of field testing with learners. By September a refined portal should be ready to launch for use by adults anywhere in the United States. The portal begins with a focus on learning English, but the portal is expected to expand over time, with the addition of materials in areas such as civics and basic skills.

Supporting Adult Education Programs Through Technology

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