**One Model for Integrating Career Fundamentals**

**with Reading/Writing and TASC Practice**

**Note to Teachers:** The following six lessons were taught to pre-HSE students at BMCC in the summer of 2018 in order to pilot a model for integrating the NYSED CUNY Career Kits with reading/writing and pre-TASC instruction. There were a few goals:

* Increase students’ awareness of the need to read more
* Try out key texts and activities from Career Fundamentals, integrating them with both literacy activities like summarizing and graph interpretation, and TASC-focused content learning
* Find out how whether a focus on personal goals for the future (college or career) would motivate students and help retention

**The takeaways**:

* **Reading:** Students read paired texts almost every session. Texts were carefully chosen in terms of both level and expected amount of interest, with the aim of presenting texts relevant to students’ struggles and aspirations. What we found was that this method worked well, and generated class discussions that focused on issues that really matter to students, including why they are in school, the challenges and barriers they have to overcome, and how they see themselves reflected in the narratives they are reading. At an end-of-class survey, all students reported that they enjoyed the readings and discussions.
* **Texts and activities from Career Fundamentals**: We discovered that using carefully chosen texts and activities from Career Fundamentals helped retention. Retention was fostered through the use of texts from the Career Fundamentals Kit that students could “relate” to, including “Norberto’s Career Letter,” and “I Want to…Work at a Domestic Violence Shelter,” as well as other articles on topics about college, career, and the learning process. Discussions that followed these readings fostered a sense of community and created the space for sharing hardships and how they were overcome. Personal narrative writing often followed the discussions, and created the opportunity for teachers to provide feedback that deepened the student-instructor bond. Activities like research on Career Cruising also fostered student retention by focusing on student aspirations. We did find that students need a lot of help and guidance when it came to online research.
* **Integrating Career Kits with literacy instruction and TASC content**: The Kits offered ample opportunities to work with graphs, which the students both welcomed and needed. Another literacy activity used was GIST for summarizing. GIST involves students in writing 20-word sentences to summarize sections of text, and worked very well on an ongoing basis to develop summarizing ability in students. Writing assignments related to texts students had read allowed us to identify skills many students in the class needed to work on, such as homonyms and sentence boundaries. The TASC social studies content we focused on was work in the context of early humans, which led to a study of river valley civilizations (often included on the TASC), and an opportunity to do map work, use a timeline, and analyze artifacts (also on the TASC). Finally, sample test questions related to the content were brought in to provide students with test-taking practice.

What follows is an outline of the sessions that were taught. Career Kit activities are described in detail in the Career Kits themselves.

**Session One:**

**Activity One**: **Letter of Introduction**

Students read a letter that explains what they will be studying, and why (Letter is attached):

* Reading and responding to text
* Practicing summary and main idea through GIST
* Understanding graphs
* Exploring Careers and Next Steps
* Social Studies: maps and the connection between work and early civilizations

**Activity Two**: **Paired Readings**

Texts: *Superman and Me* by Sherman Alexie; *Characteristics of Successful Readers,* Sylvan Learning Centers

Steps:

* A quote from each article is written on the board
* Students choose one article or the other based on the quote
* Students read and underline quotes that they especially like
* Students meet in groups based on the article they read, share quotes they like, and discuss the questions written on the board:
* After a 20-minute discussion, each group summarizes their article for the other group and the group’s thoughts

**Activity Three**: “Identifying 10 Industry Sectors” from Career Fundamentals: Unit 1, *Today’s Labor Market*, pp. 9-23.

**Activity Four**: Career Cruising, Career Fundamentals, Unit 2: *Knowing Myself* pp. 151-167)

**Session Two:**

**Activity One**:  **Thinking and writing about Strengths** (Career Fundamentals; Unit 2: *Knowing Myself*; pp. 134 from Career Fundamentals)

* Select a few words from the list to discuss as a class
* Students choose three strengths they feel they have
* Students choose one strength to write a reflection about
* Students share what they wrote with a partner

**Activity Two: Paired Readings:***Follow Your Passion* by Johnetta B. Cole; Career Narrative: *Norberto’s Letter to Clients* (Adapted from Career Fundamentals; Unit 3: *Getting Prepared*; pp. 223-226)

* A quote from each article is written on the board
* Students choose one article or the other based on the quote
* Students read and underline quotes that they especially like
* Students choose a quote and write a reflection about it
* Students meet in groups based on the article they read, share quotes they like, and discuss the questions written on the board:
* After a 20-minute discussion, each group summarizes their article for the other group and the group’s thoughts

**Activity Three:  Reading Graphs:** *Reading Graphs*

* Ask students the following questions and have a brief discussion: (1) What is a graph? (2) Why do we use graphs? (3) What are some different graphs that you’ve seen?
* Read and discuss the first half of “Reading Graphs” as a class demonstrating on the board what the Y-axis and X-axis are and clarifying questions that students have.
* Have students complete questions 1 through 9 on the “Reading Graphs” sheet.
* As a class, discuss the answers to the “Reading Graphs” questions.

**Activity Four:  Reading Graphs:** *Average Lifetime Earnings and Educational Attainment* (Career Fundamentals; Unit 3: *Getting Prepared*; pp. 217-220)

* Ask students to discuss with their groups whether they agree or disagree with statements about lifetime earnings. (Statements can be found in Career Fundamentals; Unit 3: *Getting Prepared*; pp. 217).
* Bring the class back together to discuss the statements as a class.
* Give students the Average Lifetime Earnings and Educational Attainment. Ask students to discuss with a partner: (1) What they notice? (2) What they wonder about? In other words, what questions to they have about the graph itself or the information in it.
* Draw a T-chart on the board with “notice” on one side and “wonder” on the other. Ask students what they notice and write it on the board then move on to what they wonder.
* Discuss the graph with students, specifically focusing on what they noticed and wondered. Discuss words like average, mean and median. Refer to Career Fundamentals; Unit 3: *Getting Prepared*; pp. 219) for discussion questions.
* Once students have a better understanding of the graph have them work on the “Calculated Earnings” questions in to Career Fundamentals; Unit 3: *Getting Prepared*; pp. 220).
* Once students complete the Calculated Earning questions, discuss them as a class.

**Activity Five:  Reading Graphs:** *Same Job, Higher Salary*

* Give students the “Same Job, Higher Salary” graph. Ask students to write down two things they notice and two things they wonder about.
* Have students briefly discuss their notice and wonder with a partner.
* Bring the class back together and ask volunteers to share what they noticed and what questions they have and jot these down on the board in a T-chart with notice on one side and wonder (for questions) on the other.
* Discuss the graph with students by looking at different aspects of the graph like: the color of the bars, the length of the bars, the difference in no degree v. degree, the percentages given, the professions listed, and the vocabulary. (For example: what does “clergy” mean? What is the difference between a teacher and a teacher assistant? What year does the graph represent?)
* Ask students what struck them most about the graph? What information in the graph surprised them the most? What is the main idea of the graph?

Homework: Same Job, Different Salary Questions

**Session Three**

**Activity One**: **Review graph homework** on Same Job, Different Salary

**Activity Two**: **Thinking and writing about Strengths** (Page --- from Career Fundamentals)

Go around room and each person reports back; Teachers collect and review writing to assess student needs

**Activity Three: Paired Readings:** *Rethinking Mistakes & Learning From Your Missteps* by Margarita Tartakovsky, M.S.; Career Narrative: *I Want to…Work at a Domestic Violence Shelter* (Career Fundamentals; Unit 4: *In Their Own Words*; pp. 329-332)

* A quote from each article is written on the board
* Students choose one article or the other based on the quote
* Students read and underline quotes that they especially like
* Students meet in groups based on the article they read, share quotes they like, and discuss the questions written on the board:
* After a 20-minute discussion, each group summarizes their article for the other group and the group’s thoughts

**Activity Four: Social Studies: Work and Early Humans**

***Note to teachers****: This topic and reading was chosen because there are generally questions on the TASC readiness related to early river valley civilizations. There are other high-emphasis TASC Social Studies topics that could fit just as well as a connection to career exploration:*

* *The Industrial Revolution and Slavery*
* *The Great Depression and The New Deal*
* *World War II and the role of the war economy in ending the Great Depression*
* *Supply and Demand.*

*See the CUNY Dropbox or CollectEdNY.org for resources on the topics listed above.*

* Introduction: In this class, we have been talking about work and careers. There are a number of topics in TASC Social Studies that connect with that idea, and for the next three classes, we will be studying one of them: Early Humans and Early Civilizations.
* Short discussion: What do you think “work” meant for early humans? Did they have briefcases and go into the office as we do today? Brief discussion of early hunter gatherers and farming.
* Introduce the Timeline:  Draw timeline on the board with “0” in the middle. “It’s the year 2018, but when we read about early humans, we talk about thousands and millions of years ago. How can that be? When do you think we started counting years? Discuss “B.C” and Year One as the birth of Christ, then discuss the intervals to the left and the right of this marker. Ask students when they think the first humans may have walked the earth. Give them a date: 150,000 years ago.
* Sorting events: Give out the strips of events, and have students work in pairs to sort them into the order they think they happened. Walk around to get a sense of what students are thinking. Have one group post their events on the board in the order they think they happened. Tell students that they will read, then they can re-order their events.
* Looking at artifacts: Ask students: “How do you think we know about early humans? Write the word “prehistory” on the board. We know the prefix “pre” from other words (prepare, preregister, etc.) What might “prehistory” mean? Establish that prehistory means before there were written records. So how did archaeologists learn about early humans? Students will arrive at the idea that archaeologists used fossils, bones, artifacts.

Give out the images of the artifacts, and have students work in groups to discuss the attached questions. Walk around to get a sense of what students are thinking. When students have discussed, have each group present their artifact by taping a picture to the board and reporting back on what they think the artifact was used for and what it tells about early human life.

* Reading/Revisiting events: Give out the article. Ask students to survey and notice text features. Point out text features such as subheads and illustrations and discuss their purpose. Students read silently, then in pairs, re-order the event strips. As a class, re-order the event strips that were taped to the board in the proper order, and in the correct year span.

**Session Four**

**Activity One: Test Questions and GIST for “The World of Early Humans.”**

* Students read, review or share their answers to the comprehension questions for “The World of Early Humans.” Class review of comprehension questions.
* Students are introduced to summarizing/finding the main idea through GIST. Short discussion: Why summarize (we need this skill for TABE and TASC “main idea” questions; more importantly, we need to condense information in order to remember it) What are the criteria for a good summary (it states the important information; it’s brief; it’s in your own words).
* Give out the sample GIST. Review the top part of the worksheet, the 5 Ws, then have students discuss in pairs which is the good GIST sentence, which is the bad GIST sentence, and why. Why is GIST A better than GIST B (Gist A contains more information about the two more important elements: when and how people lived. It uses fewer words to say provide more of the important information.)
* Divide the article into sections and assign each pair/group of threes one section. Each student should reread their section and decide what is important; fill out the top part of the sheet, then write a GIST sentence for their section. Once they have done this, they should share their GIST sentence with their partner(s). Walk around as students are working to provide comments and help students shorten their sentences. Ask for student volunteers to put their sentences on the board. Once the sentences are up on the board, come back as a class and evaluate. What works in each GIST sentence? How could they be improved? Improve the GIST sentences as a class.

**Activity Two: Mapwork in preparation for reading “How the Nile River Led to Civilization in Ancient Egypt.”**

* Continents and countries: Teacher explains why we are doing map work: to prepare for the TASC and because it is good to be able to read maps. Students are given a blank outline map of the continents and student atlases, and asked to label the continents as best they can, with students who know helping those who don’t. Students are asked to list the continents and the names of the continents are written on the board. If students cannot guess or guess incorrectly, they are asked to look in the student atlas.

When all students have labeled the continents, ask students: what is the difference between a continent and a country? Ask for examples. Create a T-chart on the board. List the characteristics of continents on one side of the chart, and the characteristics of countries on the other.

* Physical maps: Explain to students that when they look at a map that shows the boundaries of countries, they are looking at a *political map*. Why is it called a political map…well, can the boundaries of the countries change? What is there is a war? Will the way the countries look on the map change? That is why it is called a political map. But there is another kind of map that does not change very much. It’s called a physical map. Give out the physical map of New York state and ask students to 1) Notice: discuss what they see and 2) Wonder: Discuss what they wonder about. Allow students time to do this in class, then bring the class together and ask what they noticed. Here, you will want to make sure students understand how to use the map key, and that someone points out rivers, mountains and valleys, as well as oceans/bays, etc. Ask students: Looking at the physical map, where would be some places that you might want to settle if you were an early human? Students will call out locations. Ask them to look at the physical features. What would be advantages/disadvantages of living here? Tell students to take a look at the location of New York City. Both Native Americans and the Europeans who came later settled there. What would people want to settle here? Establish some reasons: food sources both from the water and the forest; rivers and a sea for travel and transporting things. Tell students that this is an important point to remember for the TASC.

**Activity Three: Writing Skills: Homonyms**

***Note to teachers****: We chose to focus on homonyms because many of the students in our class had confusion about them, based on the writing we received. You may choose to focus on other issues based on what you see in your own students’ writing.*

* Give out sheet with examples of sentences in which students have spelled words incorrectly because they are homonyms. Have students work in pairs to discuss what needs to change about the sentences. Have a student write each of the corrected sentences on the board.
* Review the sentences. What has been changed? Is it correct now? Discuss what homonyms are, and how they can be confusing. Give out the homonym sheet and give students some time to look at it, then do the attached exercise. Look back at the corrected sentences on the board and ask the class whether there are further corrections to be made, based on the Homonym Study Sheet. Give back student papers and ask them to look for places where they misspelled homonyms in their writing, then correct them.

For homework: Write quotes on the board from the two articles students can choose from as homework reading. Have each student choose an article to read for the next class.

**Session 5**

**Activity One: Paired Readings**: *When Low Income Parents Go Back to School* (Career Fundamentals, Unit 6: *Parenting is a Job, Too*, pp. 584-586) and *The Jubilation of Students who Got a Late Start*, New York Times

Steps:

* Students chose one article or the other to read for homework based on the quote
* Students who missed the previous class, or didn’t do the homework, read and underline quotes that they especially like
* Students meet in groups based on the article they read, share quotes they like, and discuss the questions written on the board:
* After a 20-minute discussion, each group summarizes their article for the other group and the group’s thoughts

**Teacher’s note**: *The article “When Low Income Parents go back to School…” article sparked an interesting discussion. There was resentment from one student about the term “poor” used in the article. Another student resented the statement that children of parents who don’t have a high school diploma often don’t finish high school themselves; this statement was belied by her own family. The students seemed to feel there was a narrative being written about them that didn’t include their voices or experiences. Another outcome of the discussion was students sharing how hard it was sometimes for them to feel motivated to come to class, and how crucial it was to feel that what they did in class was relevant to their lives every single day.*

**Activity Two: Writing a Letter of Advice** (Assignment from Career Fundamentals, Unit 6: *Parenting is a Job, Too*, p. 586)

Steps:

* Tell students that they will be writing a letter of advice to a friend about coming back to school as an adult using information from the article. It might be a parent or not. They will be mixing their own knowledge about returning to school with information from the article, and must include at least one quote. Ask students to reread, underlining pieces of advice that they think they would like to include in their letters. Then, as students start writing, circulate to look over shoulders and provide encouragement to write more, point out places where the writing is especially strong or interesting, suggest places where introductions or transitions are needed, ask questions. Collect papers when students are finished in order to provide feedback and identify an editing issue that many students need to work on.

**Activity Three: Reading and GIST:** *How the Nile River Led to Civilization in Ancient Egypt* from Newsela

Steps:

* Tell students that they have read about early humans, and now they are going to read about some of the first civilizations. Write the “civilization” on the board and discuss what it means, and related words, such as “civil, civilized, civic, civil rights, civil war.” Tell students that there are certain characteristics historians look for when they talk about civilizations. They should look for what those are when they watch the video that is coming and read the article that follows.
* Give out the physical map of River Valley Civilizations. Ask students to look at the continents where these civilizations are. What do they all have in common? Why might being in a river valley be a good place to live—what would be the advantages?
* Have students watch the History Channel video about the impact of agriculture <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhzQFIZuNFY&frags=pl%2Cwn>
* Students should watch the video once, then watch it a second tune, after you have written key terms on the board: *domestication of plants, hierarchical system, property, city-state, warfare, empire.* Also, write a guiding question: *Why do historians say that farming is the beginning of civilization*? After the second viewing, discuss the terms, and how the film answers the guiding question.
* Give out the Newsela article, *How the Nile River Led to Civilization in Ancient Egypt*. Remind students that good readers preview the text, noticing the text features. Ask students to do just that—what text features do they see (subtitles, illustrations, map)? What do they mean and how do they help readers understand the article? Ask students to look at the map and say which countries the Nile runs through—it’s a big river!
* Either have students read silently, or read each paragraph aloud and stop to talk about vocabulary that comes up. Words we reviewed in the course of reading: *hallmark productivity, specialized labor* (we made connections here to specialized labor in the present, such as plumbers); *hieroglyphics, barren, invaders, necessities, flourishing*. Stop after each section to talk about concepts presented to make sure students understood.
* When students are finished, have them do the Quiz Questions. Walk around to help, then bring the class together and go over the questions together. Remind students that these are exactly the types of questions they will face on the TABE and the reading TASC.
* Divide students into small groups, and assign each group one of the five sub-sections of the article (that is, the first section after the title, and the four sections that follow each subtitle). Within each group, have students work in pairs to write a GIST sentence(s) for their section, so that for each section, there are at least two different GISTs. Have pairs within a group compare their GIST sentences and decide which is best, or create one by taking the best parts of both, then have them write their GISTs on the board.
* Bring the class back together and go over each GIST, deciding what is good about it, and what might need revision.

Homework: Multiple choice questions

**Session Six**

**Activity One: Practice Test Question Review**

* Give out the test questions and have students work on them individually, then compare answers in pairs
* Circulate as students are working to look over shoulders. For those answers that are wrong, ask students “look at it again. Try it again.” Give hints where necessary.
* Review the answers, discussing not only what the correct answers are, but why and how they know

**Activity Two: Writing: Constructive Feedback and Grammar Mini-Lesson: What is a Sentence?**

* Tell students that now it’s time to talk about writing. Ask students to talk in pairs or small groups about this question: What makes writing good?
* Once students have had 5 minutes or so to discuss, ask for them to call out their “criteria,” and list them on the board. Be sure to go around the room and get a suggestion from every group, asking students not to repeat ideas, but to add. It’s good if students talk about what makes them like a certain genre or type of writing. Open up the discussion to make it plain that “good” writing might just mean writing that you like to read. You will want to include things like organization, correctness, etc. as well.
* Talk about revision and your own process as a writer. Why do you ask for feedback on your work and what kind of feedback helps you? Discuss the fact that it is just as important to know what is good in your writing as what you need to improve, either to add more information or to make it clear. Say that when students get their papers back from you, you are going to tell them what you liked as well as one area that you think they need to work on. Give back the papers and let students read the comments.
* Explain that the most important part of writing is the ideas and organization, but for the test, they need to know grammar. They are going to work on grammar now—partly for the test, but also because part of being a good writer is communicating clearly, and if your communication is not clear, even if you have good idea, it’s a problem.
* Give out the sentences from students’ own writing that are incorrect. These sentences all have the same problem: sentence boundaries. Ask students to work in pairs to correct the sentences, then put the corrected versions on the board.
* Review one or two of the sentences. This will lead to teaching Mini-Lesson One: What is a Sentence? From the Teaching Guide to the TASC Writing Skills Test

**Activity Three: Three Kinds of Job Training from Career Fundamentals, Unit 3: Getting Prepared, pages 271-2**

* Write a large version of the Prediction Guide on the board, and have students come up and write tick marks in the boxes for “yes” or “no,” then review briefly as a class.
* Write on the board some of the vocabulary that will likely be needed for the article:
* Course
* Course completion
* Community based organization
* Vocational school
* Liberal arts
* College credit
* Major
* Literature
* Philosophy
* Aspire
* Advance
* Entry level
* Have students work in pairs/groups to be responsible for looking up one or two terms on their phones, then providing the class with a “plain language” definition. Walk around as students are working to help.
* Bring the class together and ask for a report back. Write the plain language definitions on the board.
* Have students read the article silently, then open up a discussion: Do you want to go to college for a two year degree? 4-year degree? Do you want to attend a certificate program for job training? What are the pluses and minuses of each?

**Activity Four: Write a letter to yourself five years from now**

* Tell students that during these six sessions, they have had a chance to think about what their futures might be. Now you would like them to write a letter to the self they will be five years from now.
* Have students talk to each other in pairs about where they hope to be in five years. You may want to model the process by talking about how you would like your own life to be different in five years. What are your goals and aspirations? Where will you be living? What job will you have? What will you have gotten better at? These could be personal goals, too.
* Walk around as students are discussing to listen in. You might want to bring the class together to report on some of what you heard, with or without naming names. Then tell students: So now you are going to write to yourself—your future self. Choose ONE or TWO goals. Each goal or life change will be one paragraph. You might want to begin the letter with the class on the board. Dear Self: *Right now, you are going to HSE class to improve your skills and hopefully pass the TASC. You are doing this, even though it is very difficult, because you want your life to be different in the future. Here is what I hope will be different in five years:*
* Allow students to write for 20 minutes or so while you circulate. If students are comfortable, they can share their letters with other students. Collect the letters if you wish.

**Survey: What did you learn? What did you like?**

* Tell students that it’s important for teachers to understand what their students are learning and what they liked doing in class. Hand out the survey and ask students to take 5 minutes to fill it in then hand back. They don’t have to include their names.