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# Carpe Diploma

Education is a journey,  
not a destination.

## Student Success Stories

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Jeff Corbett had worked in procurement for 16 years before being laid off in January. It was at this point that the intelligent, well-spoken, and accomplished military veteran had to admit that he had never graduated from high school. He was shocked to find that the career center was able to offer him numerous free services, including enrollment in our High School Equivalency HSE class. A self-proclaimed Libertarian, Jeff has always disliked big government. He was surprised and pleased to find that there are government-run programs that do, in his words, exactly what government *should* do—help hard-working citizens get back on their feet.

Given that veterans get Priority of Service, it was a rapid transition from laid off, to career counseling, to starting the class. Jeff is so smart, and had acquired such great life skills over the course of his military, and then private sector careers, that it was a relatively simple task to get him ready for the HiSET exam. He sailed through the tests with honors-level scores; no surprise there! Speaking from personal experience, having that elusive diploma after such a long time can be very cathartic. I know Jeff agrees.

Now that he's completed the class, he's headed to CDL training. It will mark a real change from his earlier path, and we can hope that like the HSE diploma, it will be the start of something truly great! Best of luck, Jeff!

### Quote of the Day:

**“It is a thousand times better to have common sense without education, than to have education without common sense.”**

-Robert Green Ingersoll

## HiSET Graduate Profile



**Juan Valentin** was born and raised in Worcester by his father. He has three brothers, including an identical twin, and one sister. Growing up in a large, complicated family was the norm for Juan, but he faced some troubling experiences that made his childhood more difficult than most. He never really enjoyed school and by the time he reached high school, he decided that getting an education wasn't the right path for him.

It took time, but he figured out that he wasn't getting anywhere *without* that education. Jobs were hard to come by, and the ones he could find were unstable and unreliable. After being laid off from another low-level job, he started taking classes at Training Resources of America. They were able to assist him in passing four of the five high school equivalency exams, but the math remained out of reach.

While in class there, he heard that the career center could help him get occupational training. He came here for training assistance but when he met with Cheryl Kelly, she told him about our class to help him pass the final HiSET test. Knowing that the high school equivalency diploma was his ticket out of dead-end jobs, he left TRA and enrolled here. It was a long hard eight months to master the very complex mathematics that the HiSET requires, but he did it - and with points to spare! Woohoo!!!!

Now that Juan has that all-important diploma, he's making plans for his bright future! His first step is CNA training with EKG and Phlobotomy so he can start a career in nursing that began with PCA jobs. After that, he's looking at QCC for an LPN degree. With his dedication and compassion, I think nursing is the perfect career path for him. ***Congratulations Juan and best of luck!!!***



“The best thing about this class was that the teacher could give each of us one-on-one attention and focus. Without that, I could never have gotten the math.”

-Juan Valentin

## Critical Thinking Corner

The ability to think critically is the difference between passing and failing most standardized tests, especially the HSE exams. If you've been out of school for a while, chances are those skills are rusty at best. With that in mind, a critical thinking exercise is a part of every class day. It helps students get focused first thing in the morning, and sharpen that crucial skill!

Try this one:

### In the Pipeline...

After a year and a half of research and knocking on doors at DESE, I finally have some interesting information about my new license! You may recall that I earned the new Professional Adult Education Teacher license in 2013. I knew the license was rare and very difficult to achieve, but I now have confirmation of just how much so - since the license was introduced in 2001, only 25 other teachers in Massachusetts have been awarded this credential. **Wow!!!**

### HSE / Skills Enhancement Classroom Update

In the fourth quarter of FY15, two students exited, both with their HiSET diplomas. Three new students were enrolled; One as a high school equivalency candidate and the other two as ABE/Skills Enhancement. We may have a third category of credentialing available to job seekers as well - the WorkKeys program will be rolling out statewide soon!

### Suddenly a Sub

You arrive at school one day to find the principal at the door to your classroom. She tells you that your teacher, Mr. Goodmath, will not be in today and you must be his substitute. You read the lesson plan: explain to the class why the following numbers are the same. How do you do it?

$1/4$ ,  $25/100$ ,  $.25$ ,  $25\%$

*(answer at the bottom of the page)*



“The best thing about this class was the individual attention given and Brenna’s approachability and patience.”

-Jeff Corbett

**Critical Thinking Answer:** Decimals, fractions, and percents are three different ways of expressing the exact same thing. You could demonstrate this by converting each one to an alternate form. To go from a fraction to a decimal, you just divide the numerator by the denominator. To go from a decimal to a percent, you move the decimal point two spaces to the right (to account for the two zeros in 100%). And to go from a percent to a fraction, you just put the number over the percent sign (which already is a 100). When students can convert one form to another, they can really see how they are three versions of the same thing.