

A1. Incorporates theories of and research in adult development in designing effective instruction appropriate to the learning environment (e.g., in the classroom, workplace, homeless shelter).

Coursework: A 10-PDP training entitled "Adult Development Study Circle," conducted by Eileen Barry, Ph.D., in the Spring of 2003.

A. Evidence of course content:

Appended under Tab A are letter to participants and session agendas, indicating coursework covers research conducted by Robert Kegan, Ph.D. et al of Harvard Graduate School of Education.¹

B. Evidence of successful completion of coursework and application to practice:

Also appended under Tab A is a Certificate of Completion for coursework. Evidence of application to practice are lesson plans appended under Tab D and the Assessment Analysis Log appended under Tab F.

C. Coursework statements:

1. Knowledge addressed by coursework. Through the many readings and intensive discussions, my fellow participants and I delved into the findings of this new research based on extensive case studies of 41 adult learners from three Massachusetts literacy programs. We began with Dr. Kegan's "constructive-developmental" theory of adulthood, which stresses that adults always think, feel, and perceive within "meaning-making contexts."

What impressed me most about the Kegan study is that it accepts human development as very complex and multi-dimensional, more so than some other theorists have. Erik Erikson's ideas, for example, have been attractive to me because they map out human development according to very distinct phases; Kegan's meaning-making theory, however, holds that *at every point* along an adult's life, she or he must continually shift back and forth between levels of lesser and greater autonomy. Erikson's thinking suggests that adults move onto ever higher plateau's of accomplishment; for example, by grappling with adolescence and then moving into maturity. Kegan's work, however, suggests that a grown adult faced with an intensely new learning situation--e.g. a fifty-year-old bus driver from Guatemala relocated to Lynn, MA and entering beginner English classes--faces challenges akin to those of a grade school child. Kegan holds that it is less important for a teacher to ask "At what point is this adult learner in his or her life?" than "How is this adult learner approaching his or her present task of attempting to know and deal with something highly unfamiliar to them?"

To account for these variations in knowing across learning challenges, Kegan and his collaborators determine that adults apply three "ways of knowing" that move from simplicity and dependence to greater complexity and independence: Instrumental, Socializing, and Self-Authoring. The Instrumental Learner wants to acquire straight information and clear rules and processes; he or she assumes that they can apply this information and rules in all future situations; and they tend to see their teachers as dispensers of information, goals, and even conduct. The Socializing Learner possesses a broader perspective. This learner has the ability and desire to draw upon fellow learners, the teacher, and even family members for information, support, and feedback; the different perspectives and opinions of others are considered important parts of learning; and the teacher is seen as more of a collaborator or role model. The final way of knowing is Self-Authoring. The Self-Authoring Learner has a

¹ NCSALL Reports #19, *Toward a New Pluralism in ABE/ESOL Classrooms: Teaching to Multiple "Cultures of Mind"* and *Focus on Basics*, Volume 5B (Adult Development) were the primary texts for this training.

great degree of confidence in his or her own ideas; he or she can set personal goals and take responsibility for evaluating progress; she or he is not unduly thrown by difference and conflict. These descriptions give only a summary of the rich findings of this research.

Our readings and discussions also led us to understand that a particular learner might be "Instrumental" in one learning situation and "Self-Authoring" in another. The Guatemalan bus driver used as an example above might begin as an Instrumental Learner in a Lynn, MA ESOL class but operate as a Self-Authoring Learner in a bus drivers' school in Guatemala City. This point is brought home by another key finding of the Kegan study, that adults learn best within situations called "holding environments"; basically, learning situations that provide support as well as a manageable degree of challenge to stimulate learners to move from toward Self-Authoring.

2. How knowledge was used. The Kegan research findings have already had a strong impact on my teaching. I now have support for approaches that I've used intuitively in the past, while equipped with new insights about where particular learners might be in the learning journey of our classroom, from Instrumental through Self-Authoring. I've always tried to create a classroom in which all the learners feel comfortable and trustful and see each other as supporters and contributors, but since studying this research I have stepped up efforts to build a genuine "holding environment." Toward that end, we work hard to hear each other, to be patient and respectful, to see each other as resources, and to see conflict as natural rather than divisive. We create situations for everyone to step back and reflect on learning, to stimulate the overviewing needed for Self-Authoring and, by the same token, remain alert for situations where learners can step in and instruct or lead.

The Assessment Analysis Log (both original and revised) under Tab F reflects my attempt to stimulate students to be Self-Authoring Learners. Learners are asked to think about GED math assessment problems they have tackled and come up with reasons for good or poor performance. In this way, they are taking charge of their own performance instead of only looking to me for "the answers" or the "correct way" to solve problems. These activities promoted Socializing learnership too, because a learner who had successfully solved a problem would be better prepared to explain to another how she or he did it.

Lesson Plan #5 under Tab D reflects how we as a class could harness Socializing and Self-Authoring learning to great benefit. Specifically, we began culling from the learners' assessments a list of "rules" to apply to solving GED test questions. This growing list is printed as a footnote at the bottom of the page. In a class characterized by only Instrumental teaching/learning, using the Kegan model, I would have simply dictated such a list, or supplied it as a handout. What is particularly excited, though, is how much better this predominantly "self-authored" list turned out to be..

A2. Incorporates theories of and research in adult learning and in learning disabilities in designing effective instruction appropriate to the learning environment.

Evidentiary documentation:

1. Appended under Tab B is a curriculum framework, lesson plans, and sample of student work that reflect constructivist principles at work in a pre-GED writing class.
2. Appended under Tab C is an email from Dr. John Strucker attesting to my participation in the Adult Reading Comprehension Study and the assessment instruments used.

Explanatory statements:

1. Theory used in the design of this curriculum. I have striven to use a constructivist approach in my teaching. Constructivism holds that adults are by nature "meaning makers" and that they "construct their own knowledge on the basis of interaction with their environment."² As opposed to teaching methods sometimes called "objectivist," in which learners are considered blank slates upon which teachers inscribe new knowledge, constructivism demands that learners share in the responsibility and direction of their learning. Constructivist classrooms facilitate learning by urging and equipping learners to work collaboratively, engage in problems and projects from their lives, and spend the time necessary to genuinely learn for understanding. A constructivist teacher allows activities that reflect the real complexity of the world rather than trying to reduce living and succeeding to mastery of "reproducible knowledge." Permission and time must be given for negotiation and collaboration; experimentation and exploration; reflection and self-analysis. In producing new knowledge, a learner relies on her acquired knowledge and past experiences, so a personal connection to the learning at hand must be strong, including the motivation to learn; hence, constructivism's emphasis on authentic approaches, such as problem-based and self-directed activities.

2. Why this theory was employed in the curriculum. The curriculum (Tab B) is something that I have wanted to use for some time as the basis for a pre-GED writing class. From my past experience and as a result of helping to develop the DOE/SABES license-compatible courses in my work, I am convinced that writing is too seldom tied to the genuine goals of adult learners. Most often teachers rely on a reader-response approach by using reading collections that might have strong appeal to learners--e.g. pieces about the difficulties of assimilating into a new culture or stories about mentors. Time constraints and other factors move teachers in this direction. One of the largest factors is the GED test. This test is by far the educational "hard outcome" of choice for most learners (while those who choose to enter external diploma programs engage in considerably more writing). Teaching to the GED test, however, does not lead to genuine meaning making, nor to skills that can be carried much further than the test itself. For example, research skills; summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting skills; note-taking; report writing; collaborative writing tasks--so many of the skills that are needed in college and at the workplace or left undeveloped and wholly unexplored. In actual practice, writing that is connected to learner interests and life challenges can be an enormously effective learning experience. Constructivism was also employed because it integrates Jack Mezirow's compelling case for strongly promoting critical thinking in the ABE classroom.³ In fact, Mezirow believes that genuine learning for understanding cannot happen without what he calls "critical reflection." Constructivism also includes Robert Kegan's emphasis on developing "higher-order skills" in adult learners--the abilities to collaborate, problem solve, adapt to changing life and work situations, be resourceful in finding necessary information and support.⁴

² B. L. Brown, *Applying Constructivism in Vocational and Career Education*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Information Series No. 378. 124 pp.

³ Jack Mezirow. "On Critical Reflection." *Adult Education Quarterly*. Spring 1998. 185-198.

⁴ Robert Kegan. *In Over Our Heads*. Cambridge: Harvard UP. 1994.

3. How this theory was used in the design of this curriculum. The appended curriculum (Tab B) is based on what B. L. Brown calls an "Integrated Academic and Vocational Curriculum." In this curriculum, traditionally recognized academic skills--e.g. summarizing and text editing--are interwoven with the authentic and problem-based learning approaches of constructivism. The four Lesson Plans included under Tab B reflect a four-class research project designed with constructivist principles in mind. First of all, the learning task was decided by the learners, specifically in a group discussion, resulting in the goal: "I want to know more about financial aid for college for myself/my children." (Bottom of Lesson Plan #1). From that point on, my co-teacher and I most often acted as facilitators and mentors rather than lecturers. For example, the class moved quickly to the computer lab where the learners formed three-person work teams to collaborate on Internet searches--basically learning collaboratively and "learning by doing." Additional activities came out of the learners' own experiences with the Net-based research--for example, the need to narrow searches (Lesson Plan #2, second activity). By the same token, a session on note-taking skills (first activity of Lesson Plan #3) used printed-out materials for practice that one of the learners had found. Finally, to harness the momentum created by focusing on a goal tied to their own lives, my co-teacher and I asked for written reports that summarized research findings and "next steps." One learner's report follows Lesson Plan #4.

4. How instructional design is appropriate for learners with LD. This curriculum is surprisingly effective with learners with learning disabilities, or with learners who deal with learning disabilities among their family members. I have long been concerned by the clinical challenges to our field associated with LD. I have learned about LD screening and assessment instruments through my year-long position as test administrator with NCSALL's Adult Reading Comprehension Study under Drs. John Strucker and Rosalind Davison (see Tab C), but that experience only made me aware of how much *more* expertise is needed for accurately interpreting results and then remediating. In many ABE programs, detection of a learning disability results in a referral out of the program! And that approach is widely condoned, based on the assumption--a good one!--that few ABE practitioners can acquire the level of *clinical* training needed to deal effectively with a LD learner. Personally, I have been swayed by the arguments made by one of my colleagues that "the ABE program is really the adult learner's last resort." We are their last and perhaps best chance; practically speaking, to refer out is to lose that learner through the cracks. This curriculum, however, addresses that problem by encouraging the learner to take responsibility for their own personal challenges, including a learning disability. By definition, constructivism encourages autonomy and discourages dependence on others, including the ABE teacher. To illustrate, one of our learners has taken responsibility for past diagnoses that he has Attention Deficit Disorder, or ADD. He has researched the symptoms and is currently researching both testing and financial support options that are open to him. Part of his plan is to research and perhaps even create strategies for accommodating his disability so that it will not interfere with his learning. As can be seen, this curricular approach integrates LD issues and challenges into the active *and ongoing* learning of particular individuals. In addition to learners' taking responsibility for their own LD challenges, they are much more likely to stay with the program because they do not have to leave it to receive support or acquire knowledge.

C5. Sets forth the learning objectives, instructional methods, and their rationale in the design of instruction and makes them available to colleagues and learners.

Evidentiary documentation:

1. Appended under Tab D is a set of lesson plans, including a prelude listing the context of the lesson plan set, learning goals common to all the lessons, and instructional approaches used in most of the classes.
2. *Appended under Tab E is a single lesson plan, plus handouts, for the Teaching Demonstration, a single-class "workshop" on applying the five-paragraph essay format to writing a GED Test writing essay.[†]*

Explanatory statements:

1. **Why these learning objectives were employed.** The learning objectives reflected in the Tab D lesson plans were employed to give the learners significant control over a very challenging situation, confronting and succeeding with a standard education-al milestone, U.S. cultural benchmark, and threshold requirement for further advancement in education and employment--that is, taking and passing the GED. As one can see from the Common Learning Goals and the objectives listed on the separate lesson plans, a good deal of analysis, reflection, and self-direction are built in. Many adult learners come to strategic testing situations, such as the GED, with an assumption that once they learn to do a certain kind of problem--one involving percents, for example--they will be able to solve all problems involving percents in the future. Apparent from the learning goals and objectives in these plans are approaches that ask the learners to slow down and achieve genuine control, which takes time. Specifically, they are asked to analyze individual problems, make certain what is required of them, and plan out by careful steps how to solve them. They "buy in" to this more time-consuming approach as they achieve better results in on-going check-ins and assessments. *Note: A separate lesson plan is provided under Tab E to cover the Teaching Demonstration, a single-class "workshop" on applying the five-paragraph essay format to writing a GED Test writing essay. The learning objective in the lesson plan were designed to help learners understand the concept of "strategic writing" and apply it to a relevant situation.*

2. **Why these methods.** The instructional methods employ the learning of discrete skills as well as activities designed to build in reflection. Activities such as using an analysis log, explaining to other learners how one solved a problem, or coming up with a set of strategies (See footnote for Lesson #5, Tab D) are good ways for learners to achieve a deeper understanding of math problem solving and gain genuine control over this challenging situation. These same kinds of activities are designed to help learners know more about themselves, the strengths they possess, the gaps in their knowledge, and certain habits they have that help or hinder them. Several hands-on activities, such as the "helicopter activity" (Lesson #4) and the "tablecloth activity" (Lesson #5) were designed to tie math to real-life situations. Making a table-cloth with hem is a natural multi-part problem. The helicopter activity was designed to help non-native students grasp the concept of plot plans; learners from some cultures automatically see plot plans as horizontal views of solids. *Regarding the Demonstration of Teaching (Tab E), the methods chosen were used to demystify the essay writing section of the GED Test and equip the learners with strategies that they could apply to any essay topic they would be confronted with.*

3. **How learning objectives were implemented.** This particular set of learning objectives were developed from facsimile test-taking situations, followed by analysis of the

[†] Permission was received from the Office of Educator Licensing to use a specific lesson plan, separate from other appended sets, for the demonstration of teaching. The candidate was able to set up a "stand alone" class to meet the demonstration; all references to it are in italics. The Office is considering allowing this option for all candidates because demonstrations cannot always be planned to synchronize with current classes.

results by the class members and open discussion on what to do in future classes. A different group of learners might have come up with a different, even very different, group of objectives. The class didn't rest on "right answer" results, but went further, asking those who got right answers to explain how they go them. Together, the class determined they needed to learn more skills and deepen their understanding around geometric formulas, ratio and proportion, and algebra. At the same time, they wanted to explore basic sorts of test-taking elements, such as filling in the answer sheet correctly and using a calculator with greater facility. *Regarding the Demonstration of Teaching (Tab E), learning objectives were implemented as a "framing" activity at the beginning of class, then checked off as we proceeded. The overall goal was to create as closely as possible the experience of taking the essay writing portion of the GED Test.*

4. How instructional methods were implemented. The instructional methods followed from the learning objectives. In each case, I would ask myself, "Given these objectives, what sorts of activities would work best--and *for these learners?*" Several of the learners demanded direct teaching often; at the same time, we agreed that good math problem-solving ability involves careful analysis and planning. As a class, we worked into a rhythm of analysis and reflection, followed by stints of direct teaching. In some sense, we reversed the process used in a lot of math classes, which is to begin with direct teaching and then check the results through drills and quizzes. In our case, we treated each problem as unique, or at least potentially unique. In this way, we avoided the widely discovered habit of learners' trying to "snap" a problem into a category and, instead, holding back and gaining a genuine understanding of the problem. Gradually, we found a rhythm of analysis and reflection, leading to discovery of strategies and patterns, with direct teaching held back as a kind of fall-back position. *Regarding the Demonstration of Teaching (Tab E), the instructional methods were designed so that each step of the GED essay writing process was, in fact, was modeled. A combination of whole class and small group activities were used, focusing on brainstorming, drafting thesis statements and topic sentences, organizing support, and drafting/editing actual text.*

5. How lesson plans were made available. At the beginning of each class, I would share the lesson plan for the class, or for the next two classes, with the learners. I would make copies on three-hole paper and pass them out. We would spend a little time explaining why I felt these objectives and activities were good ways to proceed; at times, the learners would challenge the plans and suggest something different. For example, two learners wanted to explore graphs and tables in our class because they had discovered that graphic elements are used in questions in the social studies and science tests, and those elements were getting lost between the cracks across the different classes. (These areas were covered in subsequent classes). Two learners wanted to revisit scientific notation, which actually started with another learner's explaining the basis of that notation to the class. Some learners used the lesson plans to keep notes on. *Regarding the Demonstration of Teaching (Tab E), a copy of the lesson plan was given to each learner, to the teachers in the room, and, finally, made available to the program director for possible future use.*

C6. Uses a variety of instructional methods, techniques, and tools that facilitate adult learning.

Evidentiary documentation:

1. Appended under Tab D is a set of lesson plans, including a prelude listing the context of the lesson plan set, learning goals common to all the lessons, and instructional approaches used in most of the classes.
2. Appended under Tab F is an Assessment Analysis Log in original and revised versions.
3. Appended under Tab E is a single lesson plan, plus handouts, for the Teaching Demonstration, a single-class "workshop" on applying the five-paragraph essay format to writing a GED Test writing essay.

Explanatory statements:

1. **What instructional methods were used.** The common instructional approaches reflected in the lesson plan set (Tab D) indicate a variety of methods. They include:
 - Group and individual discussions designed to determine the skills and strategies needed to solve particular math problems.
 - Making connections between math problems on the page and real-life activities that involve math skills. This was an excellent way of getting at geometry problems.
 - Using manipulatives, such as Cuisenaire rods, to concretize concepts or to provide visualizations.
 - Getting at word problems with language skills--e.g. definitions of math vocabulary and actual words and phrases used in word problems., or "translating" common GED word problem terms into math functions ("1/5 of the women" will mean "1/5 times the number of women"--note: this was covered in other classes.)
 - Reinforcing progress by adding the step of verbalizing understanding, planning, and strategies in writing (see Assessment Analysis Log, Tab F)
 - Reinforcing knowledge and building self-confidence by asking learners to teach each other (and me!).
 - Demystifying test-taking situations through practice testing wherein strict protocols and time limits are observed.
 - Making learning fun--e.g. offering a prize for anyone who got an extra, particularly challenging homework problem correct.
 - Building in reflection to strengthen and deepen understanding.
 - Using homework to develop learners' ability to work on their own, to look to themselves as resources. (Homework is a controversial concept in adult basic education circles, but it was embraced by these learners.)
 - *Note: A separate lesson plan is provided under Tab E to cover the Teaching Demonstration, a single-class "workshop" on applying the five-paragraph essay format to writing a GED Test writing essay. Several of the instructional methods used were lecture, Socratic method, group brainstorming, small group work, and collective editing.*
2. **Why these instructional methods were used.** These approaches are used with adult learners because it is as important for them to develop genuine control over math and other forms of challenging situations as it is for them to master certain discrete skills. To gain this control, most learners must develop their analytical and problem solving skills to a very high degree. The GED test was developed with these skills in mind. (The new GED stresses these skills more often.) *Regarding the Demonstration of Teaching(Tab E), the instructional methods were designed so that each step of the GED essay writing process was, in fact, modeled.*
3. **How they were used.** In adult basic skills classrooms, choices of instructional methods are always really best estimates. The learning levels, attitudes, and cultural and

learning differences among learners require constant adaptation. In the case of the lesson plans provided here, 20-30% of the time a plan gauged for one class became a lesson plan for two classes! Sometimes, an activity would need to be repeated, or an assessment given again because it indicated that some or even all the learners needed to work further with whatever was being assessed. My lesson plans get very marked up. Tutors are an invaluable resource because with their help a learner or even a group of learners can work at a slower, or faster, pace from the other class members; tutors are given copies of lesson plans with notes and handouts, to guide their sessions. The Assessment Analysis Log ([Tab F](#)) provides an excellent example of the need for planning, variety, and adaptation. Nearly all the learners found it challenging (especially in its earlier form), but after several classes, most were using it in some form. In a few cases, the learners adapted it in ways that they found more useful. One learner refused to use it at all. Interestingly, this activity split into different forms--e.g. sharing "best entries" in some classes and in another class writing an entry as a group. *Regarding the Demonstration of Teaching ([Tab E](#)), a combination of whole class and small group activities were used, focusing on brainstorming, drafting thesis statements and topic sentences, organizing support, and drafting/editing actual text. A guiding principal behind all methods used, however, was the assumption that adult learners have great stores of discrete information at their disposal to apply to the generic sorts of topics developed for the GED essay.*

C7. Uses strategies that are effective for learners to develop and use critical thinking skills and to solve complex problems.

Evidentiary documentation:

1. Appended under Tab D is a set of lesson plans, including a prelude listing the context of the lesson plan set, learning goals common to all the lessons, and instructional approaches used in most of the classes.
2. Appended under Tab F is an Assessment Analysis Log in original and revised versions.
3. Appended under Tab E is a single lesson plan, plus handouts, for the Teaching Demonstration, a single-class "workshop" on applying the five-paragraph essay format to writing a GED Test writing essay.

Explanatory statements:

- 1. What strategy was used to develop critical thinking?** The Assessment Analysis Log (Tab F) proved to be an excellent tool for developing adult learners' complex problem solving skills. Used over time, the analyzing that the log required developed many of the learners' abilities to:
 - look at a problem task more deeply
 - consider all parts of the problem
 - step back from the problem and see themselves as "agents" engaged in problem solving
 - step back from themselves and determine what strengths they bring to the task and what weaknesses might impede their success with it
 - consider what resources outside of themselves--formulas, calculators--they could bring to the task
 - develop a plan for succeeding with the task--in this case, solving a math problem.

Our work with the log naturally segued into the list of "Righteous Rules" we developed as a kind of acquired wisdom for problem solving (see footnote to Lesson Plan #5, Tab D for this list).

Note: A separate lesson plan is provided to cover the Teaching Demonstration (Tab E), a single-class "workshop" on applying the five-paragraph essay format to writing a GED Test writing essay. Elements of critical thinking development in this class include looking at the task deeply and strategically, developing a conceptual framework involving all parts of the task, determining the resources that they personally bring to the task by dint of their prior learning and experience, and developing a scratch plan for succeeding.

- 2. Why was this strategy employed?** This strategy was employed because it held promise of countering several tendencies we noticed when looking over the results of practice tests and other assessments:
 - some learners were jumping into solving problems before fully understanding the task
 - some learners became initially overwhelmed by a problem's complexity and, panicking, would grasp at a ready or habitual "solution"
 - some learners were not convinced of the need for problem solving skills
 - many learners looked to the teacher for "right answers" or rather than themselves, or each other.

Note: All of the above reasons apply to the Demonstration of Teaching single-class workshop as well (Tab E).

- 3. How was this strategy employed?** This strategy was employed within the curriculum by building in approaches and specific activities that continually call for analysis and reflection on the part of the learners. For example, by continually asking learners who were successful with a complex math task to explain to learners who were not successful required that the former fully understand all the parts, skills, and strategies involved. As mentioned earlier, the Assessment Analysis Log (Tab F) and the set of test-taking rules that evolved from it (see footnote to Lesson Plan #5, Tab D) asked learners to step back and see themselves as critical thinkers and strategy planners. One final example might be the approach of building in time for reflection/wrap-up as a formal part of each lesson plan. In Lesson Plan #3 (Tab D) , the question "What is a formula?" led to the discovery that there are indeed "fixed rules" that govern nature and that knowing what these rules are, or where to find them, represents a great convenience!

Regarding the Demonstration of Teaching (Tab E), helping the learners to think critically about the challenge of writing and essay for the GED Test is an implicit element of the lesson plan. Most important is equipping learners with the knowledge that using schema, such as the 5-paragraph template is to bring the collective experience of precursors to bear on a present task. A Socratic dialogue approach--to elicit definitions and draft ideas/examples--moves the locus of information away from the teacher and places it within learners themselves, helping them to become independent "problem solvers."

D1. Creates and uses formal and informal assessments for the purpose of placing learners at the appropriate instructional level.

Evidentiary documentation:

Appended under Tab G are sample pages from the Basic English Skills Test (BEST). (See also email from Dr. John Strucker confirming assessment knowledge gained from participation in NCSALL's Adult Reading Comprehension Study, Tab C).

Explanatory statements:

- 1. What assessment was employed to place learners?** In 1983, the Jamaica Plain Community Schools won an Adult Literacy Initiative grant from the City of Boston, which allowed us to set up a comprehensive adult basic education program, which we called the Jamaica Plain Adult Learning Program, now more often referred to as the JPALP. With the funds, we developed a competency-based program based on the Adult Performance Level model developed at the University of Texas at Austin. In searching for an ESOL initial placement assessment, our research led us to the BEST test (Tab G), only recently developed. In fact, to the best of my knowledge our program was the first to use this test, in the Boston area at least, and its use spread throughout a program network that was established shortly thereafter. We used this test to initially place learners in either a survival-level, basic, or intermediate course.
- 2. Why was this assessment employed?** We employed the BEST test because its use of both oral and visual cues allowed us to make finer distinctions between learners' ability to understand spoken English and respond in English. The BEST is also designed to make learners feel comfortable; e.g., no matter how they respond, or even if they cannot respond at all (e.g. to the oral question, "What is your name?"), the administrator is instructed to smile pleasantly and make a notation. This aspect of the test is supremely important, because learners are accurately assessed without being made to feel as if they have failed. The entire test protocol, in fact, is designed to be inviting and non-threatening; even the picture cues that are chosen depict familiar situations that learners can associate with even if they cannot respond orally to them. Also, if learners cannot respond to the first several questions at all, the administrator is instructed to cease at that point. The learner is thereby spared having to offer no response to additional questions.
- 3. How were the results of this assessment used?** The BEST test provides a scoring rubric that programs can gauge to the different levels of instruction. In our program, the BEST was used to place learners in our survival-level class, which concentrated on standard oral amenities, telling time, managing money, navigating transportation and other basic systems, and so forth. Beyond that level, the BEST was supplemented by additional instruments. Because the BEST oral section cuts off very early if a learner cannot answer basic questions, it was a quick and non-invasive way of placing in survival level classes. If the learner could proceed to, and through, the visual cue sections, she or he would be placed in our second level class. More voluble students at that time would be slated for our ABE or even GED-level classes (where the class teachers conducted additional assessments to determine individual learning plans.) When MassDOE developed the multi-year RFP in the 1991, SPL levels were applied uniformly to program design; at that point, we developed an additional ESOL class and used additional instruments to supplement the BEST before initial class placement.

D2. Creates and uses formative and summative assessments to evaluate learner progress.

Evidentiary documentation:

Appended under Tab H are copies of several student responses to an Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP) writing assessment and rubric scores; a "REEP Essay Scoring Sheet" with learner essay; and a copy of my REEP training certification.

Explanatory statements:

- 1. What assessment was used to evaluate learner progress?** The Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP) writing test.
- 2. Why was this assessment employed?** The first set of assessments (Tab H) was used at the Jamaica Plain Adult Learning Program to measure learner gains in ESOL classes. Strictly speaking, these are used because they are mandated by the MassDOE in response to WEA regulations. Teachers, however, have used these essays for in-house assessment purposes.

At the same program, I have been working with David Stearns, the pre-GED teacher, to adapt the REEP for formative assessment in a weekly writing class. In our opinion, the REEP is a very learner-friendly assessment, with myriad uses. The "REEP Essay Scoring Sheet" plus learner essay (under Tab H) is a sample of the results of our adaptation. We employ this assessment on a 4-6 week basis to (a) evaluate the impact of instruction, (b) provide learners with direct feedback on their own writing, (c) build learners' self-editing skills, and (d) determine content for "mini-lectures" to be integrated in writing classes.

- 3. How were the results of this assessment used to evaluate progress?** Based on the initial three essays first gathered under TAB H, the teacher and all three learners decided to continue on within their current class for the near future.

Regarding the second sample under TAB H, the "REEP Essay Scoring Sheet," David Stearns and I have followed a set process that begins with sharing the rubric with learners, modeling how scoring is done, and taken additional steps toward equipping learners to self-edit. As the sample shows, our adaptation involves David and I first scoring a given REEP response and then agreeing on Notable Strengths and at least one, but no more than two, Areas for Improvement. We discuss our assessment in short one-on-one interviews with learners and invite their assessment of our assessment. We are so excited about the benefits derived from this assessment process that we will present them in a workshop at Network2003.

D4. Evaluates the effectiveness of instruction and modifies it based upon results and student feedback.

Evidentiary documentation:

1. Appended under Tab D is a set of lesson plans, including a prelude listing the context of the lesson plan set, learning goals common to all the lessons, and instructional approaches used in most of the classes.
2. Appended under Tab F is an Assessment Analysis Log in original and revised versions.
3. Appended under Tab I are copies of score cluster sheets and two "mini-lessons" that resulted from scores and oral feedback.

Explanatory statements:

1. Method used for evaluating effectiveness of instruction AND (2) why this method was employed. Using the set of lesson plans as a basis, one primary method for evaluating the effectiveness of instruction was to create a test-taking situation as close to the actual GED testing situation as possible. That is, learners were given practice tests that close to actual GED test questions, timed, and allowed to use calculators for only the first half of the test. Broad patterns in test-taking success were first blocked out using hand-written score cluster sheets, the first documents under Tab I. Along the way, oral check-ins and assessment quizzes/tests were given that were not so strictly administered; these were used to build up as a more accurate assessment of ability and increase learner self-confidence. But the class agreed that their practical goal of passing the test could not be met without testing their performance under pressure.

3. How instruction was modified based on student feedback. To give a first example directly related to 1&2 above, replicating a true test-taking situation resulted in feedback around some very basic tasks that should have been obvious but were, in fact, not. It turned out that learners were losing much valuable time in filling out bubble-graph answer boxes and working calculators. They "knew" how to do them, but each time they were confronted by a bubble-graph, or could have used a calculator to speed up calculations, they felt they were "starting over again." The solution was to work towards automaticity around these skills. In response, I modified instruction by stopping out around content and focusing instead on building facility around these two areas; the mini-lesson samples given under Tab I show, first, a blank bubble-graph sheet which we could stop and use at any time by just assigning random "answers" for filling in. After a half-dozen of these exercises, unplanned and spaced apart, the learners really got the hang of the graphs. The calculator mini-lesson, included under Tab I, was designed to "unpack" the functions of the calculator that are most often used on the GED.

To give a second example of feedback leading to modifications in instruction, I would like to describe changes made to the Assessment Analysis Log (Tab F). While some learners found the log in its original version to be useful, other learners thought it was unnecessarily complex. For example, they found the question in the original log's first column, "What is the question asking for?" too vague; many responses would be equally valid. This discussion led to the conclusion that if one of them got a wrong answer because they did not fully understand what the problem was asking for, they would deal with that as part of figuring out why they got it wrong. Interestingly, many of the learners found using a form in landscape rather than portrait format difficult, and, in their opinion, unnecessarily so. Also, the two-column revision fit the Right or Wrong nature of test-taking situations, so they were able to move back and forth from problems to analysis more easily in their minds. We got much better results by using the revised form.