

Experts Share Their Insights

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Ron Brumbarger
Indiana Virtual
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Virtual Learning

New Choices for Better Education, Stronger Economy

“If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.”

These words ring especially true in the knowledge-based economy, in which the price of ignorance can be measured in lost income and missed opportunities. A high school graduate typically earns \$7,000 a year more than a high school dropout, while the average college graduate earns well over twice as much. Our poor educational performance is a major reason why Hoosiers earn just 90 cents for every dollar earned by the average American. We can do better. We must do better.

There are a variety of policy prescriptions and critical priorities that must be addressed to improve public education in Indiana. Among them is the need to offer alternative programs to serve students who may not thrive or reach their full potential in the traditional school setting.

One solution that's gaining momentum is the virtual public school, using the Internet to deliver a more personalized education that is tailored to every student's individual academic needs. Today, more than 2.5 million college students take classes online, and more than 150 virtual schools serve more than 65,000 students at the K-12 level.

Read the full story at www.bizvoicemagazine.com on May 7



Lou Russell
Russell Martin & Associates
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Accelerating Business Learning

Identify Individual Styles to Achieve Results

In today's world, rarely a day goes by that there isn't something new to learn. With rapid market change, political unrest and disruptive technology, businesses reinvent themselves frequently. To be resilient, companies have to grow their ability to learn, and learn fast. Learning is truly a market differentiator.

Though most of us were taught in school in similar ways, we each prefer to learn in a unique manner. If a person is able to learn in his or her preferred way, the learning is faster, easier and more easily transferable to the job. As an added benefit, effective learning can lower stress and reduce conflicts in companies through improved individual and team communication. Finally, if you enjoyed learning it the first time, you'll be open to learning more.

In contrast, frustration with learning can increase stress, cause resistance and challenge feelings of self-worth. If a person is not learning in his or her preferred way, the learning is less likely to transfer and the person is more likely to be frustrated. A negative learning experience creates a communication block into the future.

Read the full story at www.bizvoicemagazine.com on May 11



J. David Donahue
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Prisoner Re-entry

Changing Lives ... One Job at a Time

More than 16,000 criminal offenders will be released from Indiana prisons this year. Forty percent of released offenders return to prison within three years. For decades, the state provided former inmates with a bus ticket and a check for \$75 upon their release. Today, the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) is committed to making changes that protect the public by reducing recidivism.

Prison-to-community re-entry programs recognize that offenders have served their debt to society and must be given the chance to become productive citizens. Offender re-entry practices begin once individuals are sentenced to the IDOC. They encompass substance abuse, mental health and education issues, especially vocational instruction designed to enhance future employability. Currently, the IDOC operates 30 employment programs to help instill strong work ethics and develop job skills among its offender population.

As a business owner or community leader, you might ask, "What's in it for me?" Employability is one of the major factors in the future success of offenders trying to re-enter society. By keeping an open mind and realizing that offenders have paid their debt to society, it's time for change.

Read the full story at www.bizvoicemagazine.com on May 16