ELA Vignette Study: PARTICIPANT PACKET

S A B E S

Introduction

Each vignette contained in this packet illustrates one or more of the indicators included in the *Massachusetts Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Basic Education* (DESE 2021). All the scenarios are ELA-based and draw from the Supporting Explanations, Indicators, and Sample ELA Applications in the *English Language Arts Proficiency Guide for Teachers of Adult Basic Education* (DESE 2022).

The vignettes were developed for the following purposes:

- To enable ELA teachers and instructional leaders to explore more deeply what the MA Professional Standards look like in practice
- To foster collegial conversations about instruction
- To support ELA educators in identifying new avenues for professional growth

Teachers may use this packet on their own or as part of a group. An Instructional Leader Packet is available (https://www.sabes.org/content/ela-proficiency-guide) to guide facilitators in holding collegial conversations around the vignettes.

ELA Vignettes At-A-Glance

Vignette	Professional Standards Domain	Professional Standard Indicator	ELA Domain	CCRSAE Learner Level
1	Professional Knowledge (K) & Instructional Practice (P)	K2.2 CCRSAE & P1.1 Standards-based Units	Writing, Reading	C, D, E
2	Instructional Practice (P)	P1.3 Student Engagement	Reading, Writing	C, D
3	Instructional Practice (P)	P1.4 Meeting Diverse Needs	Reading	C
4	Instructional Practice (P)	P2.1 Assessment Methods	Writing, Reading	B
5	Continuous Improvement (C)	C1.1 High Expectations	Speaking & Listening	E

Guiding Questions for each Vignette

1. (If applicable) Which CCRSAE anchor standard(s) does the teacher target in this lesson?

2. In what ways does the teacher address the targeted Indicator from the ELA Proficiency Guide (PG)? [Refer to the Indicator description and its Know/Do items.]

3. What else might the teacher have done to address the targeted ELA PG Indicator? [Refer to the Indicator description and its Know/Do items.]

4. How has your planning &/or instruction looked similar to this teacher's? What ideas does the scenario give you? What questions does it evoke?

Answering these questions requires concentration and close reading of both the vignette *and* the corresponding sections of the [ELA Proficiency Guide](#).

On the next page you will find a note-catcher form for capturing your thoughts as you compare the vignette with the appropriate sections of the ELA PG. You will need one note-catcher form for each vignette.

Related Materials

This *ELA Vignette Study: Participant Packet* is located online at https://www.sabes.org/content/ela-proficiency-guide. This webpage also contains:

*   *ELA Vignette Study: Instructional Leaders Packet*
*   *The English Language Arts Proficiency Guide for Teachers of Adult Basic Education*
*   *Glossary for ELA Instruction*
*   Link to the *Massachusetts Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Basic Education and Indicators of Proficiency Rubric*
*   Other related materials

See also the SABES ELA webpage devoted to tools and resources related to the CCRSAE for ELA/Literacy: https://www.sabes.org/content/CCRSAE-ELA.

Guiding Questions — Note-catcher for Vignette # _____

1. (If applicable) Which CCRSAE anchor standard(s) does the teacher target in this lesson?

2. In what ways does the teacher address the targeted Indicator from the ELA Proficiency Guide (PG)? [Refer to the Indicator description and its Know/Do items.]

3. What else might the teacher have done to address the targeted ELA PG Indicator? [Refer to the Indicator description and its Know/Do items.]

4. How has your planning &/or instruction looked similar to this teacher's? What ideas does the scenario give you? What questions does it evoke?

ELA Vignette 1

Indicator K2.2, CCRSAE
Indicator P1.1, Standards-based Units

Jaime is a new teacher who has been teaching a multi-level class for a few weeks, with learners who range from low-intermediate to secondary. She has just attended a PD session for new teachers, where she learned about the *ELA Proficiency Guide*. She read that one of her responsibilities as an English Language Arts teacher is to use the [College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education](#) (CCRSAE) to teach reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In debriefing the session with her program director, she also learned that she is supposed to follow the program curriculum. (She had seen an email about that earlier but had been too overwhelmed to give it much thought!) Her program director explained that the program had developed a scope and sequence and unit plans to guide teachers in what they should teach. These were meant to be helpful, because teachers don't always have a lot of time for planning.

Jaime opens up the scope and sequence and discovers that she should soon be teaching a unit on reading and writing arguments. She carefully reads through the learning objectives, noting that students will be doing such things as identifying and evaluating the claims and evidence made by an author. Then learners will write their own arguments, providing their own claims and evidence. Having also learned that she is supposed to differentiate instruction, Jaime is concerned about how to do that for the different levels of learners in her class.

Jaime reads through the ideas suggested for this unit and notes the recommendations for digital texts to read, ones that are supposed to be clear exemplars of how to present an argument. Jaime appreciates that there are texts at different text complexity levels provided in the unit plan, so she plans to take a look at those texts and match them with learners' reading levels. But she's more concerned right now about the writing aspect. What will be required? What should she expect from students at the different levels? There's a note in the unit plan to refer to the English Language Arts section of the CCRSAE, so she pulls that up on her computer.

After reading the first part of the CCRSAE to review what she learned in her PD session, Jaime flips to the **Writing Standards** section. The first Anchor Standard is about writing arguments, and she's thrilled to see that the document shows how performance of the standard looks at different learner levels. She does a quick check in the introductory section to make sure she

understands how the levels work and realizes that her students will be at levels C, D, and E. Reading across those columns, she highlights differences from level to level, and some ideas for differentiating instruction begin to take shape.

One of the sets of texts provided in the unit plan relates to gun violence, and the learners in the class have been talking about that on break almost since the class started. Jaime thinks that will be a relevant topic for them to explore. It might give them needed tools to make sense of arguments they see in social media. Since the unit plan provides links to the exemplar argument texts and texts about gun violence at different reading levels, she won't have to spend her time finding those texts. She breathes a sigh of relief, confident that her personal lesson plans for the unit are about to fall into place!

ELA Vignette 2

Indicator P1.3, Student Engagement

Hanna teaches ELA and Science/Health online to adult learners reading at the intermediate level. Students are currently working on a project in small groups to create infographics[1] around a specific health issue. The groups are based on assessed reading comprehension levels, with two groups reading at the low-intermediate level (4-5.9 GLE) and one reading at the high-intermediate level (6-8.9 GLE). Each group selected a health issue after hearing a presentation by a guest speaker on common health concerns in the community and discussing among themselves the concerns that affect them the most.

This is a newly-formed class, so Hanna is making sure students know how to determine main ideas and their corresponding details. This skill will be foundational to the class's ongoing work in understanding how different types of texts are organized. Hanna began the unit with a discussion about why distinguishing between main ideas and details is important in real life and in school and how it will relate to their final project. She explained that, in addition to helping learners better comprehend the texts they will be reading on their health issues, distinguishing between main ideas and details will help them in designing their infographics. The final project requires groups to depict one major idea about their health issue and include 3-5 relevant details.

To learn about the chosen health issue, the goal is for each group to read a digital text set of 3 related articles. They will work in their groups on the first article, individually with a group check for the second, and then analyze the third article individually.

In today's lesson, Hanna shares her Zoom screen and leads the class in a short lesson on finding the main idea and details in a text about diabetes (a topic than none of the groups are researching). She uses text marking/highlighting features to visually distinguish between main ideas and details in the article, asking for assistance from the class as she works through a 2-paragraph article. Each group then goes into a breakout room to analyze the first article in their assigned text set (one related to their chosen health issue). Hanna pops into each of the three groups to check progress and provide support as learners work.

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[1] For information on infographics, visit *Why Are Infographics Effective in the Classroom?* https://www.easel.ly/blog/infographics-effective-classroom/

The next day, Hanna leads a debrief in the main virtual classroom of the group work from the previous day. Each group shares one paragraph, with its main idea and the details, and discusses the issues they encountered in identifying these. Hanna and the rest of the class provide feedback and troubleshoot difficulties. Hanna reminds students to save their work, because they will be reviewing all their notes from these articles when they are deciding what to include on their infographic. Learners then go off to work on their 2nd article individually, with plans to meet back in their breakout rooms for a group check of their work at the end of 15 minutes.

ELA Vignette 3

Miguel is planning for his next unit with his low-intermediate ELA class. He understands that one of his responsibilities as an adult educator is to meet his students where they are. Using entry interviews with students as well as classroom surveys, standardized and diagnostics assessment, and his own structured observations, Miguel has developed an evidence-based understanding of students' background, learning differences, and ELA skill levels. Over time he has also learned about the cultures and home literacy practices of the English language learners in his class and has worked with students to celebrate not only what they all have in common but also what is unique about each student. Miguel draws from all this information as he plans for the poetry unit.

Using the program unit plan as a guide to his lesson planning, Miguel does the following:

- Uses the list of selected works in the program unit plan to identify poetry written by authors of different ethnicities and backgrounds

- Applies readability tools and qualitative analysis to find poems that are appropriate for his students' reading levels

- Considers different ways of grouping students for small group activities so that students hear a variety of voices as they work to interpret poems

- Designs level-appropriate alphabetics and fluency lessons for established groups

- Tweaks the list of Tier 2 vocabulary words proposed for the unit, making sure that the words are likely to be frequently used in the selected poems themselves or to discuss the poems

To begin the unit, Miguel leads a discussion with students about their experiences with and attitudes related to poetry. Some native speaking students say they hated studying poetry in school because poems were boring and difficult to make sense of. One of his English learners admitted that she was not sure what poetry even was. Miguel displays some examples of song lyrics, raps, lullabies, and nursery rhymes to make connections with what students already know.

Miguel explains that students will be reading poetry that comes in different styles, about different topics, and from around the world, in hopes that they can make personal

connections with some of the poems. Students will ultimately create a notebook of three of their favorite poems/songs (two read in class and one they find on their own), writing a simple analysis of the literary devices (e.g., simile, metaphor) used in each poem, a summary of what they think the poem is about and the evidence that leads them to that interpretation, and a reflection explaining why they like the poem. Students will also read aloud one of the poems for their classmates and share why they chose it.

Miguel notes that poets use words in very intentional ways, choosing carefully from among several options and using them in ways that do not always make sense literally. There are some English-specific ways of using some words and phrases, and they will all work together to interpret these as they come up.

ELA Vignette 4

Victoria teaches ELA for a class of Level 1 learners who were found through diagnostic assessment to have English reading comprehension levels between a 2.0 and a 3.9 grade level equivalent. She is intentional about including writing in her instruction because 1) it is an important life skill, 2) it is a skill that takes significant time to develop, and 3) it reinforces a variety of reading skills. Writing is also a required focus of the College and Career Readiness Standards.

Students are currently working on a unit on writing clear directions, and each student has decided on an activity that will be the subject of a "how to" text. This culminating product will be included in students' individual writing portfolios as evidence of their progress in writing. In a previous lesson, Victoria had started the unit by inviting students to discuss the importance of writing directions in their lives. She had explained that they would read some sets of directions first, to identify features of well written directions that they should consider when writing their own directions. The class had then read aloud one short how-to text that was significantly flawed and one that was clear. After discussing each text individually and then comparing them to each other, the class had made a list of features that describe a "good" set of directions (e.g., *listing steps in order, using signal words, using clear action words, using capital letters at the beginning of sentences, using periods at the ends of sentences, etc.*). They have also made a list of class list of common signal words (*e.g., "first," "second," "next"*).

To start today's lesson, Victoria reviews the learner-created checklist and presents a new how-to text. She divides the class into pairs, and each member of the pair reads the text aloud to the other. They use the checklist to evaluate the quality of the directions and then revise the text as needed. When the class is back together, Victoria leads the group in reaching consensus on each item on the checklist and sharing various revisions.

At the end of the lesson, Victoria reminds students that they will write the first draft of their own directions during the next class meeting. Then they will use the checklist to give and receive feedback with one of their peers. Finally, based on this formative assessment, they will make a final draft of their directions to read to the class.

ELA Vignette 5

Marco teaches adult secondary students preparing to take the HiSET. He also integrates digital literacy skills as well as speaking and listening skills, since these are included in the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRSAE). In the current unit, learners have researched current event topics of interest by accessing credible online texts and now are preparing presentations to give to their classmates on their topic. They have prepared Prezi draft presentations and are ready to practice with a partner.

Before pairs practice their presentations for each other, Marco leads a lesson to frame the practice session. He reminds the class of a discussion at the beginning of the unit in which students admitted they were nervous about public speaking. He reiterates that very few people are "natural" presenters and that making a good presentation is a skill. Like any skill, it requires preparation, practice, and a willingness to incorporate feedback.

The class reviews a rubric they had created earlier from a discussion on what a good presentation looks and sounds like. Marco explains that the "listener" in each pair will use the rubric to guide their feedback after their partner (the "speaker") presents the practice presentation. Then the partners will switch roles. Marco engages the class in thinking about how to use the rubric to give verbal feedback to each other in a way that is concrete, substantive, and kind. He models effective feedback ("You did a good job looking at me while you were presenting. I can tell you're very familiar with your notes."; "I got lost when you went from the 1st part to the 2nd part. I wasn't clear what the connection was.") versus ineffective feedback ("That was really good."). He also models appropriate responses to feedback ("Could you please say more about that?"; "That's helpful. Let me try that part again—is that clearer?").

After the pairs have practiced their presentations for each other, Marco debriefs with the whole group. Students share what they learned and what they will be working on before their presentation to the whole class. They also brainstorm strategies for dealing with particular presentation issues (e.g., maintaining eye contact, keeping your place in your notes). Marco concludes by encouraging students to be intentional about incorporating the feedback of their peers into the presentations, which will happen during the next class period.