

Johnny Opened the Door to His Future

My first night of teaching GED® classes was February 4, 2015. Johnny Hull, III's first night of taking GED® classes was February 4, 2015. I was filled with anxiety, as I had heard how difficult the new math test had become with the 2014 changes to the GED® test. I was concerned that I would not have the competency I needed as an instructor to prepare students to pass that portion of the GED® exam. Johnny, on the other hand, seemed to have no nerves at all as he strolled into the classroom and told me he only needed to "brush up" in order to get his GED®. I was rather doubtful that this was the case, but not wanting to discourage him, I said, "OK, then let's get started."

Johnny tested very high on reading and also did well on the math portion of TABE, the initial assessment tool we use to determine where instruction needs to begin with each individual. With those results, I began to believe that this confident young man might indeed only need "brushing up." His goal was to get a good job at a manufacturing facility near his home in Rural Retreat. He had been trying to get a job there for quite some time, but his lack of a high school credential was holding him back.

Speaking of high school, Johnny told me he developed a bad case of "senioritis" during his senior year and stopped doing the work required of him. When he failed two subjects needed for graduation and was told by high school administration that he could only take one subject in summer school to graduate, he felt defeated and dropped out of school completely near the end of twelfth grade.

Motivated by his desire for employment, a job that offered a good salary and good benefits, Johnny came to GED® classes faithfully. He showed up when the doors opened, and he stayed until class was over, sometimes staying after class to finish up an assignment or an assessment. He felt good about his math skills; giving kudos to an excellent math teacher he had in high school. He worked through the math assignments on GED® Academy and qualified to take his GED® Ready assessment just one month into the program. He passed with flying colors!

Next was science which we chose because of the math content in that subject. He sat for the official GED® science test just three weeks later, and once again received a passing score. His next conquest was social studies, as he was a little concerned about the writing component of the language arts test and wanted to save it for last. Social studies was easily accomplished, and we began to work on writing, knowing that his reading was already where it needed to be. Johnny wrote some excellent practice essays, putting some extra attention toward spelling and grammar, and just ten weeks after enrolling in the class, he successfully took and passed his fourth and final test. His confident, "I think I can do it, all I need is a little brush-up" rang true and he now has the credential he needs to open the door to his future.

Johnny is waiting for his official certificate to arrive in the mail. We have scheduled a WorkKeys assessment at Wytheville Community College to obtain his Career Readiness Certificate, and we have an appointment to create his resume and cover letter. With all of these tools, he is on his way to a career in manufacturing. Good luck, Johnny! You have been a great inspiration to this rookie instructor.

Submitted by: Angie Lawson

Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program offers free classes for the following:

GED® Preparation for NEW Computer Based Test

College Placement Test Preparation

Improving Reading and Math Skills

Career Readiness Certificate Preparation

English as a Second Language

PlugGED® In VA

Career Coaching Available

If you would like to learn more about free adult education classes in a location near you, please call Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program at (800) 322-7748 or visit our website at www.mrraep.org.