

# EFFECTIVE PRACTICES COMMON TO ALL DISCIPLINES

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## PDA SUMMARY:

An overwhelming 70-85% of incoming community college students lack basic skills, but only 27% of these students enroll in designated basic skills courses.<sup>1</sup> The objective of this PDA is to engender dynamic teaching practices across disciplines that reach *all* students. Each activity and material used in this PDA demonstrates active learning principles.

## TODAY'S CLASS

**Introductions & Icebreaker** (Foster)

**Power Point:** Basic Skills: Effective Practices Common to all Disciplines (Wakefield)

**Sample Lesson Plan:** The Art of the Narrative Essay (Moreno)

**Expanding Examples:** Integrating active learning in Math (Jackson)

**Group Activity:** Creating dynamic lesson plans (Foster)

**Reporting Out:** Sharing lesson plans (Johnson)

**Conclusion:** (Wakefield)

## BASIC SKILLS INITIATIVE

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### Definition of basic skills:

Basic skills are those foundation skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a Second Language, as well as learning skills and study skills, which are necessary for students to succeed in college-level work.<sup>2</sup>

### Definition of effective practices:

"Effective practices" refer to organizational, administrative, instructional, or support activities engaged in by highly successful programs, as validated by research and literature sources relating to developmental education.<sup>3</sup>

### SRJC Mission Statement:

To promote student learning throughout our diverse communities by increasing the knowledge, improving the skills, and enhancing the lives of those who participate in our programs and enroll in our courses.

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<sup>1</sup> *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges*, The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges, July 2007 (second edition), p. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Basic Skills Initiative Workbook*, Funded by the California Community College System Office Professional Development Grant. August 2008. Chapter 1, p.13.

<sup>3</sup> *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges*, p.4.

## ♥ SAMPLE LESSON PLAN: THE NARRATIVE ESSAY ♥

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This is a brief selection from a larger lesson plan that teaches the basic components of a narrative essay, using the model of a short story for an example. Similar to a classic fairytale, a powerful narrative will include plot, characters, setting, climax, and ending. Generally in the case of the narrative, the “moral” of the story will be the author’s epiphany or lesson learned.

The objective of the lesson is to encourage students to free-write, receive creative inspiration from their classmates, and employ editing skills to refocus their stories if necessary. This lesson incorporates movement for kinesthetic learners, pictures for visual learners, oral instruction for aural learners, and both collaboration and individual writing for intra- and interpersonal learners. Music can be added to make the lesson even more dynamic.

**This idea can be translated to many different disciplines. For Example:**

### Math:

A problem is written on the board. The instructor requests that a student to perform the first step. That student selects another student to perform the following step, and she selects another classmate. This continues until the problem is solved. Finally, the class as a whole reviews the problem for any mistakes.

### Foreign Language:

A picture is given to a group of three students. The first student writes a sentence or two about the photo. The second student writes another line, and the third student corrects any grammatical or spelling mistakes. This continues until each student has had a chance to correct grammar. The best “photo story” is selected and presented to the entire class.

### Dance Class/ Physical Education:

The class is divided into groups of five students, each group arranged in a circle. One student performs a dance move. The group copies that dance move. The next student to the right repeats the first dance move, and adds another. This continues until the group has 10 or more dance steps. Finally, each group performs their original dance in front of the class.



## GROUP LESSON PLANNING PROJECT

### Directions:

1. Select subject area and learning style (ex: Math/ Kinesthetic).
2. Brainstorm a dynamic lesson plan that engage selected learning style.
3. Discuss lesson objective and materials needed.
4. Outline a lesson plan (template below) for the subject area and learning style selected.

*Note: You may refer to the following page for a summary of different learning styles.*

**Group Members:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Learning Style:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Subject:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson Objective:**

**Materials Needed:**

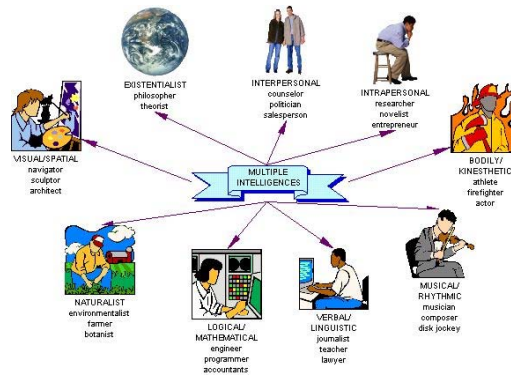
**Lesson Outline:**

**Warm-Up** (\_\_\_\_\_ minutes)

**Core** (\_\_\_\_ minutes)

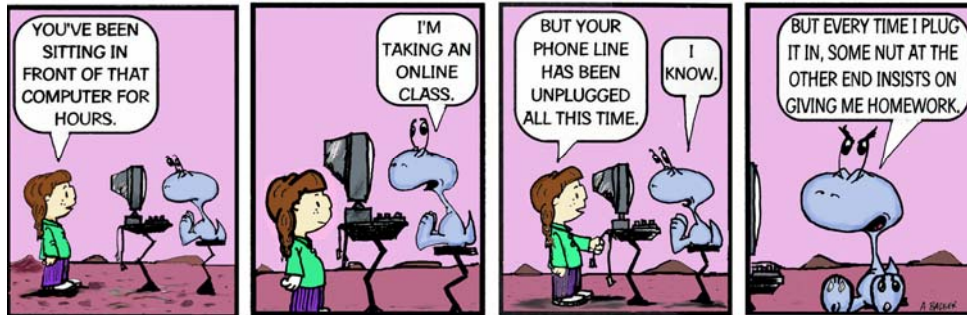
**Warm-Down** (\_\_\_\_ minutes)

## SIX LEARNING STYLES



- 1. Body/ Kinesthetic:** *Ability to control body movements and handle objects skillfully*  
 These learners express themselves through movement. They have a good sense of balance and eye-hand co-ordination. Through interacting with the space around them, they are able to remember and process information.
- 2. Visual/ Spatial:** *ability to perceive the visual*  
 These learners tend to think in pictures and need to create vivid mental images to retain information. They enjoy looking at maps, charts, pictures, videos, and movies.
- 3. Verbal/ Linguistic:** *ability to use words and language*  
 These learners have highly developed auditory skills and are generally elegant speakers. They think in words rather than pictures.
- 4. Logical/ Mathematical:** *ability to use reason, logic and numbers*  
 These learners think conceptually in logical and numerical patterns making connections between pieces of information. Always curious about the world around them, these learners ask many questions and enjoy experiments.
- 5. Musical/ Aural:** *ability to understand spoken word; appreciation for sound & music*  
 These musically inclined learners think in sounds, rhythms and patterns. They immediately respond to music either appreciating or criticizing what they hear. Many of these learners are extremely sensitive to environmental sounds (e.g. crickets, bells, dripping taps).
- 6. Inter- or Intra-personal:** *opposites~ interpersonal possesses the ability to understand and relate to others; intrapersonal has the ability to self-reflect and look internally*  
Inter: These learners try to see things from other people's point of view in order to understand how they think and feel. They often have an uncanny ability to sense feelings, intentions and motivations. They are great organizers, and work well in groups.  
Intra: These learners try to understand their inner feelings, dreams, relationships with others, and strengths and weaknesses.

## TOP TEN ACTIVE LEARNING TIPS



- 1) **Information Exchange**--During the first week of the semester, have students exchange contact information with at least four other students, encouraging them to move around the room and interact with their classmates.
- 2) **Participation Points**--Use participation points to encourage all students to ask and answer questions, solve problems, offer suggestions, etc.
- 3) **Handout Distribution**--Have students get up from their seats to obtain handouts rather than distributing them.
- 4) **Interactive Lectures**--Make lectures more interactive by asking a question every 8-10 minutes. Allow students 2-3 minutes to explore answers in various small groups. Encourage movement.
- 5) **Question/Answer Sessions**--Use small, hand-held white boards for quick questions/answer sessions. Students work in groups of 3-4 and rotate writing responsibilities.
- 6) **Informal Presentations**--Have small groups of students teach a concept, definition, or example to the rest of the class. Each group presents their information for 3-5 minutes.
- 7) **Paired Work**--Allow students to work in pairs on a short class assignment. Students must find a partner who is a few rows away. When students work with a variety of learners, they discover how others may be approaching the work.
- 8) **Two-minute meetings**--Pose a question or problem. Students get into pairs and discuss problem for two minutes. Then students reorganize themselves into new pairs and discuss the same problem again. These meetings work best if students are standing up and moving around the room to meet partners and discuss problem. Debrief possible answers and solutions as a whole class.
- 9) **Creating Visuals**--Have students sketch cartoons to summarize a reading, explain a concept, or explain solutions to a problem.
- 10) **Exit Slips**--Have students record the clearest point and muddiest point at the end of a class. Use these to assess lesson and make plans for the next class session.

## Basic Skills: Effective Practices Common to All Disciplines Reflection Assignment

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The questions below invite you to use information from the presentation to reflect on your teaching practices, encouraging you to incorporate one or more of these effective practices into your teaching.

- 1) What percentage of California community college students assess into a basic skills course in one or more areas?
- 2) In 1970, 5% of Sonoma County's population was Latino. What was this percentage in 2004.
- 3) Out of 100 students in need of basic skills, how many transfer to a four-year institution?
- 4) In the beginning of the presentation, the group participated in an ice-breaker activity. What ice-breaker activities do you already use at the beginning of the semester? How could one of these activities be modified so you could use it mid-semester?
- 5) During the writing activity, students moved in a circle to add to an ongoing narrative, which requiring that they logically connect their ideas to those of their group mates. Reflect on the writing required in your discipline. How could you incorporate this group writing activity into your discipline?
- 6) During the presentation, participants created lesson plans using a specific discipline (math, English, Biology, etc) and a specific learning style. How might you integrate one or more of these learning styles into your teaching?
- 7) Reflect on a specific skill or concept you teach in one of your classes. Summarize how you normally teach that skill or concept. How can you revise this lesson to incorporate one of the six learning styles defined on the presentation handout?
- 8) Of the six learning styles defined on the handout, which one would be the most difficult for you to integrate into your classroom teaching? Explain.
- 9) Based on this presentation, summarize one change you can make to your current teaching methodology.
- 10) How can you share the ideas presented as well as your own ideas with other instructors in your department?