Lesson 15

Research Project

Overview: This lesson formally presents the learners with their research project—written essay requirements leading to the public speaking presentation of their topic. It is a developmental lesson drawing on previous lessons (writing process, communication, mind mapping, and “Thought for the Day”) and future lessons (independent study time, library research, and public speaking essential skills). It introduces the EFF Standard, Learn Through Research, as a way to develop an essay.

Educational Goal: The goal of this lesson is for each learner to (1) identify a topic of interest, (2) apply research skills, library skills, and writing process skills to create an essay, and (3) value the entire learning activity as a reflection of what can be accomplished through hard work, commitment, and motivation.

Objectives: The learner will:
Cognitive: Identify a topic of interest
Apply research skills, library skills,
and writing process skills
Affective: Value the entire research project process as
an affirmation of his or her potential to be successful

Skill/Standard Connections: This lesson has connections to the Tennessee KSAs – Evaluate Information, Write, and Talk Respectfully; the GED – Applying Information in a Concrete Situation, Interpreting Information, and Assessing Information Prior to Evaluation; and the EFF Standards – Learn Through Research, Convey Ideas in Writing, and Speak So Others Can Understand. (Appendix II)

Teaching Strategy: This is a special developmental lesson that pulls together all the elements of communication, taking responsibility for learning, and other learning skills concepts. It is a clear application of the learners’ ability to stay focused, set a goal, work towards that goal, and believe in themselves and all of what Learning Skills is about.

This lesson is presented more as a relaxed conversation (guided discussion) between the teacher and learners to create a comfortable attitude about the work.

Time: 1 hour

Materials:
— Learner Note Taker
— EFF Standard Learn Through Research
— Goals Worksheet
• Over the next few weeks learners will research and develop a written essay on a topic of interest. Learners will develop a written essay on a topic of their choice. They will deliver a 3- to 5-minute public speaking presentation on the topic and answer questions from the audience.

• On the final day of their fourth week they will present their essay to the class using their public speaking skills. The learners will select the topic and begin to use their writing process skills to refine their topic for presentation. The reason this activity takes the form of an essay is to show learners that through systematic hard work they can accomplish a somewhat difficult task. This lesson and project promotes research skills, in its simplest form, independent action, self-reliance, public speaking skills, and a positive learning experience.

• The teacher should slowly work with the learners in a systematic way so the learner gets the most out of the process. At appropriate steps the teacher should provide guidance and support.

• The learners have numerous lessons to draw upon in the development of the research project, such as mind mapping, writing process, communication, etc.

• The learners will pick a topic of interest. It can either be something they are familiar with or want to learn more about. Learners will use the tree diagram to organize their topic into key elements or main points along with obvious supporting sub-points for homework.

• Learners learn more about their topics by visiting the school library, browsing the Internet, and tapping other sources of information. They will brainstorm and organizing their topic using the writing process. They will write an essay using the information they have gathered. Ultimately, they will present their topic to fellow learners. They will use the information from their essay to deliver a 3- to 5-minute speaking presentation.

• As the schedule permits the teacher should introduce the learners to the library and other school resources.
Lesson Plan

Introduction

Attention: What do you think about doing a presentation on a research topic? How many of you have worked on something like this before? When was the last time you wrote an essay or delivered a speech to an audience?

Motivation: You already know it is important to be able to communicate. Now we are going to start to work on your research project and essay. You will eventually, in two weeks, present that topic and essay to other learners. You can do this. It will be a great learning experience.

Overview: We are going to have a conversation about the research project, the EFF Standard Learn Through Research, and other lessons that will help you. This will be a fairly simple subject, but it will be the discussion of what you think and how you feel that will be most important.

Body of Lesson

Main Point 1: Introduction of the Research Project
Let me explain the research project to you and answer any questions you have about it. I want you to select a topic that you will write about and eventually tell the class about.

Select a topic (within reason) that is of interest to you. It could be something you are familiar with like a hobby, work, family, etc., or something you want to learn more about. It is a wide-open opportunity for you to pick what you want. Pick something that you will be comfortable writing about and speaking about.

This project pulls together all of the elements of the communication lessons into a very real-world practical application. It will be similar to what is expected of you during the GED essay, except you will have a longer time to develop, write, and prepare this essay.

A lot of this project will be independent work that will take place at home. We will give you time in class, but the bulk of the work will be
done on your own time. So you will “take responsibility” for your learning and the work you must do to reach your objective. This project starts your leadership phase of the Learning Skills course. You will have to stay focused on your goal, work toward that goal, and believe in yourself. You will learn a lot and have fun doing it.

**Question:** What might be a topic you would like to work on? What would be the key elements you would want to cover?

You will have several weeks to research and develop a written essay on a topic of interest. We will help you develop your information from the library, Internet, or other resources. We will work together using the writing process to organize and develop the essay. We will all work together as a team on it. During the last week of class we will go over a lesson on speaking essentials, which will help you prepare to speak to the class on your topic. You will have time to practice with your graduating classmates.

You will deliver a 3- to 5-minute public speaking presentation on the topic and answer questions from the audience. We will do this on graduation day two weeks from now.

**Main Point 2: EFF Research Standard – Learn Through Research**

Let’s take a moment and review the EFF Standard, Learn Through Research. The key elements of that standard are (1) pose a question to be answered or make a prediction about objects or events; (2) use multiple lines of inquiry to collect information; and (3) organize, evaluate, analyze, and interpret findings. With your research project you will be finding out more about a specific topic.

**Question:** What are some examples of using multiple (or many) sources of inquiry to collect information?

Explain what **organize**, **evaluate**, **analyze**, and **interpret findings** means and how it applies to this research project.

This will be only the beginning of many research projects to learn new things in your educational career. These are great skills to have and share with your family, at work, or in the community. Why?
Main Point 3: Briefly Review Previous Lessons for Connections to This Project

Let’s spend some time reviewing the lessons that will help you.

Conclusion

Summary: Okay, so you have your project and some initial thoughts about the topic, key elements, and what you would like to write about.

Homework Assignment: The Writing Process. I want you to take a blank tree diagram and (like the hamburger example) write out some key main points and supporting details about the topic you are thinking about. It is important to start putting your ideas down on paper.

Re-Motivation: This project will show you that you can understand and accomplish a research/essay project. It will also show you how to connect and use the ideas and techniques you are learning in this class. It will help you in the future to put your ideas together, communicate them to other people, and feel good about what you have accomplished.

Close: Being able to take an idea or topic and communicate it to other people in writing or speaking is a mark of a bright, intelligent person. That person is you!

Weekly Review – What Have I Learned This Week and Changes
(Refer to Lesson 9 for instruction)