

National External Diploma Program: 50 Years of Innovation and Opportunity for Adult Learners

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# National External Diploma Program (NEDP): 50 Years of Innovation and Opportunity for Adult Learners

#### **Today's Presentation**

- Impetus and process for developing NEDP
- Distinguishing feature of NEDP
- Appeal of NEDP in current US context

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Roles in NEDP
Director, EDP
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#### **Questions for Session Participants**

- Why do adults choose the NEDP rather than other HSE options?
- What challenges have NEDP participants encountered using the online platform?
- What are the main barriers to NEDP completion?





# New York State External High School Diploma Program An Alternative Life Skills Credentialing Program

ADULT LITERACY and BASIC EDUCATION

#### THE EXTERNAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM AND ADULT LIFE CHANGES

The impact that adult education programs have on their participants is of interest to all adult educators. In an era when educational programs must be both accountable and cost-effective, it is necessary to determine the consequences that such programs have for both the participants and the general public. Adult educators need ample informtion to assess the value of their programs and to ensure the continuation of quality services. The effects that one such program, the New York State External High School Diploma Program, has had on its graduates is the subject of this article.

#### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The External Diploma Program is an innovative high school credentialing program for adults who have acquired skills through their life experience and can demonstrate these skills through an applied performance assessment system. The objective is to provide adults with an assessment and credentialing process that is an alternative to traditional diploma programs and that enables adults to earn a regular high school diploma.

Designed in 1973 by a group of administrators, teachers, counselors, students, businessmen, and labor leaders from the Central New York area under the aegis of the Syracuse Research Corporation (SRC), the program

NEW YORK STATE EXTERNAL HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

Submission Prepared for the Joint Dissemination Review Panel

**Development of a Performance Assessment System for** The Central New York External High School Diploma Program An Educational Alternative for Adults

> A Progress Report In Applied Performance Testing

Ruth S. Nickse, Ph. D., Project Director and Coordinator of Assessment Regional Learning Service of Central New York

April, 1975

The Regents **External High School Diploma** A Proposal to the Commissioner of Education

Prepared by The Central New York Design Group for the Regents External High School Diploma

SURC

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CORPORATION

United States Office of Education National Institute of Education

Program Validated on May 30, 1979

Prepared By

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This Certifies Chat

has met the requirements of a Senior High School course of study approved by kylir the Board of Education of the Cortland Enlarged City School District aniens by the University of the State of New York and is, therefore, granted this

Diplomits

Given at Certland, in the State of New York, on

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#### Context in Early 1970s in Central New York

- 43% of adult population over age 25 in Central New York did not have an HSD
- Participation in GED, correspondence courses, and community college programs not robust,
- Ford Foundation study found that programs not utilized because:
  - Courses scheduled at inconvenient times
  - Course content irrelevant to needs of adults
  - Mode of testing (closed paper and pencil exams) not satisfactory method for demonstrating competence
- Adults interviewed in Ford Foundation study reported:
  - Highly motivated to earn diploma; take responsibility for own learning





#### Context in Early 1970s in Central New York

- Adults interviewed in Ford Foundation study reported:
  - Highly motivated to earn diploma; take responsibility for own learning
  - Felt competent in life skills that they had acquired through work and community participation
  - Wanted to participate in assessment process that would enable them to demonstrate their competence
  - Were willing to participate in programs that recognized the need for flexibility in scheduling

#### **Assumptions Guiding EDP Design**

- Community had educational resources that could be accessed
- Adults had skills learned from life, work, family, and community participation





# Key Processes in NYS EDP Development and Replication

### **Design Group**

**1972**: Ford Foundation grant to Syracuse Research Corporation (SRC) to convene a30member design group from a 5county area: administrators, teachers, counselors, students, business representatives, labor leaders; 7 generic areas of competence & program guidelines

## **Development** Group

September 1973-**NYSED** special project funds: 14member development group; Central New York secondary and post-secondary educators & SRC staff specified 64 generalized competencies and began development of assessment system

## **Development** & Field Testing

**1973-1976**: EDP developed and field-tested at Regional Learning Service in Syracuse

**1976**: NYSED funds 5 assessment sites across NY state to replicate program

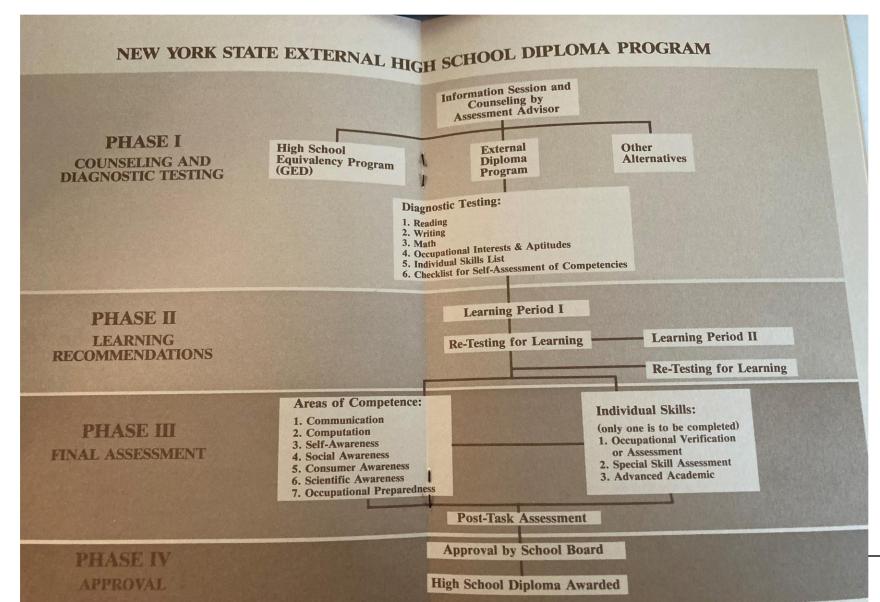
1978: Program expands to 6 locations in NY state; SRC develops **TA Center** 

1979: EDP approved by the Joint Dissemination **Review Panel** 





# NYS External Diploma Program Phases





## **Recognition and Dissemination**

- May 1979: Approved by US Office of Education & National Institute of Education
- Fall 1979: Received National Diffusion Network Grant as Developer Demonstrator Project
- Conducted EDP training and technical assistance:
  - California
  - Connecticut
  - Idaho
  - Massachusetts
  - Montana
  - Oregon
  - Virginia
  - Wisconsin



## **Competency Areas**

#### NYS Competency Areas (64 comp.)

- 1. Communication
- 2. Computation
- 3. Self-Awareness
- 4. Social Awareness
- 5. Consumer Awareness
- 6. Scientific Awareness
- 7. Occupational Preparedness

#### **Individual Skills:** (One needs to be completed)

- 1. Occupational Verification or Assessment
- 2. Special Skill Assessment
- 3. Advanced Academic

#### **NEDP Competency Areas (50 comp.)**

- 1. Communication, Cultural and Media Literacy
- 2. Applied Math/Numeracy
- 3. Information and Communication Technology
- 4. Health Literacy
- 5. Civic Literacy and Community Participation
- 6. Geography and History
- 7. Consumer Awareness and Financial Literacy
- 8. Science
- 9. Twenty-first Century Workplace

#### **Individual Competency:**

College and Career Competency





## Appeal of NEDP in Current US Context



 Assumptions about learners being able to demonstrate a range of skills using different modalities



Variety of tech tools being used



 Factors affecting learners' engagement in using tech tools and implications for supporting learners use of tools



 Range of knowledge needed to demonstrate competencies and individual skill



- Why do adults choose the NEDP rather than other HSE options?
- What challenges have NEDP participants encountered using the online platform?
- What are the main barriers to NEDP completion?
- What types of assistance are given to NEDP participants in planning next steps?



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