Plan Ahead
Teacher's Guide

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1. Background, Goals, and Philosophy

Plan Ahead® is a semester-long college and career preparation course. The result of a cross-sector partnership between San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), Gap Inc., the Pearson Foundation, and Hirsch & Associates, it is a major component of SFUSD's college and career readiness initiative. It fills the need for a comprehensive, district-wide curriculum that serves all ninth grade students by teaching them how to succeed in high school and by establishing a strong college-bound culture that shapes their high school experience. It furthers SFUSD's goal of "graduating all students college and career path ready and prepared with the skills and capacities required for successful 21st century citizenship." The need for students to become college and career ready extends well beyond San Francisco, and in the fall of 2013, after three years of successful implementation, an open source version of **Plan A**head was released.

This guide provides the information needed to teach **Plan A**head successfully. It enables educators to deliver the course with a common understanding of its pedagogy, goals, and teaching strategies. Depending upon teachers' experience, much of this information may be familiar. In these instances, this guide can serve as a reminder or reference when collaborating with or mentoring other instructors.

Background

The optimal time for students to take this kind of course is in ninth grade, so that it can exert the greatest influence on students' attitudes toward high school. Ninth graders are in the critical zone for choosing to take school seriously and graduate, or for succumbing to influences that de-emphasize school and potentially result in dropping out. Students most in danger of habitually cutting class, thereby setting the stage for dropping out, are identifiable by ninth grade—and, in many cases, as early as middle school.

MDRC (formerly Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation), a social policy research organization in New York, has determined that intervention through a college and career awareness course can help reduce the risks associated with the ninth-grade dropout rate. A 2008 MDRC report from a conference of mid-sized school districts, including SFUSD, calls out the need to introduce college planning in the ninth grade as a strategy for increasing graduation rates. "An America's Career Resource Network Association report concludes, "… if students have a clearer idea of their career goals, they will be more likely to engage in academic tasks. In effect, facilitating the career development of students will help get them to the table…"

> The US system would be greatly strengthened if the pathways to all major occupations were clearly delineated from the beginning of high school so that young people and their families could clearly see the patterns of course-taking and other experiences that would best position them to gain access to that field.
>
> *—Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century, Harvard Graduate School of Education, February 2011*

According to the National Center for Education Statistics in a report released in 2013, graduation rates are improving nationwide. However, the average first-time freshman graduation rate across states is highly variable; Vermont reports an average graduation rate of 91.4% while the District of Columbia graduated an average of 59.9% of its first-time freshmen. And despite the steady gains in nationwide average graduation rates, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hispanic, and Black youth graduate at lower average rates than their White and Asian/Pacific Islander peers. More can be done to support all students in their quest to graduate high school.

In this context, **Plan A**head is a key component of fulfilling the vision of having every high school student graduate, obtain postsecondary education or training, and succeed in a career of personal choice. Gap Inc. believes in the transformative power of work and investing in getting young people prepared for adult life. Getting that first job is a powerful force in a young person's life. As parent company to Gap, Banana Republic, and Old Navy brands, Gap Inc. has given thousands of young people their first jobs at stores and understands how it helps prepare youth for adult life. Gap Inc. invests in community organizations across the world committed to getting young people prepared for life after high school.

Similarly, the Pearson Foundation has worked with national partners on college and career readiness outcomes, organizations such as America's Promise, Harvard Graduate School of Education's *Pathways to Prosperity* project and an extensive curriculum development initiative with the National Academy Foundation, creating academy and pathway course materials that make explicit connections between a student's learning and future career opportunities.

This shared commitment has informed the work on **Plan A**head and provided the framework for a powerful and effective public-private partnership with SFUSD. Now, in response to demand, these organizations have made the curriculum publicly available for download at www.whatsyourplana.com.

Lesson resources in the open source version are marked with "Make It Local" indicators to show where site-specific information (such as graduation requirements or community resources) is needed to ensure key sections of the curriculum remain relevant outside of San Francisco. An example of a Make It Local callout for Lesson 8 is listed below, addressing the need to source new information on local cost of living options:

> **Make It Local** | This lesson requires the use of accurate financial information about the cost of living in your community. Make sure to obtain this information before beginning this lesson. See Teacher Resource 8.1 for more detail

Instructors considering the open source version of the curriculum for their own programs should pay close attention to Make it Local callouts and identify the revisions needed prior to distributing materials to students.

Common Core State Standards and College and Career Readiness

In June 2010 the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGACPB) published the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts for Kindergarten through Grade 12. The CCSS "represent a set of expectations for student knowledge and skills that high school graduates need to master to succeed in college and careers" (NGACBP & CCSSO, 2010, Introduction to the CCSS). As of June 2013, forty-five states and the District of Columbia have adopted these standards, part of a nationwide commitment to support next generation standards that will ensure all students are college and career ready by the end of high school.

The CCSS builds on an earlier effort in 2009 to develop a set of College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. These CCR standards now serve as a foundational framework for the newly released CCSS ELA standards, which further refine the CCR goals grade to grade in "age- and attainment-appropriate terms." Notably, none of these standards dictate how particular goals and objectives in each strand should be met at each grade level nor what topics and content should be included in a curriculum. These decisions are left in the hands of educators.

As described in the introduction to the CCSS, a student progressing successfully towards high school graduation and showing increasing proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language, will be able to:

– demonstrate independence;
– build strong content knowledge;
– respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline;
– comprehend as well as critique;
– value evidence;
– use technology and digital media strategically and capably;
– come to understand other perspectives and cultures.

Plan Ahead and the CCSS

Through its content-area focus on college and career readiness, and in its emphasis on rigorous, student-centered learning, **Plan A**head directly supports the overarching goals of the CCSS. The CCR standards and the ELA standards, taken together, present a picture of the competencies and literacy of a college- and career-ready student. It's in this context, focusing on the learning strands in writing, speaking and listening, and language, that **Plan A**head aligns with the CCSS. The following sections present sample activities that support specific ELA standards for Grades 9-10.

The Writing Strand

CCSS ELA standards require that students:

- produce clear and coherent writing [attending to] task, purpose, and audience;
- develop and strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting;
- use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing products;
- conduct short as well as more sustained research projects; synthesize multiple sources, on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation;
- gather relevant information from authoritative print and digital sources; integrate, information; avoiding plagiarism and following a standard for citation;
- write routinely for a range of tasks, purposes and audiences.

Writing is an integral part of **Plan A**head. Systematically throughout the course, students produce a variety of writing products, many of which become key pieces of the personal portfolio each student maintains lesson to lesson.

Text Types

In Lesson 1, students write a reflection about what success means to them. In Lesson 2, they write a summary of an interview. In Lesson 7, they complete a research project. Students synthesize information gathered from multiple online sources to write a profile of a career. They provide careful citations for those sources in their final writing products.

Student Resource 1.3

Writing about Success

Now that you have thought about the things you want most in your life, complete the prompts below. For each prompt, write at least two complete sentences. For example, if your #1 goal is to become a famous chef, which is not on this list, your reflection could sound like this:

I think my life will be a success if I can become a chef in my own restaurant. To me, this is important because I love to cook and I make up new recipes all the time. My whole family loves to cook. Some of our favorite recipes have been passed down for four generations. Cooking is a really important part of my life and it would make me happy to cook as a profession.

In Lesson 1, students produce the first writing product for their portfolio in which they clearly state their definition of personal success.

Student Resource 7.2

Organizer: Research on a Career

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use this organizer to help you keep track of the information you learn as you research your career. First, write down what career you will be researching. Then in the space provided, write down your notes and the sources of your information. An example is provided. If you run out of space, copy the organizer onto a separate sheet of paper.

The Career You Are Researching

My career will be:

Organize Your Research Here

Fill in each section of the table below. That way you can be sure that you have collected all of the information you need. Look at the example to understand what to do.

Example

Topic	What I Found	Source of Information
Education or training	3 steps to becoming architect: 1. Get a degree. 2. Complete an internship. 3. Pass an exam to get licensed in your state.	American Institute of Architects website: http://www.archcareers.org/web site/article.asp?id=8&navitemid =15&linkid=32
Average salary	Architect's annual salary in 2008: $70,320 If you're interning, you'll make a lot less.	"Architect" on BLS website: http://www.bls.gov/k12/build04. htm

In Lesson 7, students begin research on a career, using this organizer to help them integrate and synthesize data. They find reliable sources and cite them as part of their work.

In Lesson 11, students write personal mission statements. Lesson 13 provides students the opportunity to write an introduction to their course portfolio – a culminating activity in which students focus on content, purpose, and audience. The written portfolio presentation demonstrates students' ability to organize and present information clearly and concisely.

Teacher Resource 13.2

Rubric: Portfolio Introduction

Student Name: _____ *Date:* _____

	Exemplary	Commendable	Developing	Needs Attention
Reflection	The portfolio introduction clearly explains what the student learned and gained from the assignments. The writer presents a thoughtful and comprehensive reflection on his/her experiences over the semester.	The portfolio introduction explains what the student learned and gained from the assignments and presents some reflection on the writer's experiences over the semester.	The portfolio introduction explains what the student learned from the assignments, but presents little reflection on the writer's experiences over the semester.	The portfolio introduction does not explain what the student learned from the assignments and does not exhibit any reflection on his/her experiences.
Use of Thinking Strategies	The portfolio introduction uses a wide variety of thinking strategies to enhance communication, including but not limited to: - Comparing - Evaluating - Analyzing - Appraising - Interpreting	The portfolio introduction uses some thinking strategies to communicate ideas, including but not limited to: - Comparing - Evaluating - Analyzing - Appraising - Interpreting	The portfolio introduction uses one or two thinking strategies to communicate ideas, including but not limited to: - Comparing - Evaluating - Analyzing - Appraising - Interpreting	The portfolio introduction does not use thinking strategies to communicate ideas.

*This rubric excerpt from Lesson 13 shows criteria for evaluation of student portfolios, highlighting **Plan A**head's emphasis on teaching students to evaluate and synthesize information, and to organize and present that information coherently. Additionally, it puts students in charge of their own learning by making assessment criteria explicit.*

Production of Writing

Both the career profile and culminating activity demonstrate how students use the writing in an applied and authentic context. Over the course of six class sessions for each of these assignments, students plan and write first drafts, get feedback from classmates, and use that feedback to revise their work for final drafts.

CLASS PERIOD 3	
STEP 4, PEER FEEDBACK AND REVISIONS **PORTFOLIO INTRODUCTIONS**	**40 minutes**

SET-UP

Make additional copies of Teacher Resource 13.2, Rubric: Portfolio Introduction (one per student).

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

The purpose of this activity is to give students an opportunity to get peer feedback on their in-progress work. Another student's perspective can help them to recognize strengths and weaknesses in their own work, giving them time to improve the assignment before turning it in.

INSTRUCTION

– Redistribute student portfolios. Divide the class into pairs. Ask students to get out their writing frames (Student Resource 13.2) and distribute copies of Teacher Resource 13.2, Rubric: Portfolio Introduction.

– Explain that students are going to have a chance to get some feedback from a classmate before they start working on the final draft of their introduction. Remind students that the purpose of feedback is both to help the writer understand what he or she is doing well, and to point out aspects of the work that could be improved. For feedback to be helpful, it has to be specific and clear. Write these two examples on the board and ask students to explain which one is specific and clear, and therefore useful, and which one is vague and unhelpful:

In Lesson 13 students get peer feedback before creating final drafts of their writing.

In **Plan A**head, use of technology – a prominent theme in the CCSS – is an integral part of writing production. When students have access to computers and other technology resources, they are encouraged to develop digital portfolios. They use word processing programs to develop final digital drafts of their writing products.

In some instances, as in Lesson 7 when students synthesize their research on a career, they work in PowerPoint, gaining competency in use of presentation software. Students add digital photos and/or graphics such as charts and graphs to enhance their digital presentations. To "preserve their work digitally," students can upload their writing products to online platform services, archiving work as part of a personal portfolio or social resume that can be updated later in their high school careers. These tasks, and the resulting workflow, reflect the sorts of professional routines and expectations students will encounter when they leave high school.
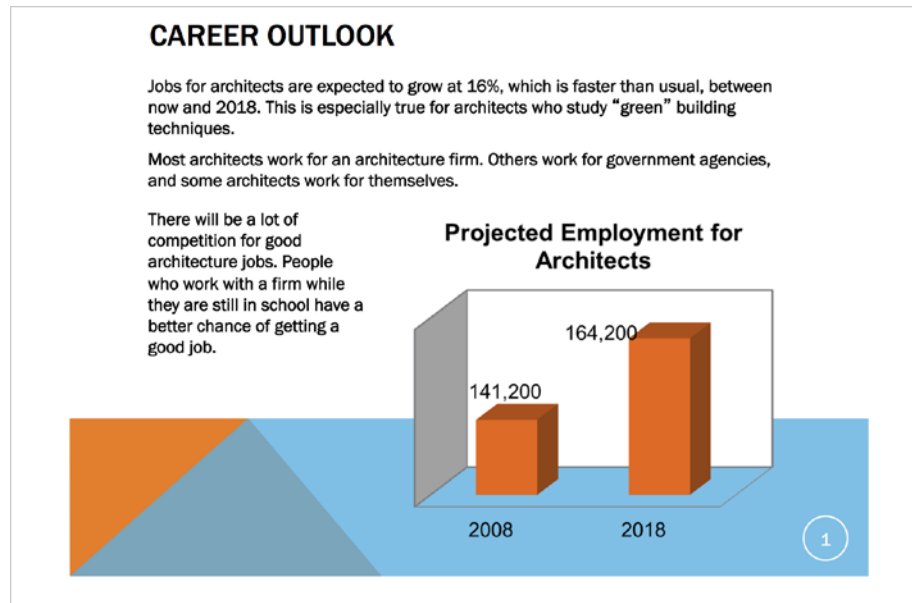
This slide from a PowerPoint presentation developed in Lesson 7 illustrates how students use presentation software to design their career presentations.

The Speaking and Listening Strand

CCSS ELA standards require that students:

– participate in collaborative discussions;

– come to discussions prepared, having read and researched relevant material;

– set rules for discussions;

– integrate multiple sources of information used in diverse media and evaluate the credibility and accuracy of sources;

– present information clearly and concisely, in a logical order, attending to purpose, audience, and task;

– make strategic use of digital media in presentations;

– adapt speech to different situations and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English as appropriate.

Plan Ahead supports the development of speaking and listening skills by consistently providing opportunities for students to participate in a wide range of conversations and one-on-one, small group, and teacher-led class discussions. These activities require students to communicate effectively with peers, teachers, and other adults such as guest speakers. In fact, in every class period in **Plan A**head, student work in groups or pairs.

Comprehension and Collaboration
Key instructional strategies in the program, such as cooperative learning and Think-Pair-Share, promote collaborative small-group and one-on-one discussions. In these activities and in teacher-led, whole-group discussions, students learn to pose and respond to questions

effectively in a variety of conversational settings. **Plan A**head's emphasis on active listening teaches students to listen attentively and to clarify and question, which enhances speaking skills as students paraphrase and summarize points in a discussion or presentation.

The first lesson in **Plan A**head guides introduces collaboration and feedback as students establish ground rules for effective communication both in the classroom and in their personal lives. In later lessons, students use agreed-upon approaches for indicating agreement or disagreement. A principal rule for all discussions states that students will respect others' ideas and accept diverse opinions, an important skill for succeeding in the increasingly diverse and collaborative 21st century workplace.

In Lesson 2, students participate in one-on-one interviews and are encouraged to work with partners with whom they have not previously worked. Again, they use agreed-upon rules for effective communication.

Presentation of Knowledge
In Lesson 3, students learn to adapt their speech and behavior based on different contexts and purposes. In Lesson 7, students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate active listening and a command of formal English when guest speakers visit the classroom. In Lesson 12 mock job interview activities with peers provide students with the chance to demonstrate their communications skills and understanding of audience.

In Lesson 3, students learn how to adapt their speech to suit particular situations, using formal English and informal English as appropriate.

Lesson 6 prepares students to do effective and responsible online research by teaching them to identify and evaluate reliable websites. Students apply these information literacy skills again in Lesson 7 when researching careers and integrating multiple online sources into their career presentations.

CAREER OUTLOOK

Jobs for architects are expected to grow at 16%, which is faster than usual, between now and 2018. This is especially true for architects who study "green" building techniques.

Most architects work for an architecture firm. Others work for government agencies, and some architects work for themselves.

There will be a lot of competition for good architecture jobs. People who work with a firm while they are still in school have a better chance of getting a good job.

Projected Employment for Architects

164,200

141,200

2008   2018

①
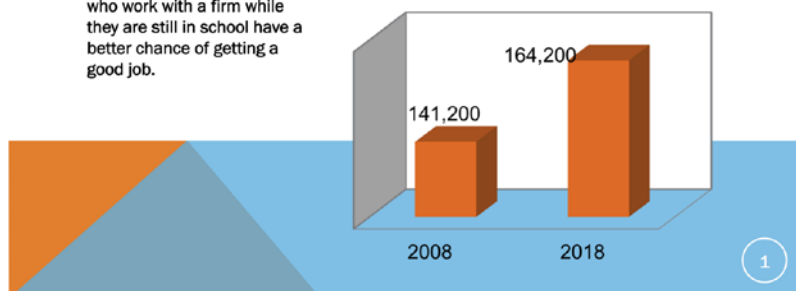
In Lesson 6 students evaluate the credibility of Internet sources by asking themselves critical questions about information presented on the site.

In Lesson 7 students also make strategic use of digital media, enhancing their career presentations with illustrations, photographs, charts, and graphs. In Lesson 13, they add a visual component to their career portfolio in order to increase audience understanding of their research and goals.

Teacher Resource 7.4

Rubric: Career Presentations

Student Name: _____   *Date:* _____

	Exemplary	Commendable	Developing	Needs Attention
Coverage of Subject Matter	Information is accurate, complete, and displays a thorough understanding of the career.	Information is accurate and displays an adequate understanding of the career.	Information contains some errors and displays a partial understanding of the career.	Not enough information is provided; understanding of the career appears limited.
Visual Design	Graphics and design reinforce viewers' understanding of the career and help to make the information presented easy to follow.	Graphics and design reinforce viewers' understanding of the career but occasionally make the information presented difficult to follow.	Too many or too few graphics are used and don't reinforce viewers' understanding of the career.	Design of the assignment is messy. Graphics create confusion about the career.

In Lesson 7, evaluation criteria for students' presentations include accuracy and understanding of information and strategic use of graphics and design to enhance viewers' understanding.

The Language Strand

CCSS ELA standards require that students:

– acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases,

– demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge, and

– spell words correctly when writing.

Plan Ahead supports the development of transferable language skills, particularly in vocabulary acquisition and usage. Students acquire vocabulary specific to academic planning in high school and college, and in the domain of career planning and exploration, including interest and skills assessments and job search.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
To acquire both academic and domain-specific vocabulary, students are introduced to key vocabulary relevant to the lesson concept and goals. In Lesson 5, students learn the terms necessary for understanding and using results of informal self-assessments that identify their interest, skills, and values—key steps in becoming college and career ready.

Teacher Resource 5.3

Key Vocabulary: Matching Careers with My Interests, Skills, and Values

These are terms to be introduced or reinforced in this lesson.

Term	Definition
assessment	In this context, a career planning tool that measures and reports a student's self-report of interests, skills, or work values; often used synonymously with *inventory*.
career	The pursuit of a lifelong ambition or the general course of progression toward lifelong goals.
career cluster	A group of careers that share a similar general focus; the US Department of Education developed 16 career clusters categorized under six general career fields as a way to organize occupations so that they can be used for career planning.
career field	A broad classification to describe a general occupational area (e.g., Human Services).

Acquisition of career-related vocabulary provides students the foundation to comprehend career planning and exploration content, enabling them to write and talk about it accurately and effectively.

Students also acquire relevant vocabulary by creating taxonomies, or alphabetical word lists. This strategy not only enhances vocabulary acquisition but also helps students gain understanding of the relationships among key terms. For example, in Lesson 5 students build a taxonomy of words related to careers and jobs. First they work independently and then later in pairs or small groups to share their vocabulary and add to their lists. Students encounter this vocabulary in course reading assignments and use the terms in their writing.

Teacher Resource 10.1

Key: Academic Acronyms

Use the following key to help students with their Academic Acronyms list and to facilitate class discussion.

ACRONYM	WHAT IT STANDS FOR	WHAT IT IS
*CAHSEE	California High School Exit Examination	A test required by state law to graduate; 10th graders take it in the spring—those who do not pass may retake it in 11th and 12th grades.
*A-G	Seven different subject areas (a=Social Science, g=Electives, etc.)	Courses in seven different subject areas needed for graduation and for eligibility to the UC or CSU systems (if completed courses receive C grade or higher).
*GPA	Grade point average	An average of points for letter grades earned in a given semester (or cumulatively).
*AP	Advanced Placement	Refers to both college level courses offered to high school students and to the standardized subject tests offered each May for possible college credit.

In Lesson 10, students learn and use academic acronyms critical to their high school and postsecondary educational options, enabling them to participate actively in conversations with counselors, teachers, and parents about their futures.

Conventions of Standard English

Plan Ahead requires students to demonstrate command of Standard English conventions. Two consistent criteria for assessment of students' writing products are proper grammar and accurate spelling.

Teacher Resource 13.2

Rubric: Portfolio Introduction

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

	Exemplary	Commendable	Developing	Needs Attention
Vocabulary	Vocabulary learned from the course is effectively integrated throughout the introduction.	The introduction includes some vocabulary learned from the course.	The introduction includes minimal use of course vocabulary.	The portfolio introduction includes almost no course vocabulary or uses it incorrectly.
Mechanics	There are very few, if any, grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. Sophisticated sentence structures enable writer to effectively convey ideas.	There are few grammatical or spelling mistakes. Most sentences are well constructed, with some variation in sentence structure.	Grammatical or spelling mistakes diminish effectiveness of writing. Most sentences are well constructed, but there is little variation in sentence structure.	Grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors interfere with understanding. Most sentences are poorly constructed.

The rubric criteria for assessing a student's portfolio introduction in Lesson 13 includes vocabulary acquisition and competency in grammar and spelling.

Course Objectives

To accommodate the range and depth of material to be covered, the course now spans 18 weeks (a full semester) instead of the original nine weeks and is now 5 credits instead of the original 2.5.

Standards Met

- The American School Counselor Association National Standards
- The National Career Development Guidelines Framework
- California Career Technical Education Standards

After taking this course, students will be able to meet the following goals:

Academic Goals

- Develop a preliminary college and career portfolio, which includes a four-year high school action plan that meets a-g requirements as well as a career options plan
- Determine the high school and postsecondary educational requirements they must meet in order to pursue the career pathways that are best aligned with their interests and skills
- Demonstrate proficiency in conducting online research; determine the reliability of online sources and information
- Use technology to research and create projects and presentations
- Display proficiency using the Cornell note-taking strategy; use a variety of study techniques for tests

Career Goals

- Gather information about industry sectors, occupations within various sectors, and educational pathways that lead to employment in specific sectors
- Identify career pathways that match their interests, strengths, and values
- Understand the components of successful applications and interviews in preparation for college and career
- Describe workplace etiquette, responsibilities, and ethical behavior

Personal Growth Goals

- Describe themselves in terms of their personal characteristics and values; identify their interests and strengths
- Understand and act upon their responsibilities to others, to their community, and to the greater good
- Set short- and long-term education and career goals
- Manage their use of time effectively and set weekly priorities

- Apply problem-solving strategies to a variety of relevant career and life scenarios
- Understand the importance of developing healthy personal relationships and their connection to future school and career goals
- Demonstrate financial literacy by analyzing personal spending and creating budgets
- Explain basic banking tasks associated with checking and savings accounts; summarize the benefits of being "banked"
- Describe the purpose of code-switching and its importance in a wide range of environments and circumstances
- Demonstrate skillful use of written, spoken, and unspoken forms of communication

Educational Philosophy

This course is written according to research into the most effective ways to engage adolescents and hold their focus.

> Students especially appreciate academic experiences that help them understand themselves, the world around them, and their current and future place in that world. Classes in which teachers draw explicit connections to issues in students' communities and in their personal lives, as well as to what they are learning in other courses, help students understand the relevance of what they are learning.
>
> *—MDRC report, 2008*

This course is student centered, constructivist, and built on the principles of active learning. Although one objective of the course is to develop such key academic skills as listening to the teacher and taking notes, students spend much of their time in class interacting with each other or actively performing a range of tasks. As students discuss, debate, and work with each other, they build on their shared understanding to construct new meaning for themselves. Students respond to this type of learning because it requires their active participation as they master content that has direct implications for their lives as students and adults.

Rigor

This course is built upon the premise that rigor is a critical component of an effective curriculum. There are a number of different ways to define and describe rigor, but **Plan A**head uses the definition put forth by authors Strong, Silver, and Perini in their book *Teaching What Matters Most: Standards and Strategies for Raising Student Achievement*: "Rigor is the goal of helping students develop the capacity to understand content that is complex, ambiguous, provocative, and personally or emotionally challenging." The students ought to feel motivated to exert themselves—but not so challenged that they become frustrated. The world that they will join after high school will require students to be critical thinkers and to be flexible, resilient, and able to cope with complexity; the rigor in this curriculum helps to prepare them for this future.

Rigor is achieved in a learning experience if it:

- is **personally meaningful** to the student
- is **challenging** by being complex, without being frustrating
- **piques** student interest by being provocative
- **sustains** student focus by being ambiguous, not cut-and-dry
- **evokes** an emotional connection or response
- **requires** the student to interact with a problem, question, dilemma, or project

More Key Points

Another key shaping factor for this course is **relevance**. Students care about what is personally meaningful to them, immediately applicable to their own lives, or capable of changing their current circumstances. **Plan A**head helps students to recognize that they are active agents in shaping their circumstances and options and that they can affect the course of their own future by the choices they make now.

Note that although all students learn best in circumstances that allow them to fully participate and take responsibility for their own learning, there is no one means of setting up these optimal circumstances that works for every student. The instructional design accommodates the highly individual nature of taking in, applying, and retaining new skills and content by using a wide range of strategies, activities, and assessment products. The variation ensures that every student has a chance to play to his or her strengths and that the lessons don't become predictable or stale.

In **Plan A**head, the term *student centered* embodies the belief that students will only engage and take risks if they feel safe. Lessons are constructed so that student contributions are welcomed and valued. Students are also set up to succeed. For example, students do not begin an assignment without fully understanding what they need to do and how they will be assessed. They always know what the teacher expects. Another example is that students are not expected to answer questions about content with which they aren't yet familiar. They are often asked open-ended questions that solicit their impressions, assumptions, and opinions;

but they are never asked questions with right and wrong answers about content yet to be introduced. In classrooms where students come from many different backgrounds, this safeguard is critical for developing trust and positive relationships.

Other researchers whose work informs our pedagogical approach are:

– Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (Basic Books, 1993)

– Robert Marzano, *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* (Pearson Education, Inc., 2005)

– Andrew Rothstein, *Writing as Learning: A Content-Based Approach* (Corwin Press, 2007)

– Neal Glasgow and Cathy Hicks, *What Successful Teachers Do: 101 Research-Based Classroom Strategies for New and Veteran Teachers* (Corwin Press, 2009)

– The Buck Institute for Education's work with Project Based Learning, *Project Based Learning Handbook: A Guide to Standards-Focused Project Based Learning for Middle and High School Teachers* (Buck Institute for Education, 2003)

This kind of pedagogy holds a number of implications for teaching the course. **First, consider organizing your classroom to optimize students' mobility.** Make it as easy as possible for students to work in pairs and in groups. You will also need space on the walls for chart paper, which both you and students use in a range of activities. Stock up on sticky notes. Also, ensure that you have a large wall area for projecting PowerPoint presentations and sufficient space to post student assignments for gallery walks.

This course invites and encourages collaboration between teachers as well as between students. Plan Ahead develops basic academic skills that need to be explicitly addressed and further developed in every class they take. Whenever possible, share what the students are doing with your colleagues and find ways to help students transfer what they're learning into other academic contexts.

NOTES
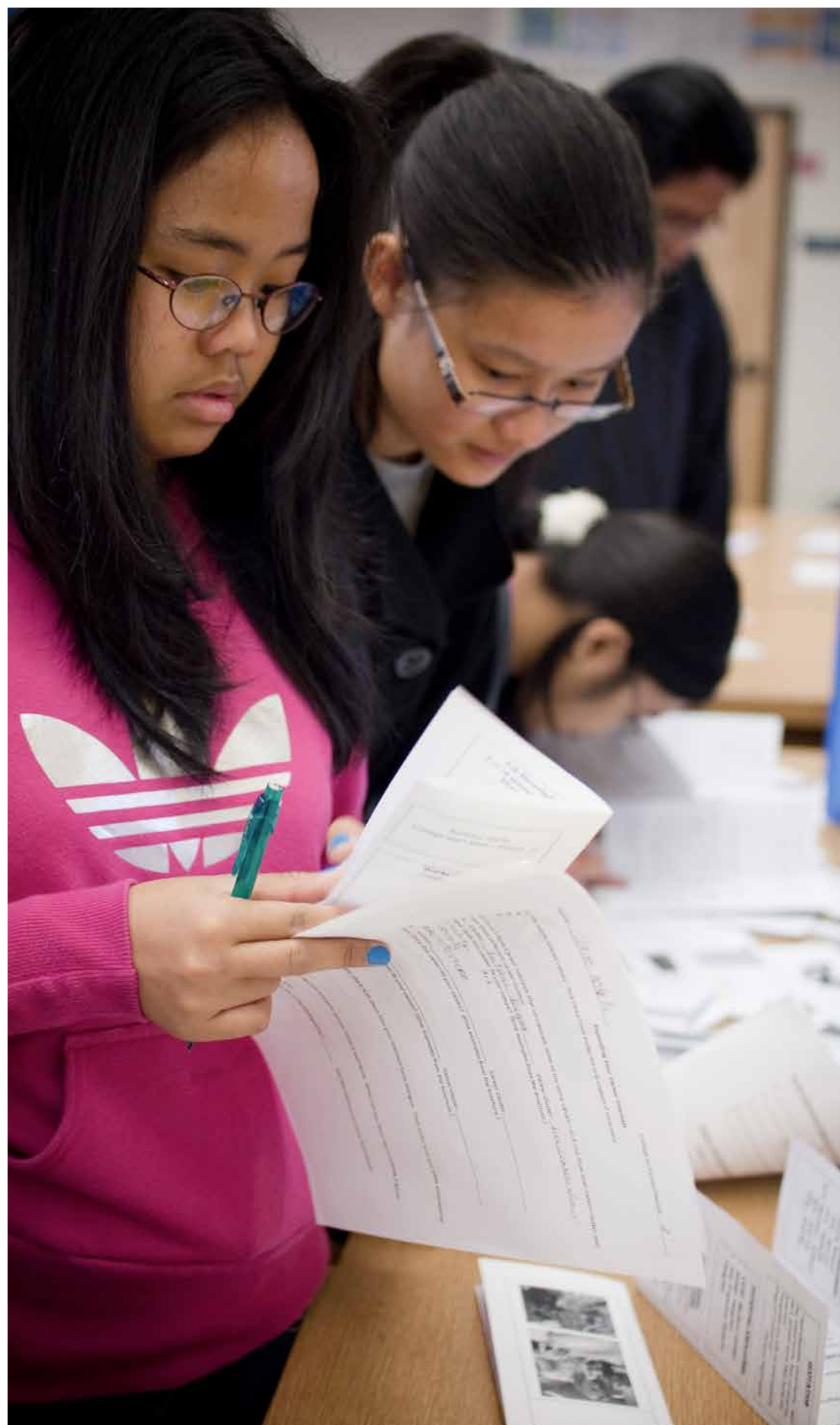
2. Course Structure and Components

Course Structure

Plan Ahead is composed of 68 50-minute class periods. Teachers on block scheduling or whose class periods are less than 50 minutes will need to adjust lesson pacing to fit their specific time frames.

The course is sequential, rather than modular; lessons build on the knowledge and skills gained in previous lessons. However, the course is designed so that teachers can also substitute their own favorite activities that meet the same learning objectives as the ones provided.

Group Work

Because working effectively in a group is a key skill students must develop and because it takes a great deal of practice to become an adept team player, every class period includes activities that require students to work in groups or pairs. And, because classroom management when students are working in groups is very different from when they are working independently, the lesson steps support teachers who may be less experienced by providing specific instructions for pair and group activities.

Benefits of group work:

- Group work is an excellent way to keep all students engaged and participating, since every member of the group provides input.
- Group work is an effective way to make sure students really comprehend the material; they are less likely to bluff their way through a group activity if they don't understand the content.
- Through discussion and working through problems together, students can help each other and develop some autonomy rather than relying on the teacher to clarify.
- The interaction group work requires also increases retention of content and ensures that students are constantly improving their communication and social skills. According to educator and author Andrew Rothstein, 80% of retaining new learning occurs through the reinforcement that discussion and reflection creates.
- Finally, group work helps develop camaraderie among students as they adjust to the complexities of high school student interactions.

Individual Work

Students also have ample opportunity to complete assignments independently and to express themselves in a personal and creative way. Individual work includes thoroughly exploring personal strengths, interests, and values, as well as career options that make a good match with their personal characteristics. Students explore their personal identities and relationships as well as their place in their community and their responsibilities as members of a community.

Through various means of self-examination, students realize how much potential they possess, which motivates them to choose paths towards high school graduation as well as to make plans for their futures.

Guest Speakers

The more exposure students receive from people with successful careers, from school counselors, and from college-oriented older students, the more real their own possibilities for the future become. Accordingly, Lesson 7 asks for a guest speaker to come to class and talk with students about jobs. The students' experience with the guest speaker is interactive; the guest engages in dialogue and answers students' questions. This occasion gives the students an opportunity to practice the professional etiquette they have learned. Other lessons recommend the following:

– Invite a school counselor and senior to class to talk about graduation requirements.

– Organize a trip to a local college and/or invite a college representative to come to class as a guest speaker.

– Ask a guest speaker to discuss financial literacy with students.

Portfolio Project and Learning Plan

Throughout this course, students spend time compiling a collection of assignments and reflections. This portfolio is designed to help them begin the process of planning for their future. Students can look back on these assignments as they make decisions about courses to take, extracurricular activities to pursue, and ultimately, what to do after graduating from high school.

The Course Planning Tool included in Lesson 1 identifies the points in the course where students create and save portfolio entries. While each item reflects a specific kind of insight and understanding, Lesson 9, titled "Graduating From High School," focuses on district requirements for graduation and calls on each student to develop a four-year action plan. This product in particular, along with the other portfolio entries, encourages students to assess their own goals and interests and make choices about how to use their time in high school most effectively.

The portfolio is not an optional part of the course or something to do if time allows – it's an essential component of the **Plan A**head curriculum. It creates the foundation for an ongoing learning plan and provides a personal point of reference students should be able to refer to in future years as they pursue college or career goals. While the portfolio itself is not optional, there are many different ways to implement this project in your classroom, depending on your circumstances and your students.

Reflection and Presentation

The final project for this course requires students to write an introduction to their portfolios in which they review its components and think about what they learned from completing each assignment. It's a way of reviewing the semester's work and seeing how much they've grown during this time. Although it introduces the portfolio, this essay is actually reflective, giving students a chance to articulate their perspective on which assignment they're most proud of and which one they found the most challenging, as well as their thoughts on several other prompts.

In the next step, students create a visual component based on three portfolio pieces. Some students will design a triptych, some a vision board—the format is up to them. If time allows, in the last two class periods, students participate in a "Portfolio Fair," in which they view each other's work. Students develop a set of talking points so that they're prepared to explain their work to viewers. Teachers have the option of opening the presentations up to a larger audience: other classes, parents and families, and administrators.

At school sites where other classes are working with culminating projects on the semester schedule, aligning activities can be a powerful way to celebrate student success. Regardless of the scope of the showcase, an interested audience helps students to take this project seriously and to put forth their best effort.

Digital Portfolios

Throughout the course, you will see specific activities and assignments that are designated as "portfolio components." At a minimum, all students completing the **Plan A**head course should have those assignments in a folder or binder for future reference. However, many students and teachers find it more effective to create a digital portfolio.

A digital portfolio is easier for students to maintain, transfer, and refer back to as they continue on their high school career. Digital portfolios also make it easier for students to transfer information to Connect!, to job applications, to college applications, or to scholarship or financial aid forms.

Since computer access and skill levels vary, the portfolio assignments in this course do not consistently require the use of computers. However, all assignments can be completed on computers and digital variations of the assignment are often listed as "Enhanced Portfolio Options."

How to Set Up Digital Portfolios

Determine where students will be able to save their files. The two most common solutions are: (1) on the school network and (2) on flash drives, which students may keep with them or may store in the classroom. Alternatively for students with reliable access to computers and the internet outside of school, the use of internet storage and content management services may be an appropriate option.

If computer time is difficult, consider having students complete their assignments on paper and then schedule regular "portfolio days" where students transfer these assignments to their portfolios (see "Collecting and Saving Assignments Digitally").

Collecting and Saving Assignments Digitally.

There are many approaches you can use:

– Students complete the assignment on paper. Scan it (or allow class time for students to scan it) and have students save the digital file to their portfolio. This is time-consuming, but a useful alternative for classes that struggle to get enough computer time.

– Students complete the assignment on the computer and print out a copy to give you for assessment. Students save the assignment in their digital portfolio.

– Students complete the assignment on the computer and submit it to you digitally (via email, Google docs, Dropbox, or any other method you prefer). Students save a copy of the assignment to their digital portfolio.

Completing Assignments Digitally

Many portfolio assignments are designed to be completed without the use of a computer. However, for students with computer access and adequate computer skills, there are "Enhanced Portfolio Options." These allow students to build their computer skills and complete an entirely digital portfolio.

These Enhanced Options may require additional class time, depending on students' skill levels. The Enhanced Options do not require the purchase of additional software, but may require the use of free programs, such as:

– Google Docs – If you have a Google or gmail account, you can access Google docs and create documents, spreadsheets, presentations, drawings, and forms online.

– Prezi (http://prezi.com/) – Prezi is a free, cloud-based presentation tool, similar to PowerPoint. You can create an educational account with Prezi for free. Prezi is very intuitive for students who have not used PowerPoint, and it makes it easy to incorporate multimedia elements into the presentation. Prezi can be accessed from any computer, allowing students to continue working on their presentations outside of class.

– Glogster (http://edu.glogster.com/) – Glogster allows students to create online interactive posters (glogs) that can include multimedia and more. You and your students can each register for an individual free account through GlogsterEDU, or you can create a teacher account for a low yearly cost that allows you to administer your students' accounts as well.

– Tiki-Toki (www.tiki-toki.com/) – Tiki-Toki is an interactive timeline tool for stories and information that builds over time – for example, the development of a learning plan or a career path. With the ability to integrate rich media, such as video and audio, students can assemble potential career paths and introduce relevant job-shadowing videos and employment data they find the web. Again, small subscription fees allow for interesting customization options.

– Paint.NET (http://www.getpaint.net/) – Paint.net is free image/photo-editing software that runs on computers that run Windows. It offers many of the same features as more expensive programs like Adobe Photoshop. This does require you to download software to computers, so you may need to get approval from your school's technology support staff. For Mac users, this article recommends several free photo editing programs, http://graphicssoft.about.com/od/pixelbased/tp/freephotoedm.htm.

For teachers interested in working with services like these, sites such as Pinterest's Web 2.0 Tools for Educators and the Ed | Tech Dispatch from the Model Classroom on Scoop.it! can provide useful information for getting started.

Necessary Equipment

Computers and Internet Access

Students will need Internet access at a number of points in the course. Students need computers to become familiar with the Connect.Edu website, which they will use throughout their high school years. Students also learn how to navigate online and evaluate sources of information; conduct research into different careers and jobs; and generally improve their comfort level and familiarity with using computers. Whenever possible, students should use computers for typing assignments, and they should use word processing software as well.

LCD Projector

Many lessons include PowerPoint presentations that are most effective if viewed as a class. A means of projecting resources, web pages, and examples from a computer is extremely helpful in most activities. Whenever possible, students can practice presenting their work to the class using these technologies as well.

College and Career Planning Resources

In San Francisco, **Plan A**head's scope and sequence calls for the use of a college and career planning tool to assist students with their research on options after high school. If your school or district has access to site licenses for an approved college and career planning tool, plan on having access to this resource.

Notebook

Students will also need a three-ring binder, referred to as a notebook, throughout the course, unless students will be completing and storing their assignments on computers. The notebook is a tool for taking notes; writing down ideas, questions, and reflections; and writing rough drafts. Because the students learn how to create a table of contents for it so that they can easily find their work or notes, it also helps them learn how to be organized.

Lesson Structure

There are three main documents that make up each lesson in the course: the Lesson Plan, the Teacher Resources, and the Student Resources. There are also PowerPoint presentations in many of the lessons, which are separate files, and occasionally other kinds of files are separate as well.

The Lesson Plan

This document contains the instructions for the lesson as well as introductory materials that help the teacher plan and prepare for teaching it. The purpose of each preliminary section of the Lesson Plan is as follows:

The introduction gives the teacher a clear, concise understanding of the lesson in a paragraph or two. It explains the purpose of the lesson and briefly describes what students do in it.

Learning Objectives define what we expect students to learn in a lesson and are stated in terms of what the students "will do." Most learning objective verbs come from a new taxonomy developed by educational researcher and author Robert Marzano.

Academic Standards are verbatim standards taken from nationally recognized sources that are most relevant to the content of this lesson. This section will contain a list of relevant national standards from the following organizations:

– California Career Technical Education (CTE) Standards and Framework

– American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Standards

– National Career Development Guidelines (NCDG) Framework Standards

– International Reading Association/National Council of Teachers of English (IRA/NCTE) Standards for the English Language Arts

21st Century Skills have been customized to fit the District's vision of how these national standards can best describe goals for SFUSD students.

Assessment identifies each element of student work to be evaluated, along with the scoring method on which to base the assessment. Assignments completed in one draft are usually assessed using assessment criteria, while assignments requiring at least one draft are usually assessed using a rubric. See the section in this guide titled "Assessment" for more information on the different purposes and formats for assessment products.

Prerequisites are the main skills and types of knowledge that students should have prior to beginning the lesson. They are described in terms of what they have already learned in this course and are stated in terms of skills and key concepts rather than activities completed in earlier lessons.

For example, the prerequisites for Lesson 3 reference the pertinent knowledge and skills students have learned in Lessons 1 and 2:

– Solid understanding of the class ground rules

– Familiarity with prioritization and basic planning

– Basic understanding of social norms and appropriate forms of communication

The bulk of each Lesson Plan consists of the following sections:

Lesson Steps

Lesson steps are the main content of the Lesson Plan and include the instructions for how to teach the lesson. Usually, two or three lesson steps fit into one 50-minute class period; occasionally a lesson step will require the whole period.

Each step has a section called "Set-Up," which describes the preparation required for that particular activity. Next to it is a short section called "Purpose and Context," which orients the teacher with a big-picture sense of the purpose and context before the teacher gets into the specificity of the actual steps. Instructions for each step follow the Set-Up and Purpose and Context sections.

Differentiation

These **strategies** appear at the end of many lesson steps. This section addresses ways to adapt the lesson, or parts of it, for English learners specifically but also for students with communication or learning challenges. Sometimes these suggestions will be specific to particular lesson steps or activities. They may also be more holistic in nature: for example, pacing, sequence, or other broader aspects of the lesson might be changed to benefit some students. For more information about differentiation, see the "Differentiation, Resources, and Support" section of this guide.

Enhanced Portfolio Options

For some portfolio assignments, an enhanced option is provided. These options may require additional class time, but allow students to expand and improve upon their computer skills. Not every portfolio assignment has an enhanced option; the option is only provided when it is deemed useful and sufficiently different from what is already called for in the lesson plan.

Extensions

These occur at the end of every lesson. There are two kinds of extensions: enrichment, which are activities the teachers can use to supplement the lesson or to take any one element of the lesson further. Enrichment activities serve:

- Gifted students
- Students who are really interested and have time to go further
- Students who have finished early and need to be challenged
- All students in order to provide additional opportunities to review, practice, or deepen their newly gained skills or knowledge

The second type of extension is cross-curricular integration. These activities provide specific examples of how teachers can integrate other disciplines into the lesson, or how a core course teacher can tie this material into his or her curriculum. These activities can also be used to integrate topics or themes across the school curriculum.

The Teacher Resources

The Teacher Resources are the tools the teacher needs in order to present or conduct an activity. They may be background readings, answer keys, and rubrics. They also include reproducibles that the teacher may not wish to let students have in advance (e.g., quizzes). All separate files are Teacher Resources (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, Word documents, and tables).

For each lesson, the Teacher Resource includes Key Vocabulary and a Bibliography. The key vocabulary alphabetically lists terms that are new in the lesson and that are important for understanding the material being covered. The bibliography includes the sources of information used to develop the lesson. It also lists sources that will be useful to teachers who want to find out more about the topics in the lesson or design activities that further students' understanding of lesson topics.

The Student Resources

The Student Resources are materials created as handouts and might include readings, worksheets, organizers, and instructions for assignments. All PowerPoint presentations are included in their entirety (slides and notes) as text for students to read. When possible, we provide more than one means to use our materials, as in the above case. We strongly encourage students to complete their work on computers to improve their skills and save paper.

The Stages of a Lesson

Each lesson progresses through three phases: the Springboard, Scaffolding, and Closure.

The springboard is designed to catch and hold the students' interest. It may also accomplish one or more of the following goals:

– Activate prior knowledge
– Establish essential background knowledge
– Set expectations for what the lesson will be about

Springboards vary from lesson to lesson in order to maintain an element of surprise. For this course, which explores many personal and provocative topics, the springboard can also engage the students by making them question their assumptions and beliefs.

Scaffolding is the phase in which students learn new content, develop skills, conduct research, and complete in-class activities and assignments. Most of each lesson is composed of this phase. In other education-related contexts, *scaffolding* refers to supporting student learning; here it means that students build their knowledge and skills.

Formative assessments are often embedded in this stage so that teachers can check for understanding and make sure that all students are ready for the next step in an activity. Whenever the lesson states, "You may want to assess this [worksheet/quiz/assignment] for credit/no credit," it means that the piece of work provides a means of formative assessment. See the "Assessment" section of this guide for more information on assessment. Students also check on their own understanding every time they confer with a partner or a small group.

The **Closure** stage gives students a chance to reflect on what they have just learned, apply the lens of personal perspective, or engage in some final activity that helps them fully absorb the learning from the lesson. Research has shown that this phase is absolutely vital for retaining learning in a meaningful, lasting way; sometimes students don't even realize how much they have been learning until they have to review, summarize, or explain their point of view. Closure is as student-led as possible; students' answers to the prompts direct the class discussion rather than a teacher summarizing for the class.

N O T E S

NOTES
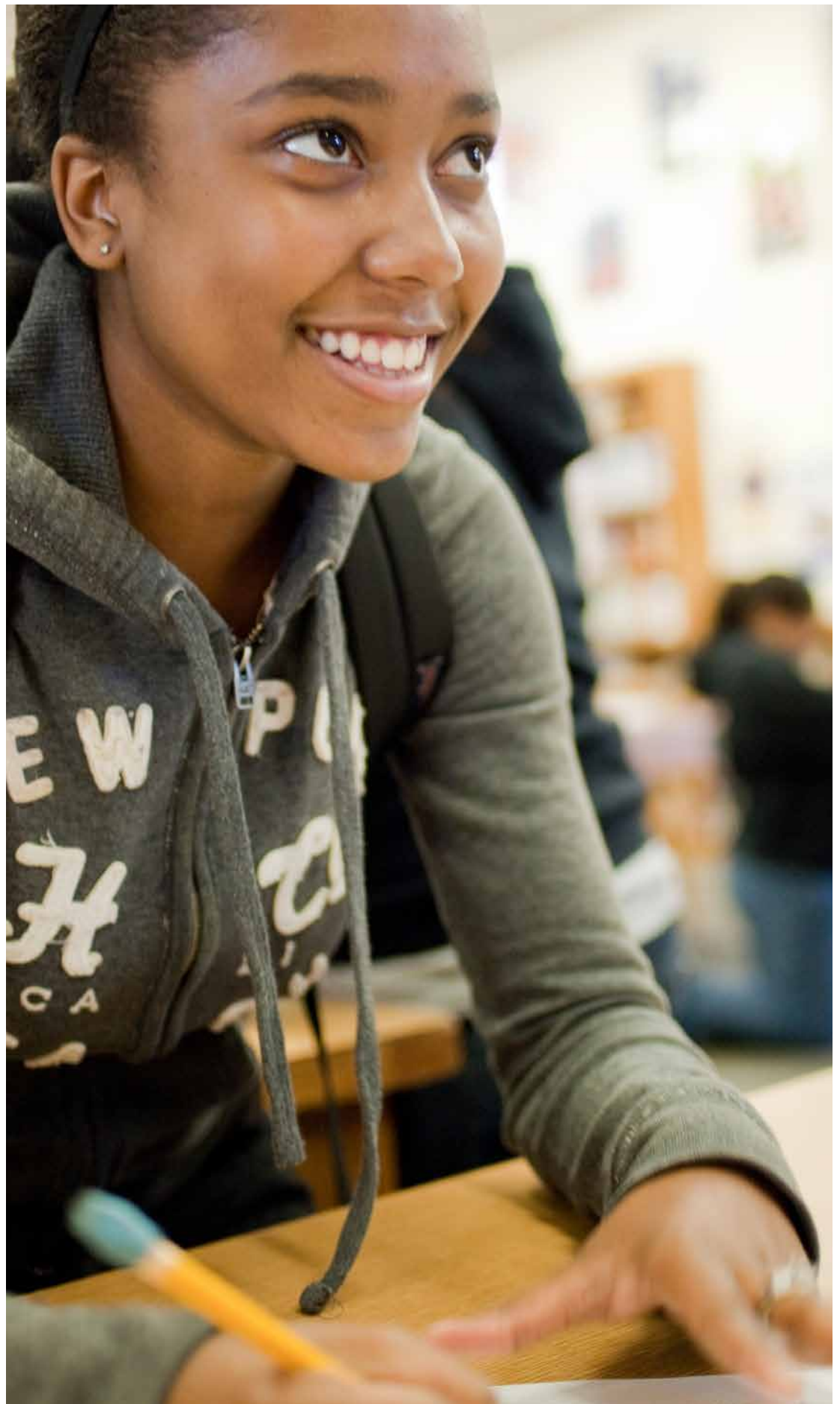
3. Strategies and Activities

Below are explanations of the main instructional strategies that are used in this course and that represent the pedagogy in actionable form.

Cooperative Learning

This strategy requires students to work in small groups to complete a project as a team. The teacher designs the project with a specific learning goal in mind. It is structured rather than open-ended; each group member has a specific role to fill, and each role is crucial for achieving the learning goal.

Cooperative learning ensures accountability at both the individual and group levels, because each student is dependent on the others to fulfill their roles, and each student is therefore depended upon as well. You can help students fulfill their responsibilities and monitor their success with accountability in a number of ways:

– Keep the size of the group small so that each student readily grasps the importance of her individual contribution.

– Ask one student in the group, chosen at random, to explain the group's work, while the group members listen. Once students realize that they may be put on the spot at any time, they will maintain greater attentiveness.

– At regular intervals, note how often each member interacts with the group and participates in the project.

– Appoint one student to be the checker, whose function is to ask the other group members to explain the reasons why they arrived at a particular conclusion or came up with an answer.

– Give students the opportunity to teach what they have learned to someone outside their group.

Plan Ahead frequently requires students to engage in cooperative learning. It is a powerful vehicle for teaching a wide range of communication and team skills, such as decision making, compromising, resolving conflict, taking the initiative or ceding that role as appropriate, listening, responding appropriately, and articulating personal opinions, concerns, ideas, and suggestions.

Activities requiring cooperative learning always include a metacognitive component so that students can practice looking at themselves and their group's performance with a constructively critical eye. They talk about what worked and what didn't, both in terms of achieving goals and getting along with each other. They come up with their own ideas for what to continue doing and which behaviors they need to work on.

Research shows that cooperative learning not only develops social, communication, and team skills, but it also increases student learning and retention, improves self-esteem, and encourages acceptance of diversity to a degree that whole-class instruction cannot. It puts students squarely at the center of the learning process and places the teacher in the role of facilitator, guide, and observer.

Think, Pair, Share

Think, Pair, Share is a specific cooperative learning strategy that uses three steps:

1. Students think about a question, a prompt, an observation, or a dilemma that you have posed (usually it's best to write it on the board or on chart paper). They might spend a minute or two in silent thought, or they may jot down their thoughts in their notebook (or both).

    Tips:
    –   Ask open-ended questions that generate a range of possible responses.

    –   Leave adequate time for students to think. Some teachers have students give a thumbs up signal when they're ready for the next step.

2. Students form pairs and exchange thoughts. Sometimes you will choose the partner; at other times they will pair with a student sitting adjacent, front, or behind them; or they choose their partner themselves. Vary this procedure frequently so that they don't fall into the habit of seeking out a friend and so that they practice working with everyone in the class. After they hear each other's ideas, pairs choose the answers they think are the best for the situation (perhaps the most compelling, interesting, complete, or accurate answer they can come up with).

3. The student pairs share the responses they discussed and chose together with other pairs, other groups, or the entire class. You can do this by going around in round-robin fashion, calling on each pair, or taking answers as they are called out "popcorn style" (or as hands are raised). Record these responses on the board or on chart paper.

    Tip:
    –   Monitor the discussions by walking around each group. This will further encourage students to stay on task. It will also enable you to listen for any misunderstandings that you can address with the whole class.

Think, Pair, Share is an extremely useful strategy on many levels. It can be spontaneous as well as structured, but in either case all students must engage with the topic and articulate their thinking to a peer. Students who are too shy to speak to the whole class can feel more comfortable talking one-on-one or in a small group. Misunderstandings are revealed and can often be dispelled via peer-peer interaction. Students retain more information because they revisit it in three different ways, each informing and enriching the next. They are necessarily focused and on task, and they feel much more confident sharing with the class after they have worked out what they think and want to say in the previous steps. This process also fosters peer acceptance and support.

As a variation, this course uses **Think, Group, Share:** Break the class into groups of four students instead of pairs. After students discuss their responses with each other, a representative from each group summarizes the group's ideas for the rest of the class. Ask for members of the class to respond in order to generate further fruitful class discussion.

Four Corners

This strategy is especially useful during the springboard of the lesson, if the content is ambiguous and provocative enough. Lesson 9 in **Plan A**head uses a double version in order to probe students' beliefs about dropping out.

Prior to the activity, the teacher places posters or displays of some sort in four different areas of the classroom, each representing a potential response to a prompt. The students listen to the prompt or the question and then move to the corner of the room that represents most closely what they think. Once in their corners, students discuss their reaction with the other students who chose that corner. Together they formulate a rationale for their choice, which they present to the class (usually one spokesperson speaks for the group).

Example: In Lesson 9, Graduating From High School, the springboard for the lesson asks students to move into the corner representing the reason they think students are most likely to give for dropping out of high school. The options are:

– School is boring/not motivated
– Have to go to work to support family
– School is too hard/not prepared to do well
– Have to raise a child

After each corner presents, the teacher can provide more information about the topic. The idea is not to show that only one corner is correct and everyone else is wrong; only use Four Corners when a range of options can be the answer. In the example above, students really do cite all of these reasons for dropping out, although the one cited most frequently is boredom. Students should be continuing to digest the various responses to the issue, weighing them, comparing them, and possibly shifting their assumptions about the topic.

It can be very effective to revisit the issue presented by Four Corners near the end of the lesson, when students have learned new content. By going back to their first impressions, students make significant connections that help them to assimilate and retain the lesson content.

Literacy Strategies

Of all the academic and life skills that students must develop in school, literacy is the most fundamental. To help students improve their literacy skills, every lesson includes at least one literacy activity. It is frequently the avenue for learning new content, but the form of the activity varies enormously. Students improve their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills as they conduct Internet research; take notes on PowerPoint and guest speaker presentations; interview each other and family members; write thank you notes, essays, and talking points for presentations; enact role plays; and write personal reflections. By constantly bringing the importance of literacy into situations that the students are bound to encounter, they begin to internalize how pivotal literacy is to their future success.

Active Listening

The distractions of a typical day, in which students are answering cell phones, sending texts, checking Facebook, and listening to iPods, work against learning how to listen with intent and focus. Effective communication cannot occur without it, however, and real learning is dependent on being able to hear and take in what is being presented. Active listening is one of the key skills **Plan A**head teaches, beginning with explicit instruction in Lesson 3.

This strategy is called "active" because it has several distinguishing features. After a speaker is done talking, the listener must paraphrase, question, or otherwise acknowledge verbally that he understands what the listener means. The teacher must model this strategy by maintaining eye contact; refraining from interrupting; and acknowledging the speaker instead of jumping to something else.

The discipline of active listening reaps immediate benefit in the classroom. It is the basis for a receptive classroom climate, in which everyone feels heard. It can help keep the entire class focused because the teacher may ask any student to respond to the speaker. It fosters speaking skills as students learn how to be clear and articulate—which in turn improves students' abilities with the key academic skills of explaining and summarizing.

To set the tone in the class from the beginning of the semester and to make clear what you expect, have students do the following in pairs or in triads:

- Look at the speaker and keep hands still.
- Observe the speaker's body language while listening to her words.
- Display interest in what the speaker is saying by staying focused on her.
- Restate what the speaker has said in your own words.
- Ask questions to clarify what the speaker means.
- Wait until you have listened and paraphrased the speaker before responding.

Anticipation Guide

This activity works very well as a means of focusing students' attention during PowerPoint presentations or readings. Before the Power Point presentation, students read a series of statements and decide whether they agree or disagree with them. As a class, go over each statement and see who agrees with it; ask a few student volunteers to explain their reasoning.

Prior to watching a Power Point presentation on truancy in Lesson 9, students fill in an anticipation guide:

Anticipation Guide: Attendance Matters

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: For each of the statements below, underline "I agree" if you think the statement is accurate or "I disagree" if you disagree with it. Write one reason to explain your guess.

Most of the people in jail today used to cut class when they were in high school.

My guess: **I agree**   **I disagree**

My reason:

I learned:

You have to cut class at least five times before you're considered "truant."

My guess: **I agree**   **I disagree**

My reason:

I learned:

Truancy is only based on absences, not tardies.

My guess: **I agree**   **I disagree**

My reason:

I learned:

If you become truant, your parents could go to jail.

My guess: **I agree**   **I disagree**

My reason:

I learned:

Students bear these statements in mind during the Power Point presentation or reading and are curious to find out if they are right or not. After the Power Point presentation they return to the anticipation guide and fill in the "what I learned" section. They can also change whether they agree or disagree with the statements based on what they now know.

In the class discussion after the Power Point presentation, it's important to emphasize that changing your mind in the face of new information and evidence is not only okay, it is advisable. Students sometimes think that they have to stick by their original ideas no matter what, and this activity provides an opportunity to show them that to some degree, learning is about letting go of opinions and thoughts that don't hold up in the face of new information.

Taxonomy

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A taxonomy is a list of words related to a specific topic or subject matter area. Students can be asked to build taxonomies about almost anything they are studying, organizing the key words or terms alphabetically. The purpose of building these taxonomies is both to increase vocabulary—and especially vocabulary they may need in order to write about a given topic—and also to encourage students to work together to share knowledge. Taxonomies become each student's personal thesaurus.

Taxonomies are typically organized by alphabet, as shown below.

Example: **Astronomy**

A	astrology, Andromeda Galaxy, asteroids
B	black holes, Big Bang
C	constellation, Copernicus
D	dwarf star
E	
F	
G	Galileo, galaxy
H	Hubble telescope
I	
J	
K	Kepler
L	lunar eclipse
M	moon, Milky Way
N	nebulae
O	
P	planet, pulsars
Q	quasars
R	
S	sun, solar flares, solar eclipse, supernova
T	
U	
V	Van Allen radiation belts
W	
X	
Y	
Z	

To use this strategy, follow these steps:

– Give students a blank alphabetical taxonomy. Tell students to work on their own to think of as many words as they can that relate to a particular topic.

– Instruct them to write each word that they think of next to its initial letter.

– After three or four minutes of working silently on their own, place students in small groups, where they share their words and add new ones that they hadn't thought of to their own taxonomies.

– Tell students to leave their taxonomies on their desks and to go around the classroom, looking at their classmates' work. Tell them to jot down words that they hadn't thought of to take back to their own taxonomy and add to it. When students review each other's work in this way, it's called a "gallery walk."

Building a taxonomy addresses these skills:

– Organizing prior, ongoing, and new knowledge
– Focusing on a topic
– Taking notes
– Expanding vocabulary
– Developing cooperative learning experiences
– Listening to others

Cornell Notes

This effective system for taking notes was designed by a Cornell University professor in the 1950s. Teachers throughout SFUSD prefer this method when the content is sequential and detailed, so students practice using it several times in this course. A template for taking Cornell Notes is also provided in the relevant lessons that can be easily used for any subject. Students follow these steps:

– First, students divide a piece of paper in half lengthwise. They take notes on a presentation, lecture, or text only in the right-hand column.

– When they come back to these notes, they pull out main ideas, key terms, and important dates and write them in the left-hand column, across from the pertinent notes.

– At the bottom of the page, students compose a summary of the most important points to remember.

Cornell Notes help students to develop the key academic skill of taking notes. They begin to develop a personal shorthand and set of abbreviations so that they can write down more information quickly. The format gives students a way to separate main ideas from less important details—another skill, as is summarizing the content of the notes. Each time students complete one of the three steps, they are working with new content differently, which helps them retain it. Students can practice studying for tests by covering one column to see what they can remember, and then the other.

Before asking students to use this strategy, model how to do it as a class. Study the example provided in the Student Resource. In the first practice session, have students write down key terms and ideas in the left-hand column immediately after they're done taking notes, and review these as a class. It takes practice for students to become effective note takers, so reviewing the steps and going over what students wrote in each column is important each time students use this strategy in this course.

Here is an example:

Main	Details
War of 1812	James Madison went to war against the English
Who was president and who did we fight?	Causes included: Controversy over English taking sailors from American ships
What were the causes?	Shawnee chief Tecumseh wanted an Indian confederacy, preventing westward expansion. This became an excuse for anti-British sentiment
What were the important battles?	Battles: Old Ironsides—sea victory, American forces capture York (Toronto) and try to conquer Canada!, capture of ten Chesapeake ("Don't give up the ship"), Battle of Thames, siege of Baltimore (where FS Key was inspired to write The Star Spangled Banner) and the Battle of New Orleans
	Treaty of Ghent ends the war—most of the issues causing the war are unresolved.

Summary: The War of 1812 was a war America was not ready to fight. England fought reluctantly and no one really won. It lasted three years.

Sources:
http://www.bucks.edu/~specpop/Cornl-ex.htm
http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/edu/search2.aspx?searchTerm=Cornell+notes

Panel Discussion

This activity requires active listening, public speaking, and critical thinking. A small group of students develops a presentation on a particular topic. They decide which group member will present which part of the presentation. The group sits in front of the rest of the class. Each member of the group speaks in turn and leaves some time for questions from the audience—their classmates—before the next member speaks. The teacher can be the moderator, or a student can be, if sufficiently coached beforehand. The rest of the class listens, asks questions, takes notes, and prepares to have a whole class discussion when the panel discussion is finished.

This forum works well with a range of learning styles. It allows students to hear different perspectives and to apply them to their own experience. A panel discussion can be a relatively straightforward presentation or it can be a debate, in which students practice using logic and argument to persuade others.

Reading Jigsaw

This activity also uses teaching others as a way to thoroughly learn new content. It is a cooperative learning strategy in which having all of the pieces of the puzzle—all of the content—requires every student to provide a portion of it.

First, students form small groups of four to six students. Each group receives a reading that contains information to remember and to share. Often students fill out a graphic organizer to help them make sure they understand the content.

Next, students form new groups in which each student represents a different text. Students take turns presenting the information they gathered in their original groups. The other group members fill in the corresponding part of their graphic organizer. When every student has presented, all of the sections of the graphic organizer have been completed.

This activity is an example of one way to put students in the center of the learning process; the teacher is the guide and the facilitator. Because students have to be able to explain their reading to others, they read with care. They have a chance to make sure they fully comprehend the reading and practice talking about it in their original groups. They enjoy presenting their part to their new groups; they get to be the expert. At the same time, their full understanding depends upon every other member of the group, and everyone has something valuable to contribute.

This is an efficient way to learn content, which students can assimilate more readily than if they had to learn all of it independently. This strategy works best if every group's section covers the same key points, but in different guises. It is not appropriate if every section has entirely different content.

SQ3R, or Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review

Education author Francis Pleasant Robinson described this strategy in 1947 as a means of helping students comprehend what they read. It worked then, and it still works now—better than having students reread the material. Students learn how to develop questions that give them focus as they read; they also learn how to follow a sequence of steps in order to attain thorough comprehension.

It's important to model each step when introducing this strategy, as at first it may seem overly complex and confusing. Note that this strategy is especially applicable to reading textbooks. The steps are laid out in a table below.

Before you read, **Survey**	Chapter titles, headings, and subheadings Captions under pictures, charts, graphs, or maps Questions or study guides Introductory and concluding paragraphs
Question while you are surveying	Turn the title, headings, and/or subheadings into questions. Read questions at the end of the chapters or after each subheading. Ask yourself: "What did my instructor say about this chapter or subject when it was assigned?" Ask yourself: "What do I already know about this subject?" **Note:** If it is helpful to you, write these questions down.
When you begin to **Read**	Look for answers to the questions you first raised. Answer questions at the beginning or end of the chapters or study guides. Reread captions under pictures, graphs, etc. Note all the underlined, italicized, bold printed words or phrases. Study any graphic aids. Stop and reread parts that are not clear. Read only a section at a time and recite after each section.
Recite after you've read a section	Ask yourself questions about what you have just read, or summarize, in your own words, what you read. Take notes from the text but write the information in your own words. Underline or highlight important points you've just read. **Note:** Use whichever recitation method best suits your particular learning style. The more senses you use, the more likely you are to remember what you read.
Review	Review key points/text and summarize understandings. Once you've finished the entire chapter using the preceding steps, go back over all the questions from all the headings. See if you can still answer them. If not, look back and refresh your memory; then continue.

Assessment

In **Plan A**head, assessments challenge students to apply new content, display mastery of new skills, and internalize learning. The assessment product is never the same in two consecutive lessons and there is a wide range of assessment products in the course. This variety gives students with different learning styles opportunities to perform to their strengths. It also keeps students engaged.

Whenever appropriate, the assessment product gives students a chance to apply a skill or a concept to a realistic task, such as filling out a job application or writing a business letter. For this course, assessment products may help students apply what they've learned to authentic situations that they will encounter in high school.

Many assessments include models and examples so that students can understand what they are striving towards in completing their assignments. Other assessment products provide a great deal of guidance. Before students undertake any assignment, they thoroughly review the criteria by which their work will be assessed. Given solid direction and support, students are more likely to work hard and focus on what the assignment is asking for.

> Students cannot be expected to do excellent work…unless they know what excellent work looks like…teachers need to do a much better and more consistent job of explaining the quality of work that will lead to an A, B, or C.
>
> *−MDRC report, 2008*

Every lesson has at least one summative assessment product, which is the means for the student to demonstrate that he or she has met the learning objectives for the lesson.

Assessment products are evaluated by three different methods:

Assessment criteria are appropriate when the product is created in one draft. Students either meet, partially meet, or don't meet a particular criterion. If they meet the criterion, they have demonstrated that they have mastered that element of the assignment and met it completely. Students receive partial credit every time they partially meet a criterion, which gives the student recognition for achieving some of the objective and prevents discouragement and frustration.

Rubrics are appropriate for more complex assignments requiring more than one draft. These have received a formative assessment during the rough draft phase and peer review as well, so that students have plenty of opportunity to improve the final product.

Rubrics are formatted as tables with the categories exemplary, commendable, developing, or needs attention. They are as descriptive as possible. Students always carefully review them before they begin the assignment so that they know what to aim for. They may also have a model to study as a further clarification of what they need to do. These supports teach students how to critique their own and others' work.

Answer keys are appropriate for assessing quizzes and exams. These tests are always short answer, to encourage students to put thought into their responses.

Formative assessment is embedded throughout the curriculum. These checkpoints for understanding are often flagged as a credit/no credit assignment. These points do not mean that students receive no credit unless they perform every part of the assignment perfectly; rather, it is a chance for the teacher to make sure that the student understands the material and is ready for the next step. It also ensures that the student is staying on task.

How to proceed if a formative assessment reveals that a student is not ready to move on depends on many factors. A student may be paired with another student who does understand the material so that they can discuss it further. Perhaps another student can act as mentor, or the student can meet with the teacher during a free period or after school for some private instruction. If a number of students are confused, a teacher must evaluate the speed and thoroughness with which he is approaching the activities. Slowing down and talking through the misunderstanding is an opportunity for learning of another kind. It shows students that acknowledging the need for more time and attention to be paid is part of the learning process. When the teacher can state that it is not an easy topic, and that it bears revisiting, students have permission to admit when they don't understand something and feel safe doing so.

Any time a student receives feedback on an unfinished assignment is also formative assessment. Peer and teacher feedback on writing drafts and in-process projects let students know what they're doing well and what they need to improve as they develop their final drafts.

Many of the assessment products are created in groups, in which case students may be assessed on their personal contribution both to the product and to the group itself. Students also assess themselves and their group mates. The teacher takes their feedback into account when arriving at a final assessment. At the conclusion of many lessons, students assess themselves informally as they consolidate their learning by writing reflections.

Assessment is a pivotal moment of growth for students. It can shut them down and cause them to stop trying, or it can boost their confidence and help them to persevere. It can give them valuable information about themselves and improve metacognition. Taking part in the process of assessment by offering peer feedback that needs to be acted upon is empowering and enables students to look at what they're doing from an entirely different perspective. For the teacher, well-defined criteria and rubric categories keeps assessment consistent throughout the District and simplifies the evaluation process.

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4. Differentiation, Resources, and Support

At the end of many lesson steps, you may see a box labeled "Differentiation." The suggestions provided in that box are easy-to-implement activities teachers may use to work more effectively with specific student populations, such as English learners.

While these activities are drawn primarily from SDAIE and other English learner strategies, many of them are suitable for a wide range of student populations, including students with learning disabilities or any students who struggle in the typical classroom environment.

Creating a Classroom Climate to Ensure Student Participation and Success

Clear and consistently enforced classroom rules are key to encouraging student participation. Establishing classroom rules and procedures can be a great help to English learners, who frequently feel overwhelmed in the classroom because of their weak language skills. Clearly established, easy-to-follow classroom procedures allow them to concentrate on the language used in the teaching component of the class, rather than on instructions for turning in homework, taking attendance, etc. Helpful procedures to perform consistently may include:

– Attendance
– Permission to leave class (to go to the restroom, their lockers, etc.)
– Class agenda
– Homework/make-up work
– Important information/reminders

In addition, rules for student discussion help students feel confident that they can participate in class without being insulted or criticized. When developing discussion guidelines for a classroom that includes English learners, it is particularly important to emphasize respect for multicultural viewpoints. All students bring their unique familial and cultural heritage to the classroom, but English learners may have a distinctly different perspective from their classmates and it is important that their perspectives, their cultures, and their languages are treated with respect. Establishing classroom discussion rules in advance can ensure that all students feel respected.

SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English)

The goal of SDAIE is to offer equal access to curriculum for English learners by helping them to learn English in the context of the curriculum. In that sense, it can be effective for many different student populations, including English learners. SDAIE lesson design relies on hands-on activities, visual and/or nonverbal cues, cooperative learning, and careful vocabulary instruction. Many of the accommodations in this course will use one or more of these strategies.

One key component of SDAIE is the careful incorporation of students' primary language(s) into the classroom. Students in an SDAIE classroom are allowed to use their primary language at specific points in the learning process. It may be helpful to think of SDAIE students as having two distinct learning objectives: (1) to learn the content and (2) to learn English. In each lesson, there should be a combination of activities that will both teach students the content and help them to improve their English skills. So, for example, if students are going to view a PowerPoint presentation, take notes on it, and then write an essay based on what they learned, SDAIE students might get a "preview" of the presentation in their primary language, view the presentation in English, take notes in their primary language, and then write their essay in English. In this way, students have worked with the content twice in their primary language and twice in English, satisfying both learning objectives.

Using These Strategies with All Students

The reality is that all students face some of the same challenges as English learners do when they are confronted with new vocabulary or complex content. Here are some SDAIE strategies that can be equally effective with students at all levels:

– Active learning (keeping students involved and actively participating; student-centered learning rather than teacher-centered)

– Development of academic vocabulary

– Activation of prior knowledge (drawing on students' personal experiences and what they already know)

– Collaboration and cooperative learning (pairing or grouping students, both homogeneously and heterogeneously)

– Demonstration and modeling (giving students an example to follow)

– Use of graphic organizers (to help students practice making connections between different facts and concepts, learn vocabulary, and track what they are learning)

Grouping

Both homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping are helpful for English learners. For some activities, grouping students homogeneously (e.g., grouping students based on their primary language) can be helpful. Students might work in homogenous groups to review or reinforce concepts they have learned. In other cases, heterogeneous grouping (e.g., creating groups with students who have various levels of English proficiency) can be helpful. In heterogeneous groups, students with high levels of English proficiency can serve as models for English learners.

Print Resources

– Fitzgerald, Jill, and Michael Graves. *Scaffolding Reading Experiences for English-Language Learners*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 2004.

– Freeman, David, and Yvonne Freeman. *English Language Learners: The Essential Guide.* New York: Scholastic, 2007.

– Herrell, Adrienne L., and Michael Jordan. *50 Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2008.

– Hill, Jane D., and Kathleen M. Flynn. *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD/McREL, 2006.
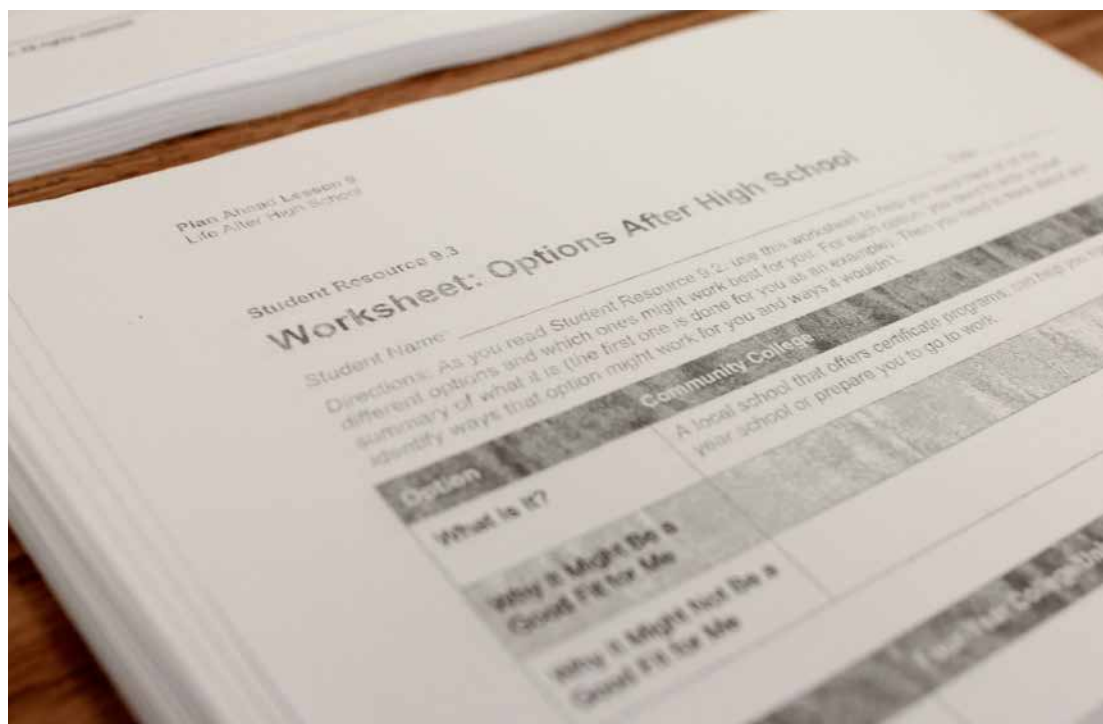
Online Resources for English Language Development

- U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs
http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/

SDAIE Strategies and Information

- SDAIE – Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English
http://www.rohac.com/sdaieinfo.htm
- SDAIE Strategies: A Glossary of Instructional Strategies
http://www.suhsd.k12.ca.us/suh/---suhionline/SDAIE/glossary.html
- Teaching Content Using SDAIE Methodology
http://www.eslcafe.com/idea/index.cgi?display:962086147-29029.txt

Teaching Tips, Strategies, and Research

- Teaching Diverse Learners
http://www.alliance.brown.edu/tdl/
- EverythingESL: Teaching Tips
http://www.everythingesl.net/inservices/
- Scholastic.com: Easy Ways to Reach and Teach English Language Learners: Strategies at a Glance
http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collection.jsp?id=233
- Rethinking Schools: The New Teacher Book
http://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/newteacher/NTBilingual.shtml
- Colorín Colorado: For Educators
http://www.colorincolorado.org/educators?gclid=COjb07CL8p0CFRlcagodpEZAwQ
- Education Northwest: What Teachers Should Know About Instruction for English Language Learners
http://educationnorthwest.org/resource/669
- Center on Instruction: ELL: Grades K-12: Resources
http://www.centeroninstruction.org/topic.cfm?k=ELL
- Dave's ESL Cafe: Stuff for Teachers
http://www.eslcafe.com/teachers/

Practice Activities for English Learners

- Activities for ESL Students
http://a4esl.org/
- Dave's ESL Cafe: Stuff for Students
http://www.eslcafe.com/students/
- Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab
http://www.esl-lab.com/
- ESLgold
http://www.eslgold.com/
- English as a Second Language
http://www.rong-chang.com/

The Role of the School Counselor

School counselors are crucial members of the college and career education initiative. For students, their role begins with the **Plan A**head course, when they come into the classroom as guest speakers to discuss the resources and programs available at their schools. They make themselves available to ninth grade students and teachers to support the successful implementation of this course and to establish relationships with the freshmen.

References

Report from National Center for Education Statistics:
http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013309/tables.asp

Referenced articles:

Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century, Pathways to Prosperity Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education, February 2011.

Relationships, Rigor, and Readiness: Strategies for Improving High Schools, Janet Quint, Saskia Levy Thompson, Margaret Bald, from a conference of midsize school districts convened by MDRC, October 2008.

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