

PACEware™ is Ready for the Year 2000

PACEware 2.1b is now Y2K compliant. It correctly processes dates after the year 2000 with the one exception detailed below.

The exception to performance of version 2.1b in the year 2000 is in running the Entry/Exit Competency Gain Report. When students take a pretest in 1999 and a posttest in 2000, the ReportSmith reporting system of PACEware 2.1b will not compute the student's gains from pretest to posttest.

To address the reporting issue in version 2.1b, choose one of the following methods:

- Temporarily discontinue use of the Entry/Exit Competency gain report for students who will take pretests in 1999 and posttests in 2000. Or re-diagnose at the beginning of the school term in 2000 to establish a new benchmark.
- Implement the upgrade to PACEware version 2.1c, which will be available via download. To be notified of the patch release, visit our website at www.pacelearning.com and click on "PACEware and Y2K."
- Upgrade to PACEware 3.0 upon its release.

To learn more about Y2K compliance, talk with a PACE customer service representative at 800-826-7223 or visit our website at www.pacelearning.com. While PACE cannot provide specific consultation on the readiness of other products, our website lists internet addresses of additional resources that provide data pertinent to our user community.

"Nothing Teaches Like Success."™

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Community Effort, Community Success:

Accelerated Skills Program Offers Students Opportunity to Succeed

"I would have to repeat eighth grade for the third time if I hadn't come to this program."

Inside this Issue

Real-World
Employability Skills

PACE's Continued
Commitment

Y2K Readiness

Business, education, and PACE Learning Systems, Inc., joined hands in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, last summer to save more than 100 failing students in the city and county school systems.

The target: Potential dropouts – primarily eighth graders ages 13 to 15 and a smaller number of seventh graders. These students either had failed two or more subjects or were at least two years behind their peers in school. They were scheduled to repeat the grade they were in, some for the third time.

The treatment: The students volunteered for 60 hours of computer-based instruction in reading and math for six weeks of their 1998 summer vacation.

The incentive: If students satisfactorily completed the instruction, they would be promoted.

The results: 128 students enrolled; 110 students completed the program; 105 – 95% – were promoted.

Instruction was delivered using PACEware, software developed by PACE Learning Systems, Inc., that enables students to learn and progress at their own pace. Teachers served as facilitators, motivators, and program managers.

Most students achieved substantial gains in 60 hours of instruction. 80 of the

105 students gained from one to three grade levels in reading, and 64 of the 105 made one to three grade-level gains in math. Overall, program participants averaged improvement in reading from a grade level of 5.8 to 7.4, and in math from 5.7 to a 6.2 grade level.

Succeeding Together

Members of Tuscaloosa's business sector, working to improve high school graduation rates and the employment skills of graduates, anted up \$70,000 to underwrite the program. A group of executives gave \$35,000. Challenge 21, a countywide, privately funded planning organization, added another \$35,000.

The Tuscaloosa County School System furnished five of the seven class locations, along with computers and administrative support. School superintendent Joyce Sellers applauds the program: "We are extremely pleased with the results. Our students felt good about themselves and enjoyed working with computers. It gave them an incentive to stay in school. It was a great beginning, but we must continue."

Student feedback was overwhelmingly positive. "It helped me a lot. I would have to repeat eighth grade for the third time if I hadn't come to this program," said one

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Pacesetter

Purpose

To inform educators of new developments in PACE products and to highlight exemplary educational programs. To update educators on current trends in assessment, curriculum, and instructional design.

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A letter from the President Susan P. McKee, Ph.D.

Dear Friend:

Let me share some exciting news! PACE Learning Systems, Inc., continues to receive enthusiastic praise from those who know from experience that our materials help people and organizations achieve success through learning.

Who are they?

- Middle schools struggling to help students acquire the basic skills they need to succeed in high school.
- High schools that want to help students who have failed exit exams.
- Alternative programs faced with the challenging task of turning failures into successes.
- Business and industry trying to recruit and retain a workforce that is qualified to meet the demands of our global workplace.

Our mission at PACE Learning Systems is to provide effective, innovative print and software materials that deliver the newest learning technology. I, and our entire staff, pledge to make it easier for you to meet today's difficult educational challenges. The idea that "nothing teaches like success" is our guiding principle.

Please call us at 1-800-826-7223, and we will be delighted to tell you how PACE can address your particular needs.

If you need help, we are ready. Our products get results.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan P. McKee".



research and development

Revised Employability Skills Cabinet Makes the Grade

PACE Learning Systems improves its popular Employability Skills Cabinet (ESC) with the new print version to be completed this summer. This revision is the result of an intense review of the original print materials last fall. PACE customers and other educators made suggestions for changes to the lessons, Instructor's Guide, and Student Activity sheets.

The new ESC offers for the first time

- Objectives written as questions to the student.
- A glossary, with phonetic respellings and definitions, of vocabulary used in the lesson above the 5th grade reading level.
- Greater emphasis on practical application of skills and concepts.

A User-friendly System

"The organization and content are current," said Susie Smith of PACE's Research and Development Department. "We have updated the examples and provide many more real-world examples in the instruction." The realistic, practical employment examples are ones with which virtually

anyone can identify – high school students, young adults who left school before graduating, adults reentering the workforce, and those moving from welfare to work.

The Instructor's Guide also presents additional detailed information about how the system works and how to manage a class in which the ESC is used.

"The entire ESC product is more user friendly and better reflects today's world," Smith said. "We're proud of the changes we've made. We believe that the new ESC will appeal to teachers and students alike as a valuable tool for being successful in the world of work."

The revised ESC contains 15 modules, three more than the original ESC and the recent PACEware for Employability Skills. These modules teach pre-employment and work maturity skills:

- Making Career Decisions
- Looking for Employment
- Preparing Your Resume
- Applying for a Job
- Completing a Job Application
- Making Your Job Interview Count, Parts 1 and 2
- Managing Your Job Search
- Introducing the World of Work
- Maintaining Regular Attendance
- Being Consistently Punctual
- Completing Tasks Effectively
- Communicating at Work
- Demonstrating a Positive Attitude
- Presenting an Appropriate Appearance

For more information about the revised Employability Skills Cabinet, call 1-800-826-7223.

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student. Another said, "Before I was in this program, I didn't care about school. Now, I care about learning."

A 14-year-old, described as a classic under-achiever, entered the program reluctantly. But he ended it by meeting all the goals and winning five achievement awards. He left with a positive attitude toward school for the first time.

Counting in-kind contributions and services, the Accelerated Skills Program cost \$110,000. With per-pupil expenditures averaging about \$5000 in each school system, PACE president Susan McKee figures "we bought

\$525,000 worth of education" by keeping these students in school for another year.

Tutors continue to assist the students, and local Shelton State Community College has accepted the students into its "School to Career" program. Several times during the school year, the students visit the college campus where faculty members advise them about their career interests.

Discussions are underway to continue and expand the Accelerated Skills Program.