summer 2006

Curriculum Frameworks

SABES

Women's Literature and the ELA Framework

BY NANCY COFFEY

When I was invited to present a workshop at the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks Conference in December 2005, I decided to revisit lessons I had taught in pre-GED and GED classes. One lesson was based on Maya Angelou's essay "New Directions" and the other was based on two excerpts from Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye.* Looking at these pieces in light of the newly benchmarked English Language Arts (ELA) frameworks opened me to seeing all kinds of new possibilities for enriching the lessons. In November I tried out some of these new activities with my students. They were a smash hit!

Getting to Know the Benchmarks

In order to prepare for the December presentation, I first needed to get a handle on the organization of the ELA framework. In this article I will focus on the Reading and Writing strands with some references to oral communication and critical thinking. The Reading and Writing standards make most sense to me if I think of them in this way:

Standard 1 is the main goal. It describes how we want students to be able to put it all together. In ELA Reading, "Learners will comprehend and analyze a variety of texts for various purposes." In Writing, "Learners will use a variety of strategies to convey meaning through written English."

Standard 2 describes what learners need to know to get there. In Reading, "Learners will acquire skills and vocabulary for reading and comprehending written text." In Writing, "Learners will apply knowledge of English vocabulary, language structure, and mechanics when they write."

Standard 3 outlines strategies for getting to the goals of comprehending written English and conveying meaning through written English.

FOREWORD

After a decade of development, revision, and field testing by practitioners, SABES, and ACLS, the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks are now in final form. According to Jane Schwerdtfeger, curriculum and assessment development specialist at ACLS (2005), "The goal of having curriculum frameworks is…to provide guidance to ABE programs for developing ABE curricula and instructional materials that are based in sound educational theory and rooted in the experience of practitioners and students."

The Frameworks are part of a larger effort to make assessment, curriculum planning, and instruction more congruent with each other. As Jane also noted, "The new ABE tests for Reading and Math were built on the Math and ELA (Reading) standards. If the standards outline what students should know and be able to do, then our goal is to have programs' curricula inform their instruction, and instruction aligned with the new tests. When all three are aligned, then the tests will be better able to capture literacy gains. These tests will replace our use of the TABE in 2006."

In my 20+ years of experience in ABE, I can safely claim that many ABE practitioners are resistant to mandates. We don't like being told what we should teach our students and how we should teach it. But the Frameworks don't restrict us in our teaching and curriculum planning; rather, they offer a tool to help us think through the integration of content, skills, and teaching strategies appropriate to our students. Unlike traditional curricula where everything is spelled out for you, the Frameworks do not "contain lesson plans or scope and sequence charts, but (they do) describe the components with which each program and teacher can design a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of their particular group of learners." (Bayer et al., 2005)

Teachers who responded to this issue of *Field Notes* suggested that the Frameworks enhanced their practice by providing them with a structure for content-based instruction. Nancy Coffey, Vicky Hall, Michelle Faith Brown, and Susanne Campagna illustrate how they have used the Frameworks creatively in their teaching. To keep things concrete, we have included some of their lesson plans as tools teachers may want to adapt, or as models for using the Frameworks to suit your own curriculum and lesson planning.

The details of how the Frameworks are organized (strand, standard, benchmark, the numbering system, etc.) become clearer through frequent use. Wherever possible, I have chosen to keep the capitalization consistent with the capitalization in the published formats of the Frameworks. So, you will see the names of strands, standards, and benchmark capitalized. You will come across the term *Frameworks* to refer to the entire range of Curriculum Frameworks (ESOL, English Language Arts (ELA), Science, Technology, and Engineering, Social Studies, Math) and *Framework* to refer specifically to the content area discussed in that article.

I hope some of the articles in this issue expand your sense of possibilities about how the Frameworks can be used to your advantage. Make them work for you and for your students; they exist to enhance and improve your work, not to limit and restrict it.

Schwerdtfeger, J.(2005). *An update on the ABE curriculum frameworks.* Field Notes *14 (4).*

Bayer, J. *wt al. (2005. Inreoduction to curriculum frameworks and curriculum development.* Boston: SABES

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The specificity of the benchmarks helps a teacher to track lessons precisely.

To give an example, R3.4c "Underline or highlight key ideas or words while reading" is in the Reading strand (R), Strategies standard (3), level (4), the third benchmark (c). These new standards and benchmarks have helped me to realize that in the past I often got so excited by the possibilities of standards 1 and 2 and the Critical Thinking strand that I gave short shrift to standard 3—Strategies. As I prepared my lessons this time I around, I tried to be better balanced.

Drawing from Angelou and Morrison

Both Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison write about women of color struggling to provide for their children in a time before the Civil Rights movement.

In her essay "New Directions" Angelou tells how her grandmother, Annie Johnson, met this challenge. Annie refused to become a domestic and leave her children. Instead she built on her strengths to establish a lunch stall that eventually grew into a thriving general store. Toni Mor-rison created Pauline Breedlove, mother of Pecola, in her first novel, *The Bluest Eye,* to illustrate the destructive power of racial self-hatred. Unlike Annie, Pauline did become a domestic, the beloved "Polly" of the wealthy Fisher family. Annie became a strong, independent woman, an anchor and model for her family. Pauline became Polly, proud and secure in the Fisher home, contemptuous and neglectful in her own.

Fiction: Two Excerpts from *The Bluest Eye*

Prior to reading the first excerpt from *The Bluest Eye*, we brainstormed a list of the elements of fiction. I then gave students an outline and explanation of these elements to keep in their portfolios for reference (R1.4e, R1.5e). In the first excerpt, one of Pecola's friends describes a day she and her sister went to see Pecola at Polly's workplace. I gave students a worksheet entitled, "How to Read Like a Detective." Armed with highlighters, they combed the first page hunting for clues to various elements of the setting-season, time of day, past or present, urban or rural, and the

kinds of neighborhoods they walked through. Next students tried to figure out point of view—who was telling the story—the author or a character in the story. Once they realized a character was telling it, I asked that they look for more clues—adult or child, black or white, rich or poor. After they had marked the clues and drawn inferences (R3.4a, R3.4c, CT1.3b), they worked with partners, sharing clues and justifying their

conclusions. I use pairs whenever possible because it makes students articulate their thinking processes. It also gives them practice in respectfully defending a position (OC1.2h).

Before the students read the next section, describing the visit to Polly's workplace itself, we reviewed similes and metaphors. Still wielding their highlighters, students found similes and metaphors in the text and discussed them with their partners (R1.4b). The visit described in the story is disastrous: Pecola accidentally overturns a hot blueberry cobbler and burns herself. A furious Polly heaps venom on her daughter and comforts the Fisher child. As a strategy to help students summarize the emotional meaning of the passage, I asked each of them to become Pecola and write a letter to her mother about the incident. (I see this as a strategy for reaching benchmarks R1.4e, R1.4). I also find that asking students to write letters as story characters is a good strategy for unblocking those who have trouble writing. Letter writing is a familiar genre that provides a clear purpose and clear audience for the writer.

In her letter, A GED. student wrote:

Mama, or as you'd rather me call you, Mrs. Breedlove,

I am deeply anguished at the way you treated me at the Fisher's house. I feel that as your daughter you didn't give me my proper place…Does the pink-and-yellow girl have more love for you than me, your own skin and blood? Why soothe her and not me? I got burned and my skin blistered, but you sent me to carry the laundry. Am I not your baby? Do I have to be pink-and-yellow to have your attention? Why, Mama? Why?

The second *Bluest Eye* excerpt traces Pauline Breedlove's transformation into "Polly," and reveals how her position at the Fisher's came to define her life. Using a teacher-

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made organizer, students took notes on Polly at home and at the Fishers' (R3.4e, R3.5a.). Using their notes as a reference, they wrote paragraphs comparing and contrasting Polly at work and at home (W1.3d).

NonFiction: "New Directions"

Prior to reading Angelou's work, we discussed as a class the differences between fiction and nonfiction. The students then read the first part of the essay, highlighted clues to Annie Johnson's goals, barriers, and assets, and discussed them with their partners (R3.4a, R3.4c). Applying the techniques they had learned in the first readings, they figured out the narrator and setting

in Angelou's essay. For homework, students finished the reading and constructed timelines to show the steps Annie took to establish her business (R3.4).(In retrospect, I think this would have worked better as an in-class partner activity). We did construct a class timeline on the board. Students then worked in pairs to come up with adjectives or phrases to describe Annie Johnson:

For the Classroom

Introduction to *The Bluest Eye* excerpt

This reading is an excerpt from *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison. Ms. Morrison is a well-known African American writer who has often appeared on The Oprah show. *The Bluest Eye* was her first novel. It is the story of young African American girl named Pecola Breedlove. Pecola's father, Cholly, is an alcoholic.The family lives in an apartment that has been made from an old storefront. Her mother, Pauline Breedlove, works as a maid. In this section of the story, two of Pecola's friends go to see her at the house where Mrs. Breedlove works.

How to Read Like a Detective: Excerpt from *The Bluest Eye*
Read the questions for Part A before you begin to read. As you read, look for clues to help you answer them. Highlight the clues that you find (R3.4c). When you have finished reading, discuss the questions with a partner. Write your answers and explain how you drew your conclusions.

Part A: Read the first four paragraphs ONLY.

1. Figuring out the setting
  * In what part of the country is the story set?
  * Is the setting urban, suburban, or rural?
  * What kind of neighborhoods are described?
  * Is the story set in the present or at some time in the past?
  * What is the season?

2. Figuring out who is telling the story
From the first four paragraphs, what do you know about the narrator? (Highlight as you go.)
  * Is the narrator the author or someone in the story? How do you know?

Read the next page through the dialogue. Stop at "We stepped into the kitchen, a large, spacious room."
STOP: Talk with your partner.
  * Is the narrator an adult or a child? How do you know?
  * What is the race of the narrator? How do you know?
  * What is the name of the story's narrator? How do you know?

Part B. Finish reading part 1
Talk and write: With a partner, discuss what happened. Together, write a brief summary of the important points.

Homework: Pretend that you are Pecola. Write a letter to your mother telling her exactly how you feel about the blueberry cobbler incident.

Almost by Accident: Connecting *A Raisin in the Sun* to the ELA Framework

By Vicky Halal

What happens to a dream deferred?....Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Langston Hughes, "A Dream Deferred"

This famous line from the Langston Hughes poem serves as the epigraph to Lorraine Hansberry's classic play, *A Raisin in the Sun.* The theme of a dream deferred is not an unfamiliar one among the students in the ASE (Adult Sec-ondary Education) Department at SCALE (Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences) where I have been teaching an intensive GED Reading/Writing class for the past five years. Though stu-dents in this class range in age and represent a diversity of racial, ethnic, linguistic, and educational backgrounds, they are bound by the goal of obtaining a GED or cre-dential from an adult diploma program. Their dreams have been deferred in numerous ways for varying lengths of time; however, at SCALE, they are working toward realizing at least one their goals: becoming a high-school level graduate.

In an effort to assist their pur-suit, SCALE's ASE Department developed an interdisciplinary cur-riculum unit based on the theme of personal finances and the economic impact of obtaining a high-school equivalency diploma. The objective of this unit was to teach the content in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science while relating it to the economics of their own lives. To satisfy some of the requirements in reading, writing, and social stud-ies, I chose Hansberry's play as a work of literature that illustrates a family's struggle to improve their quality of life individually and col-lectively while facing racism, sex-

ism, and economic hardship. This type of struggle is, indeed, familiar to many of our students.

Integration with ABE Frameworks

Serendipitously, the ABE Curriculum Frameworks were emerging, and we were asked

to begin inte-grating them concretely into our classroom planning. As I was developing my Raisin in the Sun curriculum, however, I first focused on what content I needed to address along with the related skills learners needed to develop. With the edition of the play we were using, we could cover a number of genres: drama (the play), poetry (the Langston Hughes poem), and non-fiction prose (the introductory essay by Robert Nemiroff and the biographi-cal essay to close the book). At the same time, I created appropriate writing assignments so students could strengthen paragraph and essay development. Students had opportunities to demonstrate and

improve their comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis skills through writing or discussion.

Once the curriculum was under-way in mid-October 2005, the most current version of the ABE Frame-works was taking shape and became finalized just after our completion of the unit. Since I already had begun to utilize earlier drafts of the Frame-works, I had some familiarity with its consistency. This intricate blend of strands, standards, and benchmarks could be an over-whelming document, perhaps even unwelcome amid the man-dates for so many "accountable" numbers practitioners need to doc-ument daily. At the same time, as I began to digest the Frameworks earnestly, I appreciated its depth, breadth, and clarity. Once I had applied the ELA Frameworks to each portion of my curriculum, I also began to appreciate it as a validation of my own classroom teaching; this official DOE document was echoing, in some fashion, what I have been doing these past 12 years both as an ESOL and GED instructor. The par-tial chart on the next page is an example of how I was able to match my original outline to the most cur-rent version of the Frameworks.

In addition to validating and helping to structure ABE practition-ers' work, the ABE Frameworks rais-es the status of the ABE profession as a whole. As practitioners, I be-lieve we can utilize the ABE Cur-riculum Frameworks to inform us rather than dictate to us, describe rather than prescribe curricula, and further illuminate the successes of our classrooms for our communities to see.

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For the Classroom

Sample Questions and Activities to Guide Reading and Writing Assignments for "A Dream Deferred" and *A Raisin in the Sun*

By Vicky Halal

Poem: "A Dream Deferred" by Langston Hughes

Discuss:
- Who is the speaker?
- What is the main message?
- Where is the poem set?
- When is the poem set?

Imagery:
- Identify similes/metaphors/symbols.
- What is the purpose of each?

Writing:
- Describe your own "dream deferred," either real or imagined.

Play: *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry

Read:
- Title, list of characters, list of scenes (pp. 21-22).

Make Predictions:
- Act One, Scene One (pp. 23-55).

Discuss:
- Who is in the scene? What happened? Where is the scene set?
- When is the scene set (time of year, day, etc.)?

Characterization:
- Assign each group a character (or characters), paper and markers to create a "poster" of notes describing the characters for a classroom display. Add as new characters are introduced in later scenes.

Inference:
Identify the Youngers' dream(s) deferred and the role of the insurance money in their family.

Content Area	Learner Objectives	Resources/ Materials	Assessment Tools	ELA Frameworks Strands
I./Ia. Literature - Poetry	Comprehension	"A Dream Deferred" -Langston Hughes (p. viii *RIS*).	Discussion Questions: *Who? What?Where?When? Main message?*	R1.4e, R1.5e, R3.4b, R3.4c, R3.5a OC1.2d, OC1.2g, OC1.3a, OC2.2c, CT1.2e
Ib. Literature - Poetry	Analysis -Figurative Language	"	Identify the Imagery: *similes, metaphors, symbols.* Discuss their meaning.	R1.4b OC1.2d, OC1.2g, OC1.2hOC1.3a, OC2.2c CT1.1a, CT1.1b, CT1.3a
Ic. Writing	Paragraph(s): Developing, organizing & revising	"	Write Paragraph(s): *Describe your own "dream deferred" either actual or imagined.*	W1.3b (W1.4d)
II-VII/a. Literature -Drama	Pre-Reading Comprehension	*A Raisin in the Sun* -Lorraine Hansberry	Make Predictions (title, cast, list of scenes, pp. 21-22). Discussion Questions: *as above after each scene* (<u>or</u> write as short answers). Write in Groups: small "posters" of scene summary & character traits for display.	R1.4e, R1.4f, R1.5e, R2.3d, R3.4a, R3.4b, R3 OC1.2d, OC1.2g, OC1.3a, OC2.2c (W1.4c) CT1.2a, CT2.1d, CT2.3b W1.2c, W1.4c

Developing the Math Framework: How the Process Affected My Teaching

An Interview with Barbara Goodridge

By Lenore Balliro

Few practitioners have such strong historical overview and such consistent participation in the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks development process as Barbara Goodridge does. I had the opportunity to interview Barbara about how her participation in developing, field testing, and using the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Framework for Mathematics and Numeracy has affected her classroom practice.

Barbara's experience in teaching math spans many years; she started off with junior high kids in the Lowell public schools. Eleven years and one sabbatical later (during which time she obtained a degree in counseling), Barbara made the transition to teaching adults at Lowell Adult Education Center. She has been there ever since.

Some History

About ten years ago, a committee of ABE math teachers, convened by Mary Jane Schmitt, began to meet. Their task was to envision the Math Curriculum Framework's content and structure by thinking it through together and by bringing what they knew to the table. Smaller subgroups worked on developing emerging content areas: number sense, geometry, data and statistics, algebra. Participants brought different skills to the process and worked from their strengths: some contributed concrete lesson ideas, others stepped back to help design overall structure, and one person assumed the task of proofreading to maintain consistency throughout the document—among and between all the content areas.

Barbara has been involved in the Curriculum Frameworks process throughout-from brainstorming initial content to editing the final version posted online in 2005. The original frameworks, a highly collaborative effort, resulted in a content-rich, useful document that can help teachers with many aspects of

> *"…working on the frameworks and creating the document was also an exercise in developing more awareness through the exchange of ideas."*

their classroom practice. Over the summer of 2005, Barbara, along with Drey Martone of UMass Amherst and Jane Schwerdtfeger of the Massachusetts Department of Education, edited the frameworks to make them fully aligned with the newly designed Math Assessment scheduled for release in July 2006.

I asked Barbara how her involvement in the frameworks development affected her teaching. "We were a group of teachers who got together to address what we thought should be done, " she said, adding that "working on the frameworks and creating the document was also an exercise in developing more awareness through the exchanging of ideas."

As Barbara spoke, it became clearer to me that developing the frameworks was its own kind of professional development. In this case, a group of "knowledgeable peers," guided by a leader in prevailing math practices, shared and expand-

ed their knowledge base, and crystallized and deepened their belief systems about teaching math.

"The frameworks reflected what we were interested in," Barbara noted. "For example, one of the habits of mind is developing curiosity. One of the learner questions is 'Do you ask yourselves why this is done?' We wanted to given students an opportunity to question why they were doing something, because we believed that when you understand why, you understand in a deeper way."

Many students initially resist "asking why," Barbara noted. "Just tell me how it's done," students say, "so I can pass the (GED) test." But often this initial resistance softens when other students articulate why they did something a certain way, or when other students express a desire to understand the why of solving a problem a certain way. Since some of the habits of mind are so new to students, it is important to remember the value of patience, and to trust the process, Barbara noted.

Stepping Back: Examining Enabling Skills

"Writing the Framework was a challenge for me," Barbara admit-

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ted. "Especially when I had to step back and think about the enabling skills-that is, what do students have to know already before I can teach them something like percents? I remember in my first weeks of teaching junior high math, I was supposed to be teaching fractions and percents, according to the math text. Then I saw that the students couldn't even do long division. I went to my principal and told him. 'So teach them long division!' he said. I said: "I don't teach long division! I teach fractions and percents."

"Of course I did have to teach them long division. But then, there is so much a student needs to know in order to do long division! In fact, I had to teach subtraction and multiplication, which are the basis for the traditional method of long division. I had to look at those enabling skills, too, and go back as far as I could."

"So, working on the Framework helped me to step back a little more and see a broader scope in teaching math. We had to look at students' background knowledge carefully. Tricia Donovan and I worked on the Statistics and Probability strand. Trisha was good at asking what we were assuming about what students brought with them to the classroom and checking the accuracy of our assumptions."

Barbara noted that the leadership of the process, largely provided by

Mary Jane Schmitt, provided a world view and theoretical underpinnings about math teaching to the process.

"Mary Jane shared models from the UK, the Netherlands, Australia," she said. "She and Esther Leonelli have an active connection to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Adult Numeracy Network (ANN)."

"Even though we thought research and looking at other models was important, we all agreed that whatever framework model we came up with, we wanted it to be useful to teachers."

Safe and Challenged

Barbara's background in counseling came to bear on aspects of the Frameworks development process. "When we defined the levels,"she said, "we didn't want to overwhelm students, but we did want to challenge them. We wanted to present them with something more than what they thought they might be able to do. I was always interested in the 'safe' part of teaching and learning," Barbara said, "but I wasn't always as challenging as I could have been. Working on the Framework renewed my interest in challenging students without pressuring them. The challenge part became a more explicit value for me as we wrote the Framework."

"Developing the frameworks has helped me see that there is more than one way to get to where you are going," Barbara pointed out. "I didn't learn math with a visual component. I have had to try and think, 'How can I make this concrete?' I get excited when I see it and I try to do more of that. I see that manipulatives are OK. In one lesson, I gave students a problem on

perimeter and area and they had a certain number of tiles to solve the problem. One student left early, and took the problem with him. But he solved the problem by drawing the tiles rather than having the actual tiles. That was great."

Persistence

"One of the habits of mind in the frameworks is persistence," Barbara said. "I'm still exploring persistence. Math is so easily the subject where it's do or die—I can get this or I'm quitting— instead of 'I'll stick with it.' I think more about what kind of atmosphere to create or allow where students are encouraged to persist…for example, one student who normally gives up easily is highly determined when we work on a puzzle…I try to help students think "I believe I can" when it comes to solving math problems, and for this student, I encouraged her to think of math as a puzzle…"

Open enrollment tends to work against a safe and challenging environment. Barbara noted that she always tells students on the first day that the rest of the class has been working on the area in math for some time, so they shouldn't feel overwhelmed; they should try and be patient and they will eventually catch up. It is clear that Barbara takes the "safe and challenged" perspective to heart as she employs these approaches to including students of all levels into doing math.

Overlapping levels

Barbara repeated that the group working on the frameworks had to examine their assumptions over and over again about different aspects of teaching and learning. This reexamination process showed up when the group decided to create overlapping levels. "The overlap in levels is deliberate and fluid," Barbara noted. "In Statistics and Probablilty, for example, there are eight benchmarks in level 1. In level 2, we repeat

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some of the benchmarks verbatim, but expand others, then expand into the third level. We cannot assume that a level 4 math teacher is going to read levels 1, 2, and 3, "she said, "so we repeated many benchmarks in the level 4 section. We felt that the skills in those earlier levels bear repeating. By having them written out, it's a reminder to teachers."

The 2005 version of the Frame works includes assessment notes to specify the level at which a benchmark is assessed. If a benchmark is repeated in Level 3, but assessed at Level 2,that is indicated by a note in the Level 3 benchmark. This safeguard, "Barbara explained, "allows teachers to look behind for review and ahead for challenge without requiring the students to master skills that are beyond their instructional level.

Role of the Teacher

The Math Curriculum Framework emphasizes, as prevailing math pedagogy does, that there are many ways students can solve problems. "When I taught in junior high, I believed the teacher is much more in control of leading the student to the right answer," Barbara noted. "I led the students to where I wanted them to go. Through working with the math team and working on the Frameworks, I learned that students might get there another way, and that's a habit of mind, too. As an ABE teacher, I was doing that more and more (encouraging a variety of routes to the answer)." I asked Barbara if it was scary to teach that

way. "At first it is," she said, "but once you know and the students know you don't have to have all the right answers, it's not as scary. My students tell me I can make one mistake every day, and two is getting carried away."

The Value of Peer Investigation

"Mary Jane was always talking about the teacher as learner," Barbara said. "That kind of awareness was clear as we worked as a team to develop the Framework. We had to step back, articulate our beliefs and approaches, and share ideas." This process sounded a lot like the environment teachers want to encourage among students, I suggested, and Barbara agreed. "Creating the Frameworks and using them with other teachers can re-excite you," Barbara said.

It is obvious that Barbara is guided by the habit of mind connected to curiosity. She noted that she experiences the same excitement that came with the group of practitioners developing the Frameworks as she does when she works with the Math Group that centers the Massachusetts ABE Math Initiative. (*Editor's note*: Go to the SABES Web site at <www.sabes.org> to read more about the ABE math initiative.) "Part of the meeting is to do math together," Barbara explained. "It's fun, and it enhances teaching. We share how we solved the problems and we look at the different approaches people use. Using different ways to get to an answer is also a habit of mind in the Frameworks," Barbara noted. "I leave these meetings with my colleagues charged. When we first got a

problem it seemed too easy. Then I saw that we came up with eight different ways of solving the same problem! When we were required to solve it in more than one way, it was challenging. I solved it my way then puzzled out another way to do it, one that didn't come naturally. I had to back into it."

My interview with Barbara left me jazzed about teaching and learning in much the same way that she described being charged as result of her participation on developing the Curriculum Frameworks and in participating in the math team. I can't help but wonder if I would have been less math phobic in my school days with a math teacher like Barbara who had access to a set of guiding principles like the math frameworks, The next time I pick up the math (or any other) of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, I will be more open to absorbing the energy, creativity, logic, and passion that guided the writers along the way.

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The Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Framework for Mathematics and Numeracy is available online at: <www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/>.

For additional ABE math resources, be sure to check out <www.sabes.org/ curriculum/math/index.htm>.

Got Opinions? *Field Notes* Welcomes Letters to the Editor

If you have responses to any of the articles you have read in this issue, or if you would like an audience for your ideas about any ABE-related issue or concern, write a letter to the editor for an upcoming issue of *Field Notes*. We also welcome student writing, particularly if it is related to upcoming themes. Send your submissions to Lenore Balliro, editor, at <lballiro@worlded.org> or call 617-482-9485.

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big, homely, poorly educated, well-organized, self-sufficient, persistent, brave, practical, intelligent, street-smart, caring…(R1.4e). As a class we then used a Venn diagram to compare Annie and Polly (R3.4e). We compared their goals, barriers, strengths, and weaknesses.

"New Directions" ends with a wonderful paragraph exhorting readers to follow Annie's example and strike out on a new path when the road they are on is unsatisfying. I assigned students an essay in which they applied this advice to their own lives (W1.5g). They brainstormed and then organized their essays using a graphic organizer (W3.4a). The resulting essays were wonderful, often deeply moving.

A month or so after we finished this mini-unit, I asked students to write an essay outlining the barriers that kept them from finding time for homework or made it difficult for them to get to school regularly and on time as well as the strengths and supports they had in their lives to help them overcome the barriers. As we brainstormed the essay, we referred to Annie-her seemingly overwhelming barriers and the inner strengths that helped her to succeed (CT2.2).

As a teacher, I find that the benchmarks keep me honest. I need to be pushed out of old habits and encouraged to plan lessons that teach the content, skills, and strategies that I have sometimes neglected. As a lead teacher, I find the benchmarks a useful tool in helping other teachers to look at their own practice. I would encourage teachers to meet together and play around with the benchmarks. At first they seem overwhelming, but once they become familiar, they make our jobs easier.

Nancy Coffey has been teaching at Operation Bootstrap since 1990. In 2004 she was MCAE Teacher of the Year. She can be reached at <nancoffey@yahoo.com>.

For the Classroom
"New Directions" An Essay by Maya Angelou

Part 1: Goal/Barrier/Assets
In 1903 Annie Johnson was a woman with a goal. As you read the first three paragraphs of this essay, look for the following:

- What was her goal? (You have to figure this out and put it into your own words.)
- What were her assets or strengths?

Stop at the end of the third paragraph and discuss the questions with your partner.

Annie's Goal:_____

Her Barriers	Her Strengths and Assets

Part 2: The Plan and Its Success. Finish the Story.
- Make a timeline to show the specific practical steps Annie took to reach her goal.

Words to Describe a Person (partner or whole class activity)
- Write words in each column to describe Annie Johnson.

Physical Description	*Character Description*

Paragraph Writing (W1.3b)
Write a paragraph using this topic sentence. "Success sometimes depends more on character than on education." Use details from the life of Annie Johnson to support this statement.

Essay Topic (W1.4d , W1.5a)
In the story Annie says "I looked up the road I was going and back the way I come, and since I wasn't satisfied, I decided to step off the road and cut me a new path.?" At the end of the story, Maya Angelou draws a lesson from her grandmother's life. Discuss this as a class.

Writing Extension
What is the way you have come? What has your past been like? Was there ever a time that there seemed to be only one road open to you? Have you ever done as Annie did and stepped from the road and cut for yourself a whole new path?

Write your story.

ESOL Benchmarks: Stepping Stones to Skills

By Andrea O'Brien and Jane Schwerdtfeger

(Editor's note: For an explanation of the benchmarks' numbering system used throughout this article, please refer to page 24 in the ESOL Framework. this can be found at <www.doe.mass.edu/acl>..)

When the 1999 draft of the ABE ESOL Curriculum Framework was published, many practitioners had problems understanding the concept of a curriculum framework. Indeed, the terms, strands, and standards were new and confusing. Many practitioners were used to working with a looser structure, or they used a structure designed at the program level, to develop curriculum and lesson plans. It has taken some time to gain understanding of the statewide Frameworks and to use them consistently at the program and classroom level. Many practitioners are having similarly strong reactions to the newly revised edition, but not all the responses are similar. For example, one teacher asked:

"Why change a document that is familiar and useful? What's up with the numbering system? Why add benchmarks to only some of the strands?" Another responded by commenting:

"Thanks for making the changes. The benchmarks are so useful. They really help to clarify the intent of the strands and standards. They will help to guide my teaching."

Adding Benchmarks

The ESOL Curriculum Framework revisions include benchmarks for learner levels in the reading, writing, listening, and speaking strands. The other three strands were intentionally not leveled or benchmarked. However, these strands: Intercultural Knowledge and Skills, Navigating Systems, and Developing Strategies and Resources for Learning, do include vitally important standards for learners to master. They provide the context for teaching oral and literacy skills. In the chart on this page, these strands can be visualized at the center of teaching language skills. A class can work on developing skills within the navigating systems strand at the same time they develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.
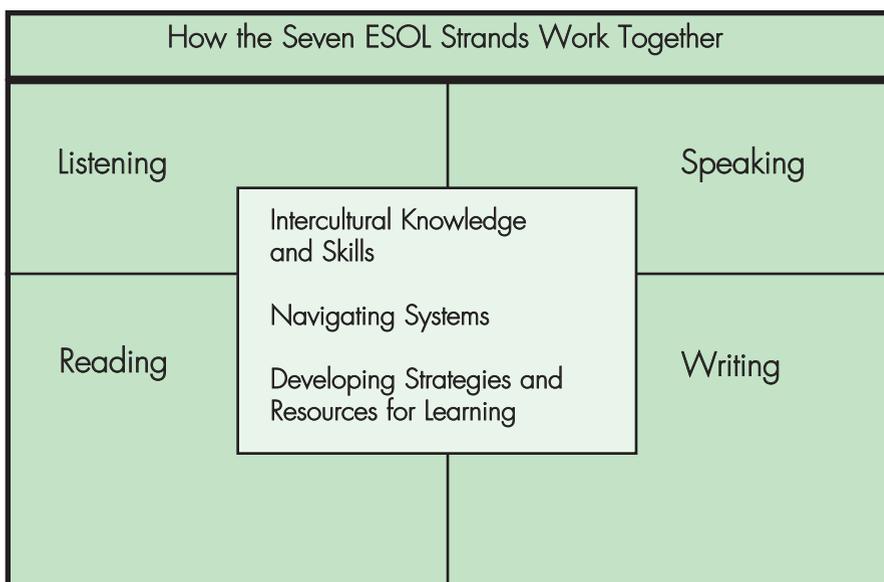
Intent of the Benchmarks

The intent of the benchmarks is to clarify the reading, writing, listening, and speaking strands and their standards. For example, in the Speaking strand, standard 1 states, "English language learners will express themselves orally in English for a variety of purposes." Without the benchmarks, the intent of the standard might mean different things to different people. The benchmarks help to explain what learners at the different proficiency levels should be able to do in order to show that they have met that standard. At the beginning literacy level, learners should be able to "Produce simple statements about familiar topics" (S1.1c) and at the low intermediate level, learners should be able to "Summarize a series of events" (S1.4c). The benchmarks are not a checklist, however. Depending on the individual goals and strengths they bring to the classroom, learners do not need to master all the benchmarks at a given proficiency level before moving to the next proficiency level.

The benchmarks can provide guidance for teachers, especially for those new to the field or for those who do not have a strong background in ESOL. The levels help learners and teachers to see a progression of skills. Within a program, teachers can work together, using the benchmarks to connect the skills they teach at the different class levels. They can note how to build on each other's teaching to strengthen the learner's transition from one class level to another. The specificity of the benchmarks also helps ensure that teachers and learners are aware of the various ways they can meet a particular standard. While specific, the benchmarks do not constitute a curriculum; they allow for flexibility

How the Seven ESOL Strands Work Together

Listening	Speaking
Intercultural Knowledge and Skills	
Navigating Systems	
Reading	**Developing Strategies and Resources for Learning**	Writing

ESOL Benchmarks...

in how a teacher decides to use learner goals to create a lesson plan around one or more benchmarks.

Whether teachers have an initial positive or negative reaction to the revisions, they do need to become familiar with the content and purpose of the benchmarks to understand them. There are several approaches toward gaining that familiarity that will lead to easily incorporating them into planning and teaching.

What You Are Already Doing: Looking at a Previously Taught Lesson

One way to start using the benchmarks is to think about a unit or lesson you have previously taught that included activities that built on skills in reading, writing, listening, or speaking. For example, an integrated unit on completing job readiness skills may integrate all seven strands of the ESOL Curriculum Framework: listening, speaking, reading, writing, navigating systems, intercultural knowledge and skills, and developing strategies and resources for learning. Specific lessons within that unit may focus on the development of different skills.

Looking at a Sample Lesson

If you look at the objectives in sample Lesson A on the next page, you can see that the teacher's intent is to help students learn how to fill out a job application as part of a unit on job readiness. In this lesson, students would also be using their reading skills as they read the form, their listening skills as the teacher presents the materials, and their speaking skills as they participate in classroom discussion of past work experiences. The main objective, however, is for students to develop their writing skills to complete an application.

Once a teacher has determined

the main focus of a lesson, she can look at the appropriate strand in the Framework to narrow the focus. For this lesson, the teacher looked at the writing strand to decide whether to focus on the purpose of the written expression (standard 1), the application of English language structure and mechanics (standard 2), or the use of strategies (standard 3). In this lesson, it was the purpose of the writing (to complete a job application) that was the teacher's objective, so she chose standard 1 as the focus.)

The teacher can then look at the benchmarks for the class level (in this case, low beginning) to determine which benchmark to choose as the main focus. In Lesson A, "Fill out simplified forms with expanded personal identification information" (W1.2b) is the appropriate benchmark.

Though they are not the main focus of Lesson A, other benchmarks are also covered, including "Use capitalization and end punctuation" (W2.2e); "Scan and extract relevant information for a simplified or adapted text" (R1.2b); and "Read and follow simple, familiar one-step written directions" (R1.2c). Even more benchmarks are touched upon in this lesson as well as standards from the other strands that are not benchmarked. Just because benchmarks may fit your lesson doesn't mean you have to include them; the important point is to focus on the learners' goals and your intention as the teacher.

Which Benchmarks Should I Cover?

After completing Lesson A, the learners have completed a job application and are familiar with the related vocabulary. The teacher can then look at the benchmarks to see what other skills the learners should be developing. After looking over the benchmarks for the low beginning level, the teacher decided to create a lesson (Lesson B) focused on one of the benchmarks in the

speaking strand, "Ask and respond to simple questions and affirmative and negative statements, working towards correct word order" (S2.2a). Focusing on this benchmark should help the learners develop interviewing skills. A lesson developed around this benchmark will fit into the unit on job readiness. This time, learners will still be using their writing skills, but it will not be the main focus of the lesson.

The benchmarks reflect experienced teachers' knowledge about what is important for learners to know and be able to do at specific levels." Through the benchmarks, teachers across the state can share a common language and understanding of how oral and literacy skills development progress from beginning literacy to advanced levels. While teachers don't need to note every possible benchmark connection to their lesson plans and curriculum, using the benchmarks when teaching helps purposefully target the main focus and identify the related skills embedded in any lesson. Benchmarks can also help teachers identify areas in which they may tend to concentrate more and the areas where they can extend lessons.

We hope teachers will explore and begin experimenting with using the benchmarks as they plan their lessons and teach. Let us know what you think!

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Lesson A

(This lesson connects to the article on the previous page.)

Teacher: _____ **Level:** Low Beginning ESOL	**Date:**
Objective: Learners will be able to complete a simplified job application form.	**Materials:** Simplified job application forms, worksheet 5,6,and 7 from Stand Out Activity Bank, Heine and Heinle, 2002.

Introduction:

■ Teacher leads a class discussion about learners' experiences with completing job applications.
■ Possible leading questions:

- ■ Did you work in your native country:
- ■ How did you get your job?
- ■ Did you have to fill-out a job application form?
- ■ Was it difficult? Why or why not?

■ If students are working now, ask the same leading questions.

Activities:

■ Teacher uses the overhead to model completion of a form.
■ Teacher reviews familiar personal information vocabulary; e.g., date, name, address, telephone number, date of birth, etc.
■ Teacher passes out forms to learners who complete only the same part of the form as the teacher (with familiar vocabulary).
■ Teacher circulates to check for accuracy.
■ Teacher introduces unfamiliar vocabulary: employment history, employer, position, reason for leaving, availability, education, references.
■ Teacher shows examples of completed forms (orksheet 6 and 7) and asks questions to check comprehension.
■ Teacher uses the board or overhead to record own examples and those elicited from learners.
■ Teacher models by filling in the information on overhead.
■ Learners fill in their specific information on their practice applications.
■ Teacher circulates to ensure that learners understand and have the opportunity to address personal concerns.

Evidence of Learning ■ Completed job application form ■ Teacher observation of participant in class discussion	**Teacher's Comments**

TIAN Connects to Math Framework

By Mary Jane Schmitt

Teachers Investigating Adult Numeracy (TIAN) is a national four-year project that brings ABE math teachers together to strengthen their practice. This year, 40 teachers—20 in Massachusetts and 20 in Ohio—are participating in the first year pilot. In Massachusetts, SABES is helping to facilitate the project.

Conducted as collaboration between the Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee and TERC, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, TIAN's main goal is to develop a model for standards-based mathematics in-service professional development for ABE teachers. The model, which uses teacher inquiry and reflection, engages teachers in learning how to design and implement purposeful and effective standards-based mathematics instructional approaches to algebra and data analysis, data analysis. (See the last issue of *Field Notes* for more information about TIAN.)

Connections to Massachusetts Math ABE Framework

The TIAN Project has used several activities to encourage connections with the state standards. In Massachusetts these are the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks for Mathematics and Numeracy. For example, in fall 2005, TIAN offered the first intensive in-service institute for TIAN participants. At the end of the two days, participants broke into small groups to review and become more familiar with the Frameworks. Each group took one of the ABE instructional levels identified in the Framework and identified the benchmarks they had covered, through a variety of activities and readings, during the two days of the institute. Then the small groups reported out to all the participants. This activity was effective because it used a well-founded approach to aiding comprehension: reading for a specific purpose.

After the first institute, teachers left with some lessons on graphs and data to try out in their classrooms. When they returned for the second institute in February 2006, the first thing they were asked to do was to select one of the core concepts from the Framework and to write how they saw that concept come alive in their classes since the last institute.

Below are excerpts from the teachers' reflections. (*Editor's note:* Many teachers refer to specific math activities and lessons by name. Teachers can find these activities in *EMPower* in the unit "Many Points Make a Point: Data and Graphs." Key Curriculum Press.

Connection to Core Concepts from the Math ABE Framework: Teachers' Reflections

Core Concept: Mathematical Communication

The ability to communicate mathematically means having an expanded voice and being heard in a wider audience. Mathematical communication enables learners to

■ interact with others,

■ define everyday, work-related or test-related mathematical situations using concrete, pictorial, graphical, or algebraic methods,

■ reflect and clarify their own thinking about mathematical outcomes, and

■ make convincing arguments and decisions based on discussion and reflection.

Teacher 1: *Group work was an area that challenged my students. This is my GED, they would ask, Why do I need to work in a group? In the lesson "Displaying Data in a New Way," students were able to speak about the foods most frequently eaten (by referring to) mathematical comparisons. Most of us, some of us, ¼ of us, 50% of us eat a certain food, for example.*

Teacher 2: *The lessons involving collecting data and making graphic representation really helped the students see the relationships between information, frequency graphs, bar graphs, and then circle graphs. I saw students who had struggled with answering questions about graphs develop confidence and skill from making their own graphs from information we had collected in class (clothing and food.) Since attendance is erratic and students join class at any time, students who have been in class are able to share their knowledge with new students and help them. For example, with the paper plate activity, a student who had previously had trouble with math explained to a new student how to represent the percentages on her plate. Another student explained the step-by-step process of making the circle graphs displayed in the classroom.*

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Core Concept: Mathematical Communication

and coaching going on about what labels should go on the graphs (this was the Giselle/Marathon/Stocks activity) and where on the *y*-axis the "story" should begin. Although it was very difficult at the beginning, and very difficult for me not to give the answers, by the end of the activity three of the students were able to retell the story while following the graph on the wall.

Teacher 4: In doing the "Clothing from our Closets" unit, students worked cooperatively in gathering data. We used our frequency graph as a group to generate numerical statements about our graph. We made statements about both our country and our continent graphs. Some students did not realize so many items came from China. Some people set up fractions to find what percent of clothing came from a particular country. I think the core concept came alive in the hands on activities in a group setting. They were able to articulate the stories that the quantities told.

Core Concept: Reasoning

Mathematical reasoning provides adults with access to information and the ability to orient themselves to the world. It enables learners to validate their own thinking and intuition, pose their own mathematical questions, evaluate their own arguments, andfeel confident as math problem solvers.

Teacher 3: The time in class where we interacted, discussed, (argued), the most was when we did the "Sketch This" activities. The students had never told stories by graphing, and there was a lot of disagreement

Teacher 6: During the "Countries in Our Closets" unit, students were engaged from the start in terms of predicting geographic clothing manufacturing patterns. Situating mathematical concepts, like distribution, ratio, fractions, and graph making, within other contexts like political power relations, geography, capitalism, and corporate cultures helped build a case for the usefulness of math as knowledge in local and larger contexts. Students' predictions about clothing manufacturing countries validated their intuition and thinking. As students drew graphs comparing continents and measuring data according to different criteria, they asked questions of each other that covered proportion, visual data, and nonmathematical topics.

Teacher 5: Two students used the Crime Watch data to create a bar graph for the midpoint assessment. They had a very animated discussion about how they would display the information. Both participated equally and the end result was a well-designed graph with a color key and an excellent display of the information. Theirs was probably the best group effort I've seen in my classroom.

Teacher 7: My student was able to draw a graph with a title, labeled axes, and form. This graph was of her life. It told a story of when she felt happy and when she felt sad. Under the graph she wrote a story explaining the up and down periods. This was an example of mathematical thinking in the real world.

Teacher 8: When we were in Lesson 5, "Sketch This," a few of my students described the busy and slow periods of their workplaces, Dunkin' Donuts. They gave information to the class regarding the number of people served in a normal workday from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. We graphed the data and then discussed why there were peaks and valleys, how many workers were needed at which times, when workers would take breaks, etc.

Core Concept: Connections

Mathematical connections enable the learner to
- view mathematics as an integrated whole that is connected to past learning, the real world, adult life skills, and work-related settings, and
- apply mathematical thinking and modeling to solve problems that arise in other disciplines, as well as in the real world and work-related settings.

Teacher 9: One thing that pops into my head in thinking about connections is when we were doing the line graphs. We were doing the lesson with the stories and graphing the stories. I started with a general discussion about line graphs; students knew about them, but no one was getting the idea about line graphs representing the concept "over time." The graphs they were drawing were too finite. We were looking at the graphs and listening to the story again. Then, suddenly, one of the students, who is on the lower end of the ability range, had the "aha." He got excited and realized we needed to show time passing by keeping the line straight. He went up, fixed the graph, and the discussion changed at that point—they started to get it. I think the graphs at that point started to take on more meaning when I reread the stories. The next set of drawings was much more accurate.

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Core Concept: Mathematical Decision Making

Mathematical decision making enables learners to
■ determine the degree of precision required by a situation,
■ define and select data to be used in solving a problem, and
■ apply knowledge of mathematical concepts and procedures to figure out how to answer a question, solve a problem, make a prediction, or carry out a task that has a mathematical dimension.

Teacher 10: *During the categorizing activity (Practice: Thirsty) there was an extended discussion around the proper placement of drinks into categories. Students started out by wanting to create only two categories—the most obvious (hot and cold). The first student who showed me his work was dismayed when I asked if any of the drinks could fit into both categories. He decided he needed to go deeper-find more and better categories. All the students heard us and after a collective groan began a lively discussion about various ways to categorize. They started breaking down the ingredients in the drinks and discussing health merits of each and even cultural preferences. Then they decided how to break things into groups depending upon the criteria they each felt was most logical for the task.*

Teacher 11: *An exciting moment …came when students were working in pairs to draw graphs based on stories ("Sketch This"). It was eye-opening and fascinating to see how different pairs made decisions and communicated/negotiated how they would create these graphs. The process and dynamics which emerged from each pair was interesting, but also what elements they choose to focus on in representing the stories in graph form was very rich. Some pairs spent a great deal of time on their axis and set up their graph. Others were totally focused on the line representing the story.*

As these teachers show, curriculum frameworks or standards can be more than a checklist of skills to be covered. By reflecting on practice, teachers can make the ideas in the standards come alive for them and their students. These Massachusetts teacher insights, as well as similar insights from Ohio teachers, will be shared with teachers from other states. Next year, groups of teachers from four other states will join Project TIAN. How they make connections between their own state frameworks and their classroom practice will be of interest as well.

Mary Jane Schmitt works with TERC and is a principle investigator of TIAN. She can be reached at <mary_jane_schmitt @terc.ed>. The authors of the above reflections, teachers in TIA N, preferred to be identified by number rather than name.

SABES Advisory Boards Offer Direction

*S*ABES, the System for Adult Basic Education Support, solicits the input from various advisory boards. Serving as a board member is a great way to give your feedback on how the system should work, and to connect with other colleagues from around the state.

SABES Advisory Group

The SABES Advisory Group meets three times a year to advise SABES and the Massachusetts Department of Education about SABES initiatives and activities. The group consists of two people from each SABES region, selected by their regional SABES office, and two statewide representatives, selected by the Central Resource Center. The group is balanced between ABE directors, teachers, and counselors; there is generally one representative from higher education. For more information, contact Mina Reddy at <mreddy@worlded.org >or your SABES office.

Field Notes Advisory Board

The editor of *Field Notes* looks to her 8–10 member advisory board for feedback on each issue's content, layout, and contributors. Practitioners from around the state meet twice a year, and members receive a stipend. For more information, contact Lenore Balliro at <lballiro@ worlded.org>.

Workforce Development Advisory Committee

This large committee meets three times a year and operates with four subcommittees. Its role is to advise and guide the work of the SABES Workforce Develop-ment Team. Members represent ABE programs, workforce investment boards, One-Stop Career Centers, skills training organizations, state agencies, and businesses.

Members are recruited and appointed by SABES staff. For more information, contact Laurie Sheridan at <lsheridan@ worlded.org>.

I May Be an Inmate, But I Am Also a Father

By Katy Upson

At Dukes County Jail and House of Corrections on Martha's Vineyard, we've stretched the term *educator* to include responsibilities beyond GED prep, reading, and current events. Now, the education program offers assistance to fathers within the jail by connecting them to local community agencies that can help them with their transition to the outside.

This innovative collaborative called "The Fathers' Group" is led by Peter Huntington, a teacher, group leader, carpenter, and father local to the island, and is funded through the Family Network/Family Center. Marney Toole is the Island director to this foundation and heads a family program through Community Service. As education coordinator at the jail, I had the good fortune to work with Peter and Marnie on this project.

Bringing together outside organizations and inmates is new to our education programs; however, the success of the program has made us realize a need and opportunity. One inmate reported of this fathers' program, "We don't talk about being a father downstairs in the common rooms; that's too personal, but we can here, and it's important. I am a father and I miss my kids, and still want to be a good Dad to them even if I am here."

As the result of the project's success, Duke county Jail and House of Corrections will offer the eight-week Father's Group in the fall and winter. Since the population turns over about every six months, this schedule seems to accommodate all. Even when the formal workshops are finished, Peter comes in every couple of weeks to meet with small groups of inmates who are scheduled to leave the jail soon. He also meets with new inmates who have issues around their children. Peter is also responsible for connecting inmates' families to local facilities that can help with transition and support.

Peter established a low-key and comfortable setting for discussions among the fathers. Food stimulates thought, and Peter always arrived with the goods. Apples or a bag of nuts went a long way toward helping these fathers find comfort. Peter

"I am a father and I miss my kids, and still want to be a good Dad to them even if I am here."

guided the nine regulars through gentle open-ended questions about trust, disappointments, fears, and expectations. He helped to raise issues about relationships the inmates had with their fathers, their relationships with their children, and the connection between the two. One father reflected, as he bit into one of the apples Peter brought, "I see that not all of us can just move back in with our kids after being locked up; it's going to take some time and thought."

"Where do you see your children as adults?" Peter asked one day, and several answered, "on the street, or in jail." "Is that final?" Peter asked. "Probably," answered the young red-headed father. He focused on the table and picked at his shirt, while realizing the meaning of what he had said.

"Well, I think it's important that even if you are in jail and you can't make things the way you might like, you see yourself as a father. You can connect to your children, even if you think you can't."

One day Peter came with cut-out hearts, glue, colored paper, and frilly doilies. It was close to Valentine's Day, and Peter was going to see that all those important connections between fathers and children were made. At first there was some resistance, but with a bit of encouragement and a few laughs, the fathers were into the activity while at the same time, remembering times they had received letters and cards and what that meant to them. Peter took photos of the men and these were included with letters written to their children. One father commented that "making valentine cards was cool, showing my kids that I cared. They even sent one back to me." On this day I thought that the glue that held the cards together was also the glue that helped these men hold on to another day and another connection with their children.

Another time Peter focused on anxiety and disappointments, and asked how people can prevent passing our own fears onto their children. He recalled his own childhood fear of spiders and snakes, and another father chimed in recalling his fears of roller coasters. This father said he never had been able to ride them, but his kids love them. This father then told us how he solved the problem by inviting

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another friend along whom he knew loved roller coasters. That way the kids got to ride all they wanted, while he stayed on the ground, waved, and took the pictures.

The inmates reported on their childhood experiences that included beatings, spankings, and other forms of corporal punishment. Discipline was a hot spot for the participants, many of whom thought that spanking remained a necessary option for their own kids when all else failed. Household chores, bad language, skipping school, or running off were events that triggered memories of escapades; some seemed humorous, some more serious. Peter asked if they ever thought of disciplining their children by using positive methods, such as using things the kids were doing something right as reinforcement for good behavior. None of them did. Then Peter suggested that discipline is a partnership between father, mother, and child; that is, a way to organize events and experiences in order to set the stage for good behavior to occur. He

explained that children learn faster with praise and suggested this as a step toward trust and relationships. The idea of fostering partnerships

> *By the end of the eight weeks, they could listen and hear, and they laughed with each other, made cards for their children, and allowed their pictures to be taken and sent home.*

for child rearing is often a strange one to inmates because it involves trust—a difficult issue—but these fathers heard what Peter was suggesting. Peter and I knew from experience that some new ideas need time to percolate before they resurfaced into wisdom.

Over the eight weeks of the project, I saw a change in the participants. In the beginning they were stiff and edgy, sitting by themselves with little or no eye contact. Their arms and hands covered their faces, guarding themselves, and it was difficult for them to talk about their

children. Little by little, they opened up, relaxed, and talked and talked and talked. By the end of the eight weeks, they could listen and hear, and they laughed with each other, made cards for their children, and allowed their pictures to be taken and sent home. They seemed to be softer, gentler, and more reflective. They were fathers trying to care for, and connect to, their children.

Katy Upson is the GED teacher and education program facilitator for the Dukes County Jail and House of Corrections on Martha's Vineyard. She can be reached at <kupson@gis.net>.

A Glossary of Curriculum Frameworks Terms

Core Concept:
An articulation of the importance of the subject of a given framework to the lives of adult learners.

Guiding Principle:
An underlying tenet or assumption that describes effective learning, teaching, or assessment in a subject area.

Habit of Mind:
A disposition, value, or tendency that supports lifelong learning.

Content Strand:
A category of knowledge within which the study of a given discipline. In this framework, the content strands are concepts.

Learning Standard:
A description of an understanding or skill within a strand that a learner needs to be able to demonstrate.

Concept: An idea that is timeless, universal, broad, and abstract

Topic: A subject of study that refers to a specific phenomenon, time, or place.

Benchmark: The specific set of skills learners need to develop and achieve in order to meet a more broadly stated standard

Proficiency Level: Portrays what students at a particular level know and can do in relation to what is being measured (e.g. a learner can do "x, y and z" in the Massachusetts ABE ESOL Framework, Reading strand, Proficiency Level 5).

* from the ESOL Framework

ABE-to-College Transitions and the ELA Framework: Extending the Continuum

By Jessica Spohn and Cynthia Zafft

The Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks are comprehensive and well-conceived road maps. They serve as guides to instruction in ABE classrooms and help teachers identify what their students need to know and be able to do within a specific content area.

The Curriculum Framework for the English Language Arts (hereafter called the ELA Framework) was designed to address the needs of learners acquiring basic literacy and writing skills—Level 1: Initial (Grade Level Equivalency [GLE] 0–1.9) through Level 5: Adept (GLE 9–12). Level 5: Adept includes the skills students need to earn an adult secondary education (ASE) credential.

Increasingly, however, ABE students are continuing their education at the postsecondary education (PSE) level, often at one of the 15 Massachusetts community colleges. Since the ABE educational continuum now extends to preparation for PSE, the ASE credential is no longer the terminal benchmark for the ABE classroom. ABE instructors need to know and be able to teach the skills and content necessary to prepare their students for a successful transition to college.

The ELA Framework and Transitions to College

While the ELA Framework stops at the ASE level, it can still be useful in addressing many of the skills students need to successfully transition to college. However, these skills are embedded in the framework in Level 5: Adept and are not explicitly connected to college-level work.

Unlike the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Framework for Mathematics and Numeracy, where skills to college-level standards are explicitly identified in Level 6, practitioners using the ELA Framework to help students prepare for college need to do a little hunting to identify the skills relevant to their teaching.

For example, in Level 5, reading standard 3 states: "Learners will use a variety of strategies to comprehend written English," and one of the

benchmarks in Level 5 states: "Take notes of key ideas while reading (e.g. paraphrase in the margins, outline)." These are essential skills for reading longer college texts, and teachers can apply them to appropriate selections to help get students ready for content-specific assignments.

Another example in Level 5: Writing standard 1, states: "Learners will express themselves through writing for a variety of purposes." Since students will need to write essay exams, narratives, and other kinds of expository writing in col-

lege, this standard is useful for transition students. Another benchmark in Level 5 states, "With assistance, complete a research paper of 8–10 pages that draws from varied, cited reference materials and includes evidence of comprehensive understanding of the subject through ample facts, details, and examples. As we know from undergraduate work, this skill is absolutely critical to a student's success in college.

The Need to Go Beyond the Frameworks for Successful Transitions

Although there are many other benchmarks that identify the skills students need to be successful in college, there remain several important skills that are not addressed in the Frameworks. ABE programs and instructors can create a kind of Level 6: ASE Bridge to College component of the ELA Framework to address the gaps in the current Framework. Like their students, instructors will need to do some homework, researching what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in college. This investigation involves learning more about the type of skills needed to be successful in college and an understanding of the placement tests required by most colleges, including the Massachusetts community colleges.

The Narrow Door of Placement Testing

Massachusetts community colleges use the ACCUPLACER to

ABE to College...

determine the level at which a student will begin coursework. The ACCUPLACER is a set of computer-based placement tests (e.g., reading comprehension, sentence skills, math) used extensively by colleges throughout the country as part of their placement process. ABE instructors, especially those at the ASE level, must understand the design and delivery of the ACCU-PLACER, as a placement test and not an assessment tool, in order to help their students prepare for the test. Two very different areas of concern come up frequently in discussions with college personnel: the need to prepare students for the mechanics of test-taking by computer and helping students build the critical thinking skills needed to successfully answer the reading comprehension questions. In addition, some Massachusetts community colleges request that the student produce a writing sample as part of the placement process.

The Importance of College Placement Test Results

ACCUPLACER scores place the student into college-level courses, like English Composition I or College Algebra, or into below college-level courses, typically referred to as developmental education. The placement decision is based on "cut scores" for each test, those scores identified with student success at a particular level of coursework. Students with low placement scores will need to take and pass one or more semesters of reading, writing, and/or math before they can proceed to courses that count toward their major and college graduation. This can add months (or years!) of classes to their trail through college, particularly if students are not prepared for college-level reading.

Your Homework Assignment

Entering and succeeding in college is more than just taking placement tests and producing a writing sample. If we return to the ELA Framework Reading standard mentioned earlier, choosing reading materials that reflect those used in college and helping students develop reading strategies can help ASE students prepare for the broader goal of success in postsecondary education. To accomplish this, ABE teachers need to investigate the kinds of texts used in college developmental reading and writing courses and the kinds of assignments and reading students are expected to do in English Composition I. Though the texts do not have to be exactly the same, they should be similar in level of reading complexity. Becoming familiar with what students will face once they leave your classroom involves developing a relationship with college faculty and staff. These relationships can yield authentic and useful information for you to conceive of a Level 6: ASE Bridge to College component to the resources already available in the existing ESL Framework.

Resources

<www.collegetransition.org>
The National College Transition Network Web site contains a wide variety of resources, including a section on placement testing under Counseling and several Promising Practices. (See especially, Preparing for College-Level Math and Strategies to Facilitate Reading Comprehension in College Transition Students.)

<www.collegeforadults.org>
College for Adults is a new website designed specifically for adult students. It contains information on all aspects of the admission and placement process.

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Latest Changes in SABES Library-Land!

By Lou Wollrab

The SABES library now exists in one physical location, but it will enthusiastically serve practitioners across Massachusetts! How?

- You may call our toll-free number at 877-605-5400.
- You may e-mail our new address at <sabesliteracylibrary@umb.edu>.
- You may search our online library catalog < www.sabes.org/library > where, if you're a registered borrower, you may request materials.
- You may examine resources showcased at SABES events.
- And of course, you may talk to the friendly, knowledgeable staff in your respective

SABES regional office. Tell us what you think, tell us what you do, tell us what you need! That's why we're here.

Developing Curriculum Using the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks

By Annemarie Espindola, Dori McCormack, and Carey Reid

Many teachers and program directors are looking for guidance on how to apply the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks (CFs) to practice. SABES and ACLS are developing new training to help teachers to use the CFs more easily. In addition, several programs around the state are exploring their own ways to make the CFs alive and relevant to their work. In this article, we would like to share examples of how two programs set up successful curriculum development efforts. In both cases, staff members worked together and their directors were strongly supportive.

Bristol Community College

The ABE Program at Bristol Community College has been engaged in curriculum development using the ABE Curriculum Frameworks for several years. In FY2004 the program began to develop a new reading curriculum. They organized a group of interested teachers into a curriculum development team.

Director Eileen Cruz takes an active role as the curriculum development team leader; the team also includes teachers Kathleen Manning, Nan MacDonald, and Sarah Hague. This team stays in touch with the entire ABE staff through monthly staff meetings, when questions and issues are brought back to the whole staff for brainstorming and feedback.

Using the ELA Framework and Reading strand as a starting point, the team developed a scope and sequence for levels of ability, which they labeled ABE Pre-Reader; ABE; Pre-GED 1; Pre-GED 2, and GED. This scope and sequence was a first step toward organizing class levels around the ELA strands/standards, and a move toward greater clarity for teachers about what skills and knowledge they expect to cover in their classes. It also helped clarify what skills and knowledge learners need to move on to the next level.

Connecting to Research

The team then used the ELA standards as a kind of map for research. They began to review standard by standard what they were teaching. Using *Research-Based Principles for Adult Basic Education Reading Instruction* (see citation below), the group was able to flesh out the emerging reading curriculum with research-based practices. Kathleen Manning brought an additional research dimension to the process; she participated in a field test for a Harvard-based research project focusing on vocabulary development and fluency, areas identified as crucial for intermediate level (4–8 GRE).

The team's final step was to identify strategies, methods, materials, and tech resources for each standard at each level. However, they continue to meet and discuss in detail each strategy, and the program director remains strongly involved. The team has also developed a database so staff can manipulate the data to examine various elements such as level, strategies, or objectives.

Some of the successful strategies from the Harvard study include round-robin reading and using full novels in the classroom. The team has incorporated these strategies into the intermediate-level reading curriculum. Overall, the research supported and validated what they were doing based on the standards of the ABE Frameworks [no italics, plus title is shortened here].

Ludlow Area Adult Learning Center (LAALC)

This spring three practitioners from the LAALC—Deirdre Marley, Monica Ceccatto, and Kermit Dunkelberg — participated in SABES West's Introduction to Curriculum Frameworks and Curriculum Development course, sometimes known as CD101. The practitioners came to the training already convinced that curriculum development should be a program-wide effort. They also realized that a program-wide curriculum project is too big for any one individual to put together, so they set up a team.

As Kermit Dunkelberg, program coordinator, noted,"[CD101] has been made all the more valuable in that three out of four instructors were able to take part, and have contributed a lot of effort, enthusiasm, and creativity to developing curricula together. Working together, we drew on a much broader base of teaching strategies and materials."

The initial activities of CD101 ask participants to identify goals and interests of their own learners and then to build theme-based units of lesson plans, using the CFs for guidance. The LAALC team decided to develop a unit focusing on the human body, health and illness/symptoms, and medical treatment/doctor visits. They wanted to create English language lessons on this theme through the three class levels in their program. Later on, they integrated the Health CF strands of Prevention, Early Detection and Maintenance, and Promotion and Advocacy. They also included ESOL CF

How Programs Are Developing...

strands and standards. The coordinator developed a chart indicating (and documenting) which ESOL strands would be covered by each activity. According to Kermit, "One especially helpful insight [about the ESOL Framework] was that the standards for each of the four basic strands—Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening—can be broken down into: communication for various purposes; structure/vocabulary, and strategies. This is a workable level of detail to internalize."

In the second session of the CD101 workshop, each team presents its curriculum materials and other participants in the workshop give feedback. Feedback focuses closely on how practitioners will know if their lesson units are effective, both for individual learners and for the class as a whole. These classroom-based assessments are teacher-designed and directly keyed to the stated learning objectives of particular classes.

Again to quote Kermit, "I value classroom-based assessments which are task-based, and are authentic. Assessment is also important to teachers' understanding of whether the material or skills they intended to teach were in fact what was learned!"

Curricula can take many forms. It can be presented in file folders, binders, notebooks, or a computer database; it can be organized according to theme or class level; it can reflect all of the above. Whatever the form, it should always be user-friendly, flexible, and accessible to teachers. The LAALC team eventually developed a series of lesson plans and materials on their health theme, organized by class level.

The LAALC team realizes, however, that curriculum building is not something you do once and then put

the materials on the shelf, finished. On the contrary, the process is ongoing and requires commitment, planning, and leadership. Therefore, the team will revisit their curriculum products on a semiregular basis as they are evaluated, updated, and changed to fit the changing needs of their learners.

According to Kermit, "the staff is looking forward to using common planning time, both during the year and during planning weeks, to develop more cross-class, theme-based curricula. We enjoyed the process."

Another goal of the team will be to incorporate the CFs into their teaching so they become second nature. According to Kermit, "the ESOL benchmarks are too detailed to be easily internalized, so the question arises, how do we incorporate them into planning and teaching? I think that if the benchmarks are revisited a few times a year and not obsessed over, they will eventually become more familiar." Recently, when doing teacher observations, he incorporated the benchmarks into his feedback to the teachers. "That is one way to build knowledge of the benchmarks into our conversations and thinking about instruction."

What can other programs take away from the experiences of these two programs?

First, it makes sense for a critical mass of teachers in any ABE or ESL program to work as a team to develop curriculum and connect it to the CFs together. If the team is self-selected, all the better. LAALC realized that a curriculum project is just too big for any one individual to put together for an entire program, and that a curriculum often crosses over class levels. They also recognized that most teachers want to be involved in designing instruction; they do not want to have something handed down to them from above but want to base their curriculum on student interests and needs. Second,

strong, supportive leadership is necessary to keep the curriculum development process ongoing. Finally, it is important to find ways to keep the curriculum work active, ongoing, refreshed, and easily shared among colleagues. Bristol Community College and LAALC found the Frameworks helpful in strengthening their own curriculum building process. Your own program can also collectively explore possibilities that work for you.
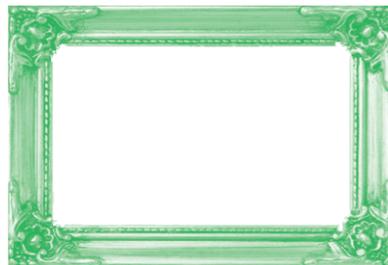
Reference:

Kruidenier, J. (2002). *The partnership for reading, research-based principles for adult basic education-reading instruction.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Available online at <www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading>.

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Using the Curriculum Frameworks to Develop Integrative Lesson Plans

By Michelle Faith Brown and Susanne Campagna

At the Read/Write/Now (R/W/N) Adult Learning Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, we focus on small group instruction in a learner-centered classroom. While teaching the basic literacy skills needed to make educational gains, instructors try to use learners' individual and group goals to drive our curriculum development. We have found that the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks provide structure and guidelines for effective and learner-centered curriculum development.

The lesson plans we are including here were the result of a SABES three-part workshop presented last spring that focused on using the curriculum frameworks to develop integrative lesson plans; that is, lessons that integrate both content and skills-based frameworks. (*Note:* Not all the materials used in the lesson plans have been included here.)

Our students had expressed an interest in being able to go out to sit-down restaurants with an under-standing of the many aspects that restaurant dining entails, including reading a menu and figuring out a tip. Our lessons reflect their interest and are part of a larger unit on restaurants. In addition, many are also workers in restaurants and may be on the receiving end of tips. Therefore, we believe that the unit about restaurants would appeal to a variety of learners for a myriad of purposes.

We are presenting examples of

Integration of Skills and Content

Skills
■ Mathematics & Numeracy
■ Strand: Number Sense

TOPICS

Content
■ History & Social Studies
■ Strand: Production, Distribution, & Consumption

lesson plans that were prepared using both the history and social science (content-based) and mathematics and numeracy (skills-based) frameworks. See the chart below for an illustration of how these lessons connected to the Frameworks. (*Editor's note:* Find Lesson Plan 2 on calculating restaurant tax and tips at <www.sabes.org/field notes>
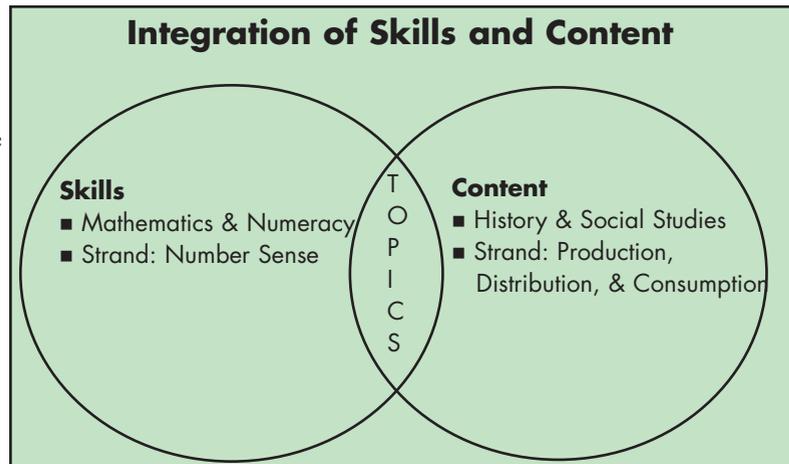
Reflections of the Process:

The process of developing an integrative lesson has been a good experience for us because we realize we already do this kind of integrative lesson planning informally. After the workshop, we have become more mindful of how the content-based frameworks can be integrated with the skills-based frameworks that we already use regularly in our lesson planning.

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Susanne Campagna teaches ABE learners at the Hampden County House of Corrections in Ludlow. She can be reached at <susannedc23@yahoo.com>.

Content Framework: History and Social Sciences	Skill Framework: Mathematics & Numeracy
Strand: Production, Distribution, and Consumption **Standard:** The influence of P, D, & C on individual decision making **Strand:** Cultures and Identities **Standard:** How cultures affect identity and perspective	**Strand:** Number Sense **Standards:** Demonstrate an understanding of 　1. different meanings of addition 　2. efficient and flexible strategies of subtraction of 2 or 3 digit numbers 　3. different meanings of multiplication of numbers up to 12. **Strand:** Statistics and Probability **Standard:** Extract information from a list or table. **Strand:** Geometry and Measurement **Standard:** Calculate the total cost of many items and the whole dollar change.

Tools for the Classroom
History of Tipping
(Reading level 2)

Learning Objectives:
- Students will understand the history and concept of tipping

Materials
- KWL pyramid on tipping (below)
- List of vocabulary words to preview from the article
- Copies of the article from CNNMoney, "Advanced Tipology: The Logic and History of Tipping" from the Web site
  http://money.cnn/2001/10/07/pf/tipping
- A definition and examples of acronyms from the Internet Acronym Site
  http://silmaril.ie/cgi-bin/uncgi/acronyms
- List of words to discuss related to "tip" at <www.factmonster.com/ipd/A0695416.html> (tipsy, tipster, tippy, tippler, tipple)

Time
- About 3 hours

Introduction
There has been some interest in learning a little bit about tipping at nice restaurants where you sit down and get table service. As part of our reading classes this week, we are going to find out how much you know already about tipping, explore some new vocabulary, learn about acronyms and read and discuss a short article on the history of tipping. We will also discuss the custom of tipping in your culture. In math class, you will also learn more about this topic as well.
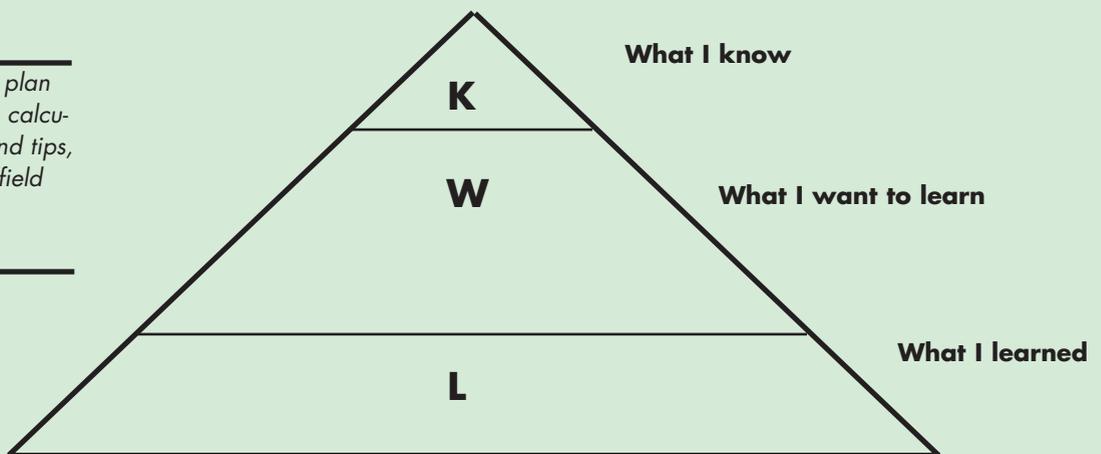
Part 1 (1 hour 30 minutes)
- Begin with KWL pyramid. Ask learners what they know already and record answers on board so they can fill in their chart. Next ask them what they want to learn about tipping and record all their questions.The last section (what they learned about tipping will be completed at the end of the week.

- Hand out the acronym page with the words laser, radar, scuba and tip on the page. Discuss the definition of an acronym and how it applies to these words. Talk about TIP meaning "to insure promptness"

- Have learners go to the computers where they will open the bookmarked site for <www.factmonster.com>. Enter the word tipsy and navigate using the arrows at the bottom to the tipster, tip staff, tippy, tippler and tipple. How do these words relate to the root word tip?

Part 2 (one hour with option to extend if there is a real interest)
- Preview vocabulary words from article. Hand out word lists, have students put words in alphabetical order and break into syllables.
- Take 5 minutes to preview and scan article to find some of the vocabulary words we just learned. Read article together. Since paragraphs are short, I will read every other paragraph to them. Learners can take turns reading the alternate paragraphs.

- Discuss what they learned and go back to the KWL chart and fill in the answers at the bottom. We will compare and contrast the use of tipping in different cultures.

For an additional lesson plan by the same teachers on calculating restaurant taxes and tips, go to <www.sabes.org/field notes>

What I know

K

W

What I want to learn

What I learned

L

What You Should Know About Curriculum Development*

Curriculum is all of the instruction, services, and activities provided for students through formal schooling, including but not limited to content; teaching methods and practices; instructional materials and guides; assessment and evaluation. Beyond the planned, overt topics of instruction, there are other elements, sometimes unseen, such as norms and values taught through classroom interaction between teacher and learner, hidden social messages imbedded in the curriculum materials themselves, the physical environment, and classroom leadership, time organization and controls. Curriculum development is a "living document," a continual, ongoing process ideally involving the whole program. (Bayer, 2005). Try filling out the sheet below with others in your program. What does it reveal about your own process of curriculum development?

Three Components (Layers) of Curriculum

Explicit: What we say "out loud" that we are teaching.

Implicit: The climate and culture of our programs and classrooms (posters on the wall, classroom dynamic, an uncomfortable atmosphere created by things going on among learners, etc.).

Hidden: What we might not articulate out loud to students but we incorporate consciously or unconsciously in our teaching (values, beliefs, choices, attitudes, etc.).

*From Bayer, J., et al. (2005). *An introduction to the curriculum frameworks*. Boston: SABES, 15.

College for Adults

<www.collegeforadults.com>

BY DEEPA RAO

Do you know that someone with a college degree can earn nearly one million dollars more over the course of a lifetime than someone who only has a GED or high school diploma?

In an effort to help nontraditional adult learners prepare for college, the National College Transition Network, with generous support from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, has launched a Web site. At <www.collegeforadults.org> your students can go from building to building on a virtual campus. The site contains information to help prospective students identify career goals, understand the admissions and financial aid processes, and understand placement testing. They can also check information about the academic preparation necessary to persist in college. This user-friendly site is packed with helpful information.

Don't let your students think that the GED is the end of the road. It's just the beginning.

Mark Your Calendar

Check the SABES Web site, <www.sabes.org> for local and regional activities. This list was prepared by Lou Wollrab.

June 28-30, 2006

The Centre for Literacy of Quebec, Summer Institute 2006
Accountability and Public Trust: Restoring the Balance
Location: Montreal, Quebec
Contact: The Centre, 514-931-8731, x1415
Web:

July 5-7, 2006

National Educational Computing Conference (NECC), NECC 2006
Charting an Intentional Future
Location: San Diego, CA
Contact: NECC
Web: <http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/NECC2006/>

July 23-29, 2006

Center for Popular Economics, 27th Annual Summer Institute
Location: Amherst, MA
Contact: CPE, 413-545-0743
Web:

August 2-4, 2006

University of Wisconsin, School of Education, 22nd Annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning
DL2006: Teach, Learn, Connect
Location: Madison, WI
Contact: Univ. of Wisconsin, 608-265-4159
Web: <www.uwex.edu/disted/conference/>

August 2-5, 2006

Alliance for Nonprofit Management, Annual Conference
Collaborative Leadership: Teaming Up to Strengthen the Sector
Location: Los Angeles, CA
Contact: The Alliance, 202-955-8406, Web site

October 4-7, 2006

ProLiteracy Worldwide, 2006 Annual Conference
Linking It All Together
Location: Atlanta, GA
Contact: ProLiteracy, 888-528-2224
Web: <www.proliteracy.org/conference/>

October 25-26, 2006

Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE)
Annual Conference, *Network 2006*
Location: Marlborough, MA
Contact: MCAE, 800-339-2498,
Web:

Change is good.

says Sheryl Crowe. We *agree.*

In December 2006 Field Notes *will publish a* double volume issue *on ABE* **Math.**

Deadline for **submissions** *is September 15.*

Email Lenore Balliro to reserve your space ASAP!

<lballiro@worlded.org>

PS: *We always welcome letters to the editor…*

Help Us Update Our Mailing List (Please!)

Are you receiving too many copies of *Field Notes*? Do you need more copies for your staff? Please let us know so we can keep the mailing list updated. Each ABE/ESOL teacher in Massachusetts is entitled to a copy. Fill out the form below and mail it, or email the information to the address below. Thanks!

Please remove the following names from the *Field Notes* mailing list:

Please add the following names to the *Field Notes* mailing list:

Mail to Leah Peterson, World Education, 44 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02210, or email information to <lpeterson@worlded.org>.

Upcoming Issues of *Field Notes*

Fall/Winter 2006
ABE Math/Numeracy
Submit by September 15.

Spring 2007
ABE Student Leadership
Submit by : December 15.

Summer 2007
Teaching from the Heart
Submit by: April 1.

Ideas? Want to reserve space for an article? Email Lenore at <lballiro@worlded.org>

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Number 1
by and for the Massachusetts Adult Education Community
funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education

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WORLD EDUCATION

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