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Literacy...

Learning to Achieve

A PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO EDUCATING ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

This article was re-printed from the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), October 2010.

For more information go to: <http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/L2AProfessionalGuide2010.pdf>

Part II

The following articles and lesson plan were reprinted from *A Professional's Guide to Educating Adults with Learning Disabilities* found on the link above. The Part I is featured in the March Director's Newsletter.

Chapter 2

Self-Determination

Setting the Context

Simply stated, self-determination is the development of personal characteristics, knowledge and skills needed to take responsibility for and control of one's actions. Self-determination is connected to positive adult outcomes, is teachable, and is valued by individuals with learning disabilities (LD) and their family members, employers and teachers (Mooney & Silver-Pacuilla, 2009). The ability to act as a self-determined individual is important for all adults. This ability can be jeopardized when individuals feel they do not have the skills, power or control to assert themselves for their own benefit. Incorporating experiences to develop self-determination is an evidence-based intervention that can improve adult life outcomes for individuals with LD (Malian & Nevin, 2002) and can be used in adult education and related adult services.

Why Is Self-Determination Important for Adults with LD?

The development of self-determination is important for successful adult adjustment of individuals with LD (Tilson & Hathaway, 2010). Many adults with LD, diagnosed or not, have experienced unresolved challenges and failures because of their LD. For example, some individuals may have received too much help and assistance, which sends the message that they are not capable and should be dependent on others. These experiences can negatively affect motivation and confidence to pursue and succeed in education and employment. Individuals with LD have the legal right to request and receive reasonable accommodations if they are willing to self-disclose their disability. In most instances it takes more than self-disclosure to negotiate accommodations (Gerber & Price, 2005). Individuals must be able to self-advocate by explaining their strengths and needs in order to receive appropriate accommodations. Effective self-disclosure and self-advocacy requires self-knowledge, self-confidence and communication skills. Adult service providers can assist in the development of these attributes by integrating the development of self-determination into their intervention goals.

Lesson Plan

Introduction

Homework Review

Thought for the Day

"All rising to great places is by a winding stair!"

-*Frances Bacon*

The future is yours, so embrace it. You may not know what the road ahead has to offer, but you can prepare yourself to achieve. Remember to carefully and thoughtfully take it step by step. Reaching your goals can be challenging. You may encounter several twists and turns. But in the end you will have succeeded.

Attention: Today you will learn a skill that will allow you to become more independent and able to change as the world changes around you. In order to be successful as parents or family members, citizens and workers, we must be able to take responsibility for our own learning. This is a skill that you can *use* for the rest of your life.

Motivation: The EFF Standard, *Take Responsibility for Learning*, is an EFF Lifelong Learning skill. If we are going to keep up in the 21st century we need to set goals, identify our strengths and weaknesses, collect a series of strategies to help us acquire knowledge, use those strategies, monitor our progress, then tryout the new things we learn in real-life situations. In order to keep pace with change, we must always be learning. The skill we are learning today will build a strong foundation for your growth and independence. So, let's look at the Standard, analyze what it means, then identify how we can use it.

Overview: You have made the decision to return to school to improve your education and achieve your goals. This lesson will give you the strategies to use to reach your goals. It also lays the foundation for your future. This is a skill that asks you to take action. If you take action you will become an independent learner who knows how to learn and who will be able to change as the world changes.

Teaching Tip

~ Begin each day with a
_ review of the previous
day's homework. Allow 15-20
minutes to review the homework.
Then begin the "Thought for the
Day." Give students time to
answer the four questions. Then
discuss the "Thought for the
Day."

Body of Lesson

Main Point 1. What Is *Take Responsibility for Learning*?

Taking responsibility is doing away with excuses for not performing. It is accepting that you must take action or make a change. In order to take responsibility for learning, adults need to be able to understand their learning style and the styles of others, value differences between individual styles, and learn from these differences. You need to be able to identify your strengths and weaknesses, identify strategies for learning, and know when existing strategies are not working or when they are challenged.

When learners takes responsibility for their learning they are using all of the components listed above.

Question: Who is responsible for your learning?

- (Record student responses on the board.)

Taking responsibility for learning includes the learner as well as the teacher. It is always a good idea to ask, "What am I doing to learn as much as I can?"

Question: Can you think of a way that you have taken responsibility for your learning?

Those are all ways that we take responsibility for learning. The components that we read are a kind of check-off list that a person can use in order to see if he or she is doing everything possible to take responsibility for their learning. Let's take a deeper look at the components.

Main Point 2. The Five Components of the *Take Responsibility for Learning Standard*

Now let's take a closer look at the five components of the skill. (Read the components and discuss.)

A. Establish learning goals that are based on an understanding of one's own current and future learning needs.

B. Identify own strengths and weaknesses as a learner and seek out opportunities for learning that help build self-concept as a learner.

C. Become familiar with a range of learning strategies to acquire or retain knowledge. There are several different ways to learn something,

not just one. *Example: If I asked someone how to get to Chicago, she could give me one way or several depending on where I am coming from. There are several routes to any destination.* Just like traveling, learning something can be taught and received in different ways. There are options to how you learn something. Everyone learns in a different way. Just like no two snowflakes are alike, neither are people and their learning styles. We all require special and unique strategies. One person may learn best by looking at pictures, while another may need to simply listen to directions.

D. Identify and use strategies appropriate to goals, task, context, and the resources available for learning. Once you are aware of the different learning styles and strategies, choose one that is best for the learning situation that you are in. No one is better than another, but having several different learning strategies will ensure your growth and learning.

E. Monitor progress toward goals and modify strategies or other features of the learning situation as necessary to achieve goals. If we are not making progress, then we must ask the question, "Why not?" To achieve our goals we must control the things that might get in the way of our learning. Several things can get in the way of learning. Sometimes other people in our lives can become barriers. Sometimes we can be barriers to ourselves. Barriers might include negativity from others, low self-esteem, a teacher that doesn't teach to different learning styles or even something as simple as hunger or time barriers. Once we identify what is wrong, we can make corrections in our strategies and get back on course. This requires that we focus on our goals and constantly check to see whether our strategies are working. In order for anyone to learn the best that they can, a person must monitor her progress and make adjustments when necessary.

F. Test out our new learning in real-life applications. Take what you learn in class and apply it in your family life, social life and community. You will want to be able to access your new learning and knowledge readily in a variety of settings and situations. Always try to connect your new learning to something that is significant and realistic to your life and goals. Reviewing what you have learned will help you to increase your ability to use what you have learned in other parts of your life. It is important that you not only understand what you learn, but also see how you can apply it to other parts of your life.

Teaching Tips

(Refer to components at left.)

A. Ask students to identify their learning needs and list them on their Note Taker.

Then ask if they have set a goal to meet that need. If they have set a goal, have them record it on their Note Taker. If they have not set a goal to meet their needs, ask them to set a goal now.

B. They will have a more difficult time identifying their strengths. If students have been tested, give them copies of their tests to review and have them identify their strengths and weaknesses on their Note Taker.

C. If students have not had a learning styles assessment, remind them that when they complete the assessment, they will know how they learn best and can begin to identify strategies that will help them acquire new knowledge. Discuss with them how they feel they learn best. Many students already know what works best for them.

D. You may have to help students identify learning strategies that will help them. Make sure that they understand you are available to assist them in identifying appropriate strategies. There are many books available to help students learn different strategies.

Slang Today, Proper Speech Tomorrow?

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Most of us don't think too much of the slang of today. However, you should watch what you say. Chances are that you are using slang, when you think you're using proper speech. Here are some examples of slang from the past.

The saying, "**Don't throw the baby out with the Bath water!**" Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it.

"**It's raining cats and dogs.**" Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would fall off the roof.

"**Dirt poor.**" The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance-way. Hence: a thresh hold.

Have you heard the rhyme: "**Peas porridge hot, peas' porridge cold, pea's porridge in the pot nine days old.**" In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while.

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, "**bring home the bacon**" They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and chew the fat. Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the **upper crust**.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a **wake**.

Now don't be such a **fuddy-duddy** (Duddy was a Scottish term meaning ragged, and Fud, or fuddy, was a Scots dialect term for buttocks). The cartoon character Elmer Fudd inherits his name from this phrase.

Life is a Word Problem

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Living the lavish life of a Professional Development Specialist here in Missouri you get to enjoy the finer things in life. One of those things is lots of wonderful travel opportunities to the most amazing places on earth (Adult Education Programs in Missouri). On these travels on thing continues to come up. No not can I get your autograph, but how do I get my students to be better problem solvers. Believe it or not human being are born problem solvers, (well most of them, some are born problem creators, but that's for another article). Babies, toddlers, and young children learn through problem solving. I could spend all day watching my six month old son learn how he can move his hand to pick up items on the floor. Now maybe I'm thinking to simplistically, but I believe we can learn a great deal from watching how children solve problems. I say this because the simplest things trip up our students when they attempt to solve math problems. Here is a list of things to consider when working with students on problem solving skills.

Students who struggle with problem solving often fail to:

- Read the problem carefully and pay attention to detail.
- Define the type of answer required and eliminate extraneous information.
- Identify key words that will assist in choosing the correct operation or, in the case of multi-step problems, the correct operations.
- Identify a strategy that will work in solving the problem.
- Use a graphic organizer.
- Set up the problem correctly and remember the order of operations.
- Use mental math and estimation skills.
- Check the answer for reasonableness.
- Use a calculator with care and always double-check the answers.

The first mistake students make when trying to solve a problem is not to read carefully. They think they know what the problem is asking them to do. Here are a few tips teachers can do to help their students: Model the way you should read a word problem and break down the parts of the problem. Use a graphic organizer to help students find the main idea of the problem.

Second, most students at one time or another have difficulty identifying exactly what the question is asking. Have students discuss how they arrived at their decisions for each problem. Discuss with students any problems they encountered and how they addressed each problem. Have students work in groups or with partners and identify what the problem is asking, how does the answer need to be expressed, what do I need to solve the problem, and what information is given to me.

Next, I would teach students how to identify key words. I would look at workbooks at many levels to find word problems they can work on to find key words like, increase, product, area. You could even have students identify and write these key words on charts or bulletin boards in your classroom.

Hopefully, these tips help your students. If you need more tips don't worry, I'll be in your neighborhood soon. Until then I hope you have caviar wishes and champagne dreams.

FY 11 Back to School and S-Know Bound Online Calendar
Missouri's AEL Professional Development Center
North Central Missouri College
March/April

Tuesday, Mar 1	Health Literacy 2	1-5 p.m.	4
Wednesday, Mar 2	Employability Skills	1-5pm	4
Saturday, March 5	Financial Literacy	9-11 am	2
Tuesday, March 8	Information Literacy & Technology	5-9 p.m.	4
Wednesday, Mar 9	Math Starters	2-4pm	2
Thursday, March 10	Millennials Rising!!	9-11 a.m.	2
Tuesday, Mar 15	Math Starters	10am-12 noon	2
Tuesday, March 15	Web 2.0	1 – 5 p.m.	4
Tuesday, March 22	WIN	6-8 p.m.	2
Tuesday, March 22	EL/Civics	2-6 p.m.	4
Wednesday, Mar 23	Math Starters	3-5 p.m.	2
Monday, Mar 28	Reaching Out To Immigrant Populations	5-9 pm	4
Wednesday, Mar 30	Math Starters	9-11 a.m.	2
Wednesday, Mar 30	Millennials Rising!!	3-5 p.m.	2
Tuesday, April 6	Web 2.0	9 a.m. -1 p.m.	4
Wednesday, April 7	WIN	9-11:30	2

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