

East Bay Career Advancement Academy

A REGIONAL APPROACH TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Contra Costa
Community
College District
pathways to success

Instructional Framework Overview

Phase I of the basic skills component of the East Bay Career Advancement Academy builds student skills in reading, writing and math while simultaneously building their “intellective capacity.” Intellective capacity is defined as “the integration of academic content and skills (reading, writing and math) with mental processes such as reasoning, information processing, and critical thinking taught within a relevant context for the student.

Research by the Study Group for the Affirmative Development of Academic Ability at Columbia University’s Teacher’s College in its report, *All Students Reading at the Top: Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gap*, tells us intellective capacity is related to a student’s learning adaptability or “learn how to learn skills.” Consequently, the Academy believes extending students’ intellective capacity is essential in light of rapidly changing industries and technologies.

Traditional basic skills programs usually emphasize the acquisition of decontextualized and disconnected sets of facts and skills. The Academy’s instruction framework centers around using high-leverage instructional strategies to contextualize learning so that students develop fluency and automaticity in key sub-skills while learning to transfer their applied reading, writing and math skills to their future work in their chosen career-technical area.

The Academy’s instructional norms allow for academic flexibility across the cohort while ensuring program consistency as instructors work toward the key outcomes in these two areas: proficiency in 9th-grade level reading, writing, and math and well-developed learning-to-learn strategies.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Berkeley City College
College of Alameda
Contra Costa College
Diablo Valley College
Laney College
Los Medanos College
Merritt College

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Familias Unidas
North Richmond YouthBuild
Oakland Adult and Career
Education (OACE)
Oakland Metropolitan
Chamber of Commerce
Oakland Private Industry
Council, Inc.
Oakland Workforce
Investment Board
Pivotal Point Youth Services
RichmondWORKS –
Workforce Investment Board
Rubicon Programs Inc.
Street Tech
The Unity Council
West Contra Costa Adult
Education
Workforce Development
Board of Contra Costa County
Youth Employment
Partnership
Youth Uprising
YMCA of the East Bay

For more info:
(510) 587-7896

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Five principles gleaned from cognitive science and best practices in adult learning guide the Academy's lesson design and classroom activities (National Research Council, 2000; Gillespie, 2003):

1 Participants come to the Academy with some knowledge and expertise rooted in their social, cultural and political experience. Academy instructors make learning relevant and accessible by using these collective experiences to guide lesson planning and instructional activities. Effective learning begins with what learners bring to the classroom. This includes cultural practices and beliefs along side the learner's experience navigating racial and social politics in their communities. Evidence shows that learners use their current knowledge and preconceptions of the work at hand to construct new knowledge.

2 Academy instructors create explicit learning scaffolds for participants by connecting all new skills and content to existing skills and knowledge. Effective instruction uses external scaffolds to allow the learner to build on prior knowledge and skill mastery gained in the previous lessons.

3 Academy instructors make learning explicit by making the "invisible" internal cognitive processes visible to participants. The ability to think and solve problems requires



that knowledge of a subject area be accessible and linked to current understanding of when and how to use cognitive strategies to make meaning of content.

4 Academy instructors provide learners with timely corrective feedback to facilitate each learner's self-correction and monitoring skills. Once thinking is made visible and students become meta-cognitive around their own skill development, feedback must be provided on an ongoing basis to give the learner the opportunity to revise and improve the quality of his strategic thinking, skills application, and understanding.

5 Academy instructors create a community of learners in the classroom facilitate deeper learning. The classroom environment promotes a sense of community that encourages students to learn from each other and take advantage of their collective knowledge.

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INSTRUCTIONAL NORMS

These instructional norms represent tools and strategies that we hope will become routinely used in every Academy classroom. These instructional norms grow out of the six instructional strategies that make up equity pedagogy. They are not specific to a particular subject area. Instead, they should be integrated into all Academy developmental reading, writing and math classes to aid understanding and skill development.

1 Use of Scaffolding Tools

Instructors aid student learning with scaffolding. Students get explicit instruction in how to use a variety of scaffolding tools to represent their understanding, diagram their thinking.

2 Use of Contextualized Text and Tasks

In the classroom, learners use texts and tasks related to a particular industry or career path to teach basic reading, writing, and math skills. Using contextualized materials and tasks provide opportunities for explicit instructional conversation around how learners use strategies and skills to make sense when they are reading, writing or problem-solving.

Contextualized tasks allow for culturally responsive approaches to making meaning while developing key skills.

3 Explicit Vocabulary Development and Word Study

In the classroom, there is a systematic approach to introducing relevant, contextualized vocabulary to students as a strategy to build their background knowledge. Deep background knowledge is strongly correlated with deeper understanding, whether doing algebraic thinking in math, reading for comprehension, or writing coherently.

In addition to vocabulary development to build academic literacy, there is explicit word study that takes place over the 18-week period. Word study in the form of learning prefixes, suffixes and root words particular to a given subject area deepen understanding and help to accelerate learning by building fluency.

4 Focus on Information Processing and Memory

Instruction includes opportunities for learners to explicitly develop strategies for taking in new information, remembering it so that it is easily recalled later. Instructors provide time and activities that help learners practice the principles of memory: rehearsal (doing something with the new information), internalize (make associations and connections between the new information and other similar information already committed to memory), and apply (use it or lose it so that it is committed to long-term memory).

5 Self-paced Instruction to Build Automaticity

In the classroom, learners have opportunities to build automaticity of lower level basic skills (sub-skills) through engaging self-paced instruction via computer-assisted programs or other types of learning games. Automaticity is critical to freeing up the learner's cognitive space for higher order functions like comprehension, mathematical reasoning, and analytical writing.

6 Peer-assisted Processes

Instructors tap the collective expertise of the students by employing peer assistance processes such as peer-editing, collaborative teams and reciprocal teaching.