

First Mondays

Monthly Notes for Virginia's Adult Education Providers



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF
TECHNOLOGY, CAREER & ADULT EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ADULT EDUCATION & LITERACY SERVICES

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GED®



Resources for GED 2014 information

[Virginia's GED Web site](#)

[VALRC](#)

[Online Forum for Virginia's 2014 GED Instructors](#)

[GEDTS](#)

[OAEL](#)

Money Matters



Award notifications for reallocated 2013-2014 AEFLA funds have been mailed.

Reimbursement requests are due the 10th of each month if submitting on a monthly basis.

College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) – Key Advances in Math, Part 2

By Jeffrey Elmore, VALRC

Last month I wrote about the transformation Adult Ed is going through and some key guidance given to us in the College and Career Readiness Standards for math. The gist of the message was to plan lessons over a series of class sessions, narrowing the scope of what is taught, but deepening the manner in which a concept is covered. I hope the article left you asking questions such as, “How can we do this?” and “What does it look like in practice?”

A couple of weeks ago Sabra Timmons from Charlottesville shared with me a video by Dan Meyer that is right on target, creating perspective and providing some starting points. Please have a look:

http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_meyer_math_curriculum_makeover?language=en#t-581919 .

From the five points Dan gives us for improving math instruction, the last three are the most direct: “Ask the shortest question you can; let students build the problem; be less helpful.” The last point I believe is the most critical but possibly the most unnatural for teachers. I also think it’s a bit over simplified, so I’d like to amend it to: “Become progressively and deliberately less helpful.” We know the majority of our students are not ready to be fully self-directed learners when they come to us. In the beginning of the learning experience they need our support and guidance, and overwhelmingly adult ed does an effective job of meeting these beginning needs. This section of the scaffolding is strong! The challenge comes after we have provided direct instruction and students have shown competence in the controlled textbook environment. At the point where students are passing content based quizzes, it may seem logical to move on to the next content item, particularly when impatient students cry out, “OK, I know this stuff now!”

So, if we’re not moving on to the next chapter in the book, what’s the next step? The most effective way to position yourself would be to have, before delivering any direct instruction, posed a big, relevant open-ended challenge or situation to your students. You knew all along that the students would need specific direct instruction to learn tools necessary for formulating solutions. Now, after a period of direct instruction, they have the textbook learning for those skills. It’s time to revisit that challenge by asking “the shortest questions you can” and by “letting students build the problem” posed by this challenge. With your students, look back at the problems you’ve been doing in the text and ask how elements could be stripped away, leaving



OAEL

Phone: 804-225-2053

Fax: 804-225-3352

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only the core question. Challenge students to rebuild these problems with new informational elements adding irrelevant “static” that might be absent in an isolated textbook problem. Continue with the challenge, looking to news items and real-life situations for similar situations. Ask your students to examine the real-life situations they’ve found and construct the core question or questions, categorizing information into what matters and what doesn’t. Encourage discussion and debate over the information items, identifying how information that’s essential in one question is irrelevant to another. All along this process, at key moments, become less helpful as an instructor while encouraging student perseverance and grappling with the problem as an involved facilitator. If you think this sounds a bit like project-based learning, you are already on the right track!

Did You Know?

The Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center has added an [Apps and Websites](#) section for teachers and students in adult education and literacy programs? This section includes links to apps for students, apps for teachers, contextualized game apps, lists of apps by teachers and other reviewers, useful websites for technology instruction, as well as matrices for assessing apps.



iPads/tablets. Image @Wikimedia Commons

