

## Introduction

Since we published *GED as Project, Language Arts, Reading*, several developments have influenced the field of adult education. First of all, considerable research and findings about adult learners and adult readers have been published. Secondly, interest in and concern about the transitioning student has caused us to look at the work we are doing with the GED®-level students, and to consider the post-GED outcomes they are attaining. Finally, the growing focus on standards for instruction is causing every program and, perhaps, instructor to look at what is being taught and how.

In the past year, we asked several reading specialists who have focused on adult education to review *GED as Project, Language Arts, Reading*. They found that what we set forth has remained sound, although it was suggested that we should look at the mechanics of reading as well as comprehension. In particular, they felt a stronger focus needed to be put on fluency and alphabetics. We thought, too, it would be good to have a clearer understanding of the characteristics of the GED-level reader.

The research on the transitioning student shows us that those who have passed their GED Tests still are at a significant disadvantage compared to high school graduates in their efforts to attain further goals. Some of this is attributable to their not having had significant experience in doing a great deal of individual work—homework. Other problems include a lack in their body of knowledge; not having finished high school means a lack of exposure to some basic cultural icons.

During my classroom observations, I felt a growing concern about how to encourage instructors to carry out the activities presented in *GED as Project* with materials other than those provided by the Official Practice Test. I saw a huge variation in what is offered as reading instruction. We have been told repeatedly that, at the GED level, some instructors felt little need to work on their students' reading development.

As we worked on the development of Virginia's General Educational Development Content Standards, I saw an opportunity to add content discussion to the reading skills development so well covered in *GED as Project, Language Arts, Reading*. I have long considered that lack of a focus on content to be a weakness in this book. It is very important that these advanced adult learners develop approaches to understanding literary forms and increase their capacity to understand more advanced texts.

Marcia Phillips

### **This CD contains:**

- Reading Characteristics of GED-Level Learners, by Bill Muth,
- Alphabetics and Fluency: Strengthening the Foundations of Reading Comprehension, by Susan McShane
- The English Teacher: Developing critical reading skills and literary awareness, by Marcia Phillips

- Reading passages from the Official Practice Test A, and others:
  - *Barefoot in the Park* (Learning Project 2)
  - *My Antonia* (Learning Project 3)
  - Employee Handbook (Learning Project 4)
  - “The Vanishing American” (Learning Project 5)
  - Trompe L’oeil exhibit review (Learning Project 6)
  - “Sympathy” (Learning Project 7)
  - “A Visit to Grandmother” (Learning Project 8)