

The PACTA Conference – Sharing Ideas with Workforce Development Partners

I recently attended the annual Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators (PACTA) Conference in Hershey. The theme of the conference, *Pathways to Career Readiness*, was established and confirmed through the keynote presentations and informational sessions offered to participants.

The opening keynote speaker, Kevin J. Fleming, presented an informative message that resonated with the work that we do as adult education practitioners. Kevin, known for his production of the inspirational video “*Success in the New Economy*,” shared 12 ideas to consider for supporting career activities. Although these 12 ideas were presented to a k-12 audience, most are relevant and applicable to our work.

One of the tips that Fleming offered was to embed career exploration in to more of our work. Many tools to assist you with this are available under the Workforce/Career Pathways menu on the PA Adult Ed Resources site at <http://www.paadulthoodresources.org/>. Fleming offered a very simple way to present this to students: What do you love to do? What are you good at? and What can you get paid to do? At the point these three questions intersect is where students can begin to further explore careers.

Fleming also encouraged those in the audience to attend a board meeting once a year to share a success story. This advice really mirrors what adult education providers do when they present a Title II report to their respective Workforce Development Boards annually.

The last of the 12 tips that I’ll share is that it is no longer enough to teach the traditional “3 Rs”. Fleming noted that we need to add two more Rs so that we are more fully preparing students to transition to employment or postsecondary. These two additional Rs are relevance and reality.

If you would like more information about Kevin Fleming’s presentation or support for career pathways or workforce development strategies, please contact me at klh267@psu.edu.