

SAC: Adult Basic Education

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Adult Basic Education Critical Thinking Assessment Plan 2010

1. The ABE SAC has incorporated capstone themes and projects into our curriculum. The four themes are: citizen, family, worker and life-long learner. The general parameters of the project are: The project should consist of 10% or more of class time over the course of the term for each ABE class and address reading, math, writing, communication and technology. As a SAC, we determined that each instructor would be given the creativity to approach the capstone in their own way. Each campus would implement the citizen theme during fall, but department chairs would assign the other themes during the rest of the year as they wished. For this project, we are focusing on capstone projects at each campus.
2. The following rubric will be applied to individual capstone projects, or parts of capstone projects:

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Rubric

ABE/GED Capstone Project Winter 2010

Level 1 Demonstrates limited application of knowledge and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates little or no understanding of an identified issue and cannot formulate clarifying questions.• Unable to comment on explicit aspects of the issue and does not formulate connections.
Level 2 Demonstrates emerging application of knowledge of skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to reflect on an identified issue and formulate questions.• Can comment on explicit aspects of the issue and is beginning to make connections.
Level 3 Demonstrates a basic or adequate application of knowledge and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies the main issue and/or the source's position and formulate questions.• Identifies implicit aspects of the issue, addresses relationships, and makes connections

<p>Level 4</p> <p>Demonstrates effective application of knowledge and skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies one's own position on the issue, drawing support from experience, and information not available from assigned sources. • Addresses more than one perspective including perspectives drawn from outside information. • Clearly distinguishes between facts, opinions and acknowledges value judgments.
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Score 1:

Score 2:

3. Because instructors have the flexibility to create their own unique capstone projects, we decided to try this general rubric. During winter term, instructors at each campus will apply the rubric to a sample (2-3) of student capstone projects or assignments. During a follow up meeting, instructors will exchange, double score and discuss. Each instructor should write up a summary of their project, and write a follow-up reflection noting what worked well and would they would revise if they taught this unit again. At that time, we will decide what we need to change to better implement this project for the next core outcome, as well as what worked well for us as a SAC.

Contact: Amy Boehnke, SAC Chair 2009-2010

ABE SAC Core Outcomes Reflection: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

4. The ABE SAC has incorporated capstone themes and projects into our curriculum. The four capstone themes are: citizen, family, worker and life-long learner. The general parameters of the project are: The project should consist of 10% or more of class time over the course of the term for each ABE class and address reading, math, writing, communication and technology. As a SAC we determined, that each instructor would be given the creativity to approach the capstone in their own way. We chose to look at different capstone projects at each campus for this project. The participating instructors were: Amy Boehnke, Juliet Pursell, Paul Kaady, Judy Voth and Derek Oringer. All teach ABE Secondary classes.
5. The following are the individual project overviews and reflections based on the rubrics and discussions:

Amy Boehnke

Assignment Overview and Reflection:

In winter 2010, my Rock Creek ABE class explored the theme, "Work and Immigration in the United States" as a part of Worker Capstone Project. Students examined a variety of texts through class discussions and a variety of informal and formal writing assignments. They read a historical text, "The Strike at Three Loaves." They viewed a portion of *Modern Times* by Charlie Chaplin which depicted the challenges of mechanization and industrialization. They also studied the movie *Norma Rae* which told the story of a modern factory strike. The unit culminated in their attendance of PCC's Illumination Project "Why Racism Matters" at Rock Creek. Overall, I was pleased with the level of critical discourse especially in our discussions. I noticed students talking about the Illumination Project, particularly outside of class, during break, and with me after class. Many students were able to reflect this critical thinking in their writing, as well. I was pleased with the unit overall.

Recommendations:

If I were to teach this unit again, I would consider including the following elements to further enhance critical thinking, problem solving and connection making:

1. Invite a labor union representative to discuss modern labor union issues
2. Introduce all students to the Naturalization process including the 50 U.S. History and Civics quiz- this ties in well with understanding U.S. history and civics- crucial to doing well on the GED.
3. Invite ESOL students to speak to our class about their experience and /or connect ABE students and ESOL students to converse about immigration issues. The ABE students could write either reflective paragraphs or essays based on what they learned.
4. Have students watch the movie *Papers*, a documentary about undocumented students and the challenges they face. Facilitate student contact with government representatives regarding supporting The Dream Act.
5. Wrap up the unit with a student survey asking students to reflect on the unit as a whole and allow them to come up with their own connections and questions regarding the material.

Esther Loanzon

Assignment Overview:

Following our unit on Government and Citizenship, specifically the duties and roles of citizens, ABE Secondary (4,5,6) students would be matched with ABE Beginning (1,2,3) students to conduct personal interviews regarding immigration histories. Students would develop a list of questions, and then interview, to be followed by writing reflective paragraphs based on what they learned.

Unit Reflection:

Level 4,5,6 Writing students were asked to interview Levels 1,2,3 students who were non-citizens. Questions were formulated separately by the two classes and instructors for both classes selected the

more relevant ones. The two classes got together and students were matched with each other. Level 4,5,6 students were asked to write about their interview experience.

Most of the Level 4,5,6 students found the experience interesting and informative. They realized the value and appreciated being a US citizen. It was an eye opener for both groups of students.

Something I could do different next time is to ask students about their own immigration path and answer sample naturalization test questions. A field trip to the Japanese Historical Museum and showing of documentary films related to the topic are other activities I can do to enhance students' learning.

Juliet Pursell and Paul Kaady

Project Overview: Awareness of our Calorie Intake

Most of my students are not aware of the amount of calories that are in their food items or the amount of serving that each item serves. I feel this is a good opportunity and the first step in teaching students this important health topic and help them become aware of their calorie intake by counting, doing basic math operations, charting, graphing, estimating, finding mean and median, recognizing patterns of their calorie intake, and present their findings to their peers.

Unit Reflection: Students reflected on the main issue (calorie intake) in a variety of ways. Students made connections between calories and activity, what they consumed and what was recommended. In order to improve this project, I would do a number of things:

- Include a reading on obesity and how that is affecting our society
- Write an essay on the topic of obesity, eating disorder or exercise
- Watch a documentary film about food like *Supersize Me*.

Judy Voth and Derik Oringer

Capstone Assignment Overview: The Minimum Wage

Using the minimum wage map from http://www.bls.gov/ro9/minwage_ca_chart.gif, introduce the idea of federal and minimum wages. Ask: Does anyone know what the minimum wage is in Oregon? Discuss why there is more than one minimum wage and how to know which one applies to a particular state. Discuss whether an increase in the minimum wage might affect higher wages as well. In groups of 2-4, students work together to calculate the gross annual earnings of a full-time minimum wage worker in Oregon and in a state where the federal minimum wage prevails. The groups estimate these workers' take-home pay by calculating 80% of each gross. Finally, each group analyzes a pay stub to determine rate of pay, net pay, and percentage withheld. Skills Employed: addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of decimal numbers; converting percentages to decimals and decimals to percentages; interpreting information in tables; reading maps with legends.

Reflection:

Recommendations for follow-up activities:

- Have students develop a budget
- Show documentary- *Thirty Days on Minimum Wage*
- Look at jobs that make minimum wage versus living wage.

The critical thinking and problem solving rubric we used did not work well for a math activity. We were only able to use the left side of the rubric to gauge skill level of achievement for students.

6. After double scoring the student samples from each above project, as well as discussing the individual projects and overall experience, we made the following suggestions for next year:

- a. During fall SAC inservice, develop a common assignment be used in a particular subject area (reading, writing, social studies, science or math) with an accompanying rubric. Due to the individual nature of the capstone projects, it was very difficult to use one common rubric.
- b. Or, develop a rubric for each subject area that instructors could choose, based on their own project or assignment.
- c. Involve more members of our SAC by starting this project earlier and using the Fall SAC Inservice to start the project.
- d. Based on the double-scored rubrics for each student sample, we felt that our students demonstrated a high level of critical thinking and problem solving overall, average of 3 out of 4, and the capstone project was a good vehicle to emphasize all of the core outcomes. It was interesting to see the great range of instructor creativity in the different projects. Next year, we should survey the students so that they can comment on their own perception of how well the assignment, and their work, addresses the particular core outcome we are studying. Those results would help to further inform us on how well our students are meeting the core outcomes.
- e. Discuss the above results with the SAC at fall inservice to further brainstorm ways to make this project more meaningful and useful for instructors and students.
- f. All those involved felt we had a greater knowledge of the core outcomes because of this project. It was encouraging to see the extent to which we were already addressing core outcomes in our classes. We identified areas in which we can continue to improve this.