

Professional Development Monthly Advisor and Planner (PD MAP)

Theme: Critical Thinking

June 2010

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Welcome to the June Professional Development MAP!

Sometimes we get so caught up in teaching adult learners historical facts, vocabulary words, mathematical formulas, sentence structures and grammar points that we forget to teach them the more important skill of how to think critically. In many countries, rote memorization of facts is highly valued, but in the American education system, we value learners who can comprehend, question, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the information they encounter while learning. In 1940, William Graham Sumner defined critical thinking as:

. . . the examination and test[ing] of propositions of any kind which are offered for acceptance, in order to find out whether they correspond to reality or not. The critical faculty is a product of education and training. It is a mental habit and power. It is a prime condition of human welfare that men and women should be trained in. It is our only guarantee against delusion, deception, superstition, and misapprehension of ourselves and our earthly circumstances.

This issue of the PD MAP focuses on teaching critical thinking skills to adult learners. You'll find many articles specifically targeted to adult education classrooms, both ABE/ASE and ESL. Those who want to dig deeper can explore the Foundation for Critical Thinking, whose website has more than seven dozen articles on this fascinating topic.

Best Regards,

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Self-Study:

[Using Critical Thinking with Adult Learners](#)

The Critical Thinking Community

Foundation for Critical Thinking

<http://www.criticalthinking.org/articles/index.cfm>

This website provides over seven dozen articles about critical thinking that teachers can use for their own learning, or adapt and use with adult learners. The articles in the sections entitled Fundamentals of Critical Thinking and For Students are particularly helpful for adult education students. These sections include a glossary of critical thinking terms, a 3-part examination of the art of close reading, a 4-part article on how to study, and an article with nine strategies for critical thinking in everyday life.

Blooms Taxonomy

<http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learning/exams/blooms-taxonomy.html>

Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Plan Your Lessons

http://www.doe.in.gov/lmmp/pdf/08conference/bloom's_taxonomy.pdf

These resources describe Benjamin Bloom's 1956 classification of levels of intellectual behavior in learning, identify the skills addressed at each level and provide question cues appropriate for each level.

Critical Thinking Skills Module

GED 2002 Online Professional Development

<http://www.ket.org/ged2002/critical/cr1.htm>

This self-paced online module for GED teachers identifies the traits of critical thinkers. Then it explains how five types of critical thinking skills – comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation – are incorporated within the Language Arts Reading, Social Studies, and Science content areas of the GED Tests. The module defines what each skill is, how it is used in GED preparation, and tips for critical thinking instruction in the GED classroom.

Critical Literacy for Adult English Language Learners

Van Duzer, C. and Cunningham Florez, M., Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA), December 1999

http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/critlit.html

This digest defines critical literacy and discusses why it is important to include in instruction for ESL adults. The article describes how critical literacy activities can be used with beginning to advanced learners and provides a dozen classroom strategies.

Learning through Discussion: Designing Tasks for Critical Inquiry and Reflective Learning

Ngeow, K. and Kong, Y., December 2003

<http://www.ericdigests.org/2004-1/tasks.htm>

This article describes four classroom discussion tasks: guided, inquiry-based, reflective, and exploratory that can be used with adult learners to develop their skills in critical thinking, debate and reflection. The tasks show how learners first develop their individual thinking, then suspend these opinions to consider alternatives, and later negotiate meaning with other discussants to arrive at a shared understanding of the issues at hand.

Problem-based Learning and Adult English Language Learners

Mathews-Aydinli, J., Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA), April 2007

http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/briefs/problembased.html

Problem-based learning focuses on learning through solving real, open-ended problems to which there are no fixed solutions. This brief describes problem-based learning, explains how it aligns with research on second language acquisition, identifies the roles of teachers, learners and administrators, describes four steps in implementing problem-based learning, and outlines the benefits and challenges of using a problem-based learning approach with adult English language learners.

Teacher to Teacher: Using Problem-Posing Dialogue in Adult Literacy Education

Nixon-Ponder, S. 1994, Ohio Literacy Resource Center

<http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/Pubs/0300-8.htm>

This article explains the purpose and outcomes of the problem-posing technique used with adult ABE/ASE learners, describes the five steps of the problem-posing process and shares two case studies of the problem-posing technique from actual literacy programs.

Using a Problem Posing Approach for Authentic Language Learning

Verizon Foundation Thinkfinity course, self-paced, online, approx. 60 min.

To read the full course description, go to

<http://literacynetwork.verizon.org/fileadmin/download/VLNCourseCatalog.pdf>

To enroll, go to <http://literacynetwork.verizon.org/TLN/courses>

Upon completion of this course teachers are able to describe the problem posing approach, use the five-step problem posing questioning process in an ESL, literacy, or workplace setting to help students think critically about the problem or issue, design a robust language lesson using a problem posing approach and apply this approach to the teacher's current materials.

Language Learning Strategies: An Update

Oxford, R., CAL Digest, October 1994, Center for Applied Linguistics

<http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/oxford01.html>

This article describes effective strategies that language learners use to advance their language acquisition. Through such strategies language learners think critically not about the language itself, but about their own process of language learning. The article considers whether teachers should incorporate strategy training in instruction.

Promoting Learner Transitions to Postsecondary Education and Work: Developing Academic Readiness Skills From the Beginning

Parrish, B. and Johnson, K., CAELA Network, April 2010

<http://www.cal.org/caelanetwork/resources/transitions.html>

This article describes skills ESL adults need before transitioning to post secondary education. Those skills include reading and listening, critical thinking, organizing information and note taking. The article describes half a dozen sample activities for beginning, intermediate, and advanced ESL learners, and shows how those activities introduce higher order skills and strategies.

Using Beyond the GED: Making Conscious Choices About the GED and Your Future

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), 2005 and 2007 (updated)

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=1086>

At the completion of this self-study module GED teachers are able to deliver a three-unit module to GED students regarding the economic impact of the GED. Unit 1 investigates labor market trends (global economy, downsizing, temporary work). Unit 2 explores the economic impact of higher education and the connection between education and earnings. Unit 3 presents the research findings on the economic impact of the GED and explores the implications for GED learners' own future. Adult learners have an opportunity to practice critical thinking skills, writing, use graphs, read charts, and analyze research findings.

Teachers thinking critically about their practice

Reflective Practice in the Professional Development of Teachers of Adult English Language Learners

Thomas S. C. Farrell, T., Brock University, Ontario, Canada, October 2008

<http://www.cal.org/caelanetwork/resources/reflectivepractice.html>

This article explores the research and rationale for teacher self-reflection and describes three approaches teachers can use to think critically about their practice: action research, teacher journals, and teacher development groups. Through reflective practice, teachers can develop a deeper understanding of their teaching, develop informed decision-making skills, and become proactive and confident in their teaching.

Choosing and Using Web Sites for Literacy Instruction: Evaluation Resources and Strategies

Hacker, E., 2000 National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL)

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=312>

This article shows adult education teachers how to think critically when choosing Web sites for Instruction. It presents questions to ask in four areas: authorship, design and navigation, content/information, and currency. Additional considerations covered are graphic design, reading level, and accessibility to learners with disabilities. Though written at a time when using the Web was new to many teachers, the evaluation process still rings true.

To conduct a 60-90 minute staff discussion of any of the articles listed in Self Study, use the following resource:

Guidelines for Facilitating Discussion Groups

<http://www.calpro-online.org/pubs/DiscussionGuidelineforResearchPublications.pdf>

ESL Fast Track

June 22 – August 20, 2010

Facilitated online course, five modules, 30 hours, cost applies.

<http://cce.cpcc.edu/leadership-management/esl-instructor-fast-track-training>

This course balances theory and research with practical methods and teaching strategies. Interactive modules focus on core issues in teaching ESL, second language acquisition in adulthood, effective teaching techniques, student-centered lesson plans, and effective classroom observation and reflection strategies. The course is recommended for ESL teachers *after* the first 10-15 months of classroom teaching.

Workshops, Trainings, Conferences:

World Refugee Day, June 20
United Nations

National ADA Symposium

June 20-23, Hyatt Regency, Denver

To register: <http://www.adasymposium.org/>

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Exposition and Conference

June 27-30, 2010

Colorado Convention Center, Denver

To register: <http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/2010/>

30th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking

July 19-22, 2010, pre-conference July 17-18

To Register: www.criticalthinking.org/conference/index.cfm

Claremont Resort Hotel near UC Berkeley, CA

Theme: *Teaching Students to Master Content by Developing a Questioning Mind*

Courses for Credit:

CCCOOnline, www.ccconline.org, <http://www.ccconline.org/register/>, June 7-August 15, 2010
EDU 133 Adult Basic Education (ABE)/Adult Secondary Education (ASE/GED)

Lamar Community College, www.lamarcc.edu, June 7-August 15, 2010
EDU 134 Teaching English as a Second Language to Adult Learners

Colorado State University, Fort Collins, <http://Learn.colostate.edu>, June 14-August 8, 2010
EDAE 692 Seminar: Staying Current
<http://www.learn.colostate.edu/courses/EDAE/EDAE692.dot?Group=A> (graduate credit)
EDAE 590 Workshop: Teaching English as a Second Language to Adults
<http://www.learn.colostate.edu/courses/EDAE/EDAE590.dot?Group=F> (graduate credit)

CDE/AEFL Professional Development Hours

All professional development options listed on this PD MAP earn CDE/AEFL PD Hours as described in the *Guide to Professional Development Reporting* at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/download/pdf/GuideToPDReportingV2.pdf> For annual AEFLA reporting, teachers completing Self-Study or Collaboration with Colleagues options simply confer with their program director and record the number of PD Hours earned on their *Teacher's Annual Professional Development Activity Record*. Teachers completing workshops, training, or courses for credit receive certificates with PD Hours or transcripts. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/download/pdf/AnnualPDActivityRecord-FY09v3.pdf> The PD options listed under the Self-Study strand are not acceptable for the LIA Portfolio training hours or for renewing a LIA. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/LIAIndex.htm>

Follow-up to This Month's Professional Development

The CDE/AEFL office is hosting a 1-hour discussion on Friday, **June 25th**, 2010 at 9:00 am to follow-up with teachers who complete any of the PD options listed in this month's PD MAP. The conference call allows teachers across the state to connect with each other to ask and answer questions about this month's theme of *Critical Thinking* and to share successful strategies and ask for advice regarding challenges. Teachers who participate in the conference call earn 1 additional PD Hour. Please register online at <http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dFlnem5sQUlaVHU3UTNsajNpWVN6eHc6MA> by Wednesday, **June 23rd**.

Each person on the call should be registered separately.

To find this issue of the PD MAP on our Web site go to:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/PDMAP.htm>

PD Advisory Group Mission Statement

To create an integrated, accessible, and flexible system of professional development for adult education teachers in Colorado.

Our Concept of Critical Thinking
By: The Critical Thinking Community

Our basic concept of critical thinking is, at root, simple. We could define it as the art of taking charge of your own mind. Its value is also at root simple: if we can take charge of our own minds, we can take charge of our lives; we can improve them, bringing them under our self command and direction. Of course, this requires that we learn self-discipline and the art of self-examination. This involves becoming interested in how our minds work, how we can monitor, fine tune, and modify their operations for the better. It involves getting into the habit of reflectively examining our impulsive and accustomed ways of thinking and acting in every dimension of our lives.

<http://www.criticalthinking.org/aboutCT/ourConceptCT.cfm>

July 2010 PD Monthly Advisor & Planner
Theme: Civic Participation and EL/Civics

CDE/AEFL Professional Development Advisory Group members:

Jane Miller, CDE/AEFL; Mary Jo Sobocinski, McLain Community High School, Lakewood; Connie Davis, Northern Colorado Professional Development Center, Longmont; Debra Fawcett, CDE/AEFL; Dave Aske-land, CMC Adult Education, Breckenridge Campus; Karin Hostetter, Summer Scholars, Denver; Michele Short, The Learning Source, Lakewood