



COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OF RHODE ISLAND

**Center for Workforce and Community Education
Transition Pathways**

I have been very involved with the *SkillsTutor* Online Tutorial and have been working with adult students since 2001 as an employee of Warwick Adult Education and the Community College of Rhode Island. I was part of the Rhode Island Distance Learning Project through the Department of Education, Office of Adult Education and Vocational Training. Rhode Island was looking for a program that would reach adult students who had barriers, such as stay-at-home mothers or adults with disabilities as an alternative to attending classes at an agency. After a review of several distance learning programs, the group decided on *SkillsTutor* because of its user friendliness, alignment to state and national tests, and quick management tool.

Rhode Island Distance Learning began in 2001 with three Adult Ed agencies in each geographical area of RI. The programs were Project Learn in Woonsocket, Washington County Adult Learning Center in Wakefield, and Warwick Adult Education in Warwick. Through RI Distance Learning, students were enrolled in *SkillsTutor* across the state.

The project began as a distance learning program but quickly became part of classroom instruction and supplemental instruction. The students worked extremely well with *SkillsTutor*. My experience found great educational gains in Reading, Math, and Writing skills. It is a great tool for remedial activities also. I used it extensively for retesting within the GED Test Battery. The increase in test scores after a student worked on *SkillsTutor* in the needed area was invaluable. I have seen GED test scores increase by **50-100 points**. The average increase is 10-20.

Rhode Island Distance Learning became part of a nationwide distance learning research project with Project Ideal at the University of Michigan. We worked with 13 other states to see the value of distance learning programs with adult learners. This project now involves 25 states using various distance learning programs such as *SkillsTutor*. Several of the 25 states are using *SkillsTutor* as a major Distance Learning initiative.

Currently, at the Community College of Rhode Island, Office of Adult Education, *SkillsTutor* is used in three very effective best practices:

1. College Readiness:

CCRI offers a rigorous GED to College and Careers program. This program prepares students for the GED Test Battery and the Accuplacer college placement test. The goal of the program is that a learner obtain the GED credential, enroll in a post secondary institution, and test in the last level or test out of remedial (developmental) classes at the community college level.

This program consists of three modalities: Instruction, Distance Learning, and Independent Projects. Students are encouraged to show 135 hours in each modality. For the Distance Learning modality, *SkillsTutor* is used extensively. Students work on the program at home or on campus outside of the classroom. The average hours of the last two college readiness classes were 88. Learners feel that the *SkillsTutor* program is a big part of their success on the GED tests, especially in math and writing skills.

2. GED Preparation:

CCRI offers two Official GED Testing Centers in the Providence and Lincoln campuses. GED candidates are pre-tested to predict GED test readiness. After the pre-test, students are advised if they are ready to take the test, parts of the test, or need a preparation class.

Students with lower level scores in math, writing, or reading (one of the 5 GED subjects only) are enrolled into *SkillsTutor* for the subject area they need to work on. Upon completion of the assigned *SkillsTutor* modules, learners then are administered the Official GED Practice Test in the area needed to predict readiness in the GED subject worked on. For students who complete the subject modules for the weak area, the passing rate for the individual GED test is about 89%. The students taking part in this opportunity work solely at a distance with the tutorial.

SkillsTutor is always used when a student fails one subject of the GED Test Battery. There has been more than a 50 point increase in re-test scores after completion of the assigned *SkillsTutor* modules.

3. Career Pathways:

CCRI Adult Education offers a workplace literacy class to improve basic skills or English language skills to better meet the demands of the workplace. CCRI offers customized workforce training programs designed to meet the needs of the current workforce. These training classes are offered at CCRI and at area business and community agencies. Programs are offered to increase basic skills for non English speakers, GED prep candidates, adult basic education, and instruction in reading and math.

SkillsTutor is used as a supplement and classroom activity to reinforce the basic skills taught in the classes. At the present time *SkillsTutor* is being used with a pre-CNA class, a Green Pathways class, basic skills & computer skills class, a computer based ESL class, and classes at four local RI businesses. Teachers feel that *SkillsTutor* reinforces and strengthens classroom instruction.

SkillsTutor is a great part of the success of the Adult Education programs at CCRI. All staff involved with our students report that the tutorial is an integral part of all adult education skills instruction areas.

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