Next Steps After Learning Skills

Overview: This lesson will focus on learner preparation for the next class and how the next steps relate to the key concepts that have been introduced throughout the Learning Skills Course.

Educational Goal: The goal of this lesson is for each learner to
(1) Comprehend what the next steps and class will be like.
(2) Respond positively to the next steps and the future.

Objective: The learner will
Cognitive: — Explain what the next level will be like
— Identify some of the changes that may occur after Learning Skills
Affective: — The learner will contribute to the class discussion
— The key concepts and tools and predict how she will use the key concepts in the future

Skills Standards Connection: This lesson has connections to the Tennessee KSA – Evaluate Information, to the EFF Standard – Reflect and Evaluate, and to the GED – Interpreting Information that is inferential, literal, or implied, by asking learners to analyze the information that they have accessed.

Teaching Strategy: The learners are in their last days of Learning Skills. They have learned several key concepts and tools and have used some of these tools in class and in their lives. They have also learned the Five Stages of Team Growth and understand that change occurs when working with new people as a team. This lesson helps learners to understand how their prior knowledge will assist in their success for the near future. The lesson also helps learners to comprehend what will happen when they leave the Learning Skills class. The tools and key concepts that will be addressed in this lesson are the STAR method, the Shewhart Cycle, the Five W’s and 1 H, “Thought for the Day,” the Communication Process, the Three A’s, and teamwork.

Time: 1 hour

Teacher Materials:
— List of key concepts and tools
— Markers to record
— Note Taker

Learner Materials:
— Learner Note Taker
— Previous class notes
— Pencil or Pen
This lesson also prepares learners for the changes that will occur when they begin a new class. Learners should begin to see how they can apply the key concepts and tools to the next class. Share the educational goal and objectives with the learners. Always let the learners know what they are expected to learn. Learners will take notes throughout the lesson and can look through their notes for concepts and tools.

The lesson begins with an open discussion of what learners expect from the next class. Ask two main questions: 1. What are some good things that might happen in your next class—what are you looking forward to? And, 2. What are some things that will be hard? Add their responses in the chart.

Create a positive/negative chart on the board. The left side of the chart is the place for feedback pertaining to “what went or will go well” in whatever subject the recorder is referring to. The right-hand side of the chart records the “things that should be improved.” On the chart, record all thoughts from the learners on the board in order to refer back to them throughout the lesson. The key to this first part is to get all of the learners’ concerns, questions, and comments out on the table. Talk about the need to accept change—how it’s good and how it is difficult. This discussion will then lead into things that learners should expect. Some of the things that will be discussed during this portion of the lesson are different teaching styles and strategies, classroom environment, personalities of other classmates, and educational work. The last part of the lesson focuses on how to use the key concepts and tools that have been introduced in Learning Skills. Ask the following questions: “What tools and/or concepts could you use that would help you in the next class?” and “How will these tools help?” The lesson ends with the learners’ describing what they can do to make their next class a positive and successful experience.
Lesson Plan

Introduction

Attention: Have any of you been thinking about what the next class will be like for you?

Motivation: Thinking about the next class is important. We need to have an idea of what it will be like so that we can be better prepared for it. I want you to feel comfortable enough to share what you are really thinking and feeling about the next class. We will work through your comments, questions, and concerns together as a team.

Overview: Now that you are about to graduate from Learning Skills, we are going to talk about what to expect in your next class, some of the changes that you may encounter, and what you want from the next class. We will also talk about the key concepts and tools that you have learned and applied in this class and how they can work in other classes and parts of your life. I would also like for you to take notes on your Note Taker. At the end of this lesson you should be able to explain what changes may occur in the next class and what will be different. You should also be able to tell me about some of the tools that you can use to make your next class a success.

Body of Lesson

Main Point 1. Positive/Negative Expectations

A. When thinking about the next class there may be some things that you are looking forward to, and there could be some things that you are a little concerned about.

Question: What are some good things that might happen in your next class? What are you looking forward to?

There are a lot of positive things to look forward to in your next class. You are finishing the first step in your adult education. The first step is usually the hardest. Now that you have finished you are probably feeling more prepared and up to the challenges ahead than you were when you first came into Learning Skills.

Question: What are some things that will be hard?
Sometimes moving to a new class or a new place anywhere in life can be a little difficult. Many of the things that we think of as difficult aren’t really that hard. It’s just that we have questions that need to be answered. We will try to answer some of your questions today. Other questions might have to wait until you get into the next class.

**B. Change.** Change is when someone or something has to adapt. People need to be able to adapt in order to survive and succeed. Change is a part of life. Change is not easy but it can be easier.

**Question:** How did you feel when you first began *Learning Skills*?

**Question:** How did we help you to become more comfortable with the class?

We wanted you to feel comfortable in this class. We wanted you to be able to do well in here and to feel like you could learn. The next class will want the same for you.

Many things might be different about your next class experience. One of the first big changes that people think about is the change in teachers.

There are some things that you can do to create a respectful and learning relationship with your new teacher. Be open. Allow yourself to be open-minded about a new teacher. Sometimes learners hear rumors about a teacher and end up entering a class with a negative attitude. Try to stay positive and give your new teacher a chance. Communication is the best tool. You may want to know a few things about your teacher. Some good questions might include: Why did you become a teacher? What can I do to get the most out of your class? How does the class work?

One of the best things that you can do to gain respect from a teacher is to just do the work. Attend class as often as possible, do your work and homework, and participate in class discussions. Ask questions if you don’t understand an assignment or a concept. By doing these things, just as you want her to care, you show that you care.

**Main Point 2. Tools and Key Concepts**

You have learned many tools in *Learning Skills* that can be applied in any learning situation. You have already used some of these tools in class and at home.
Question: What tools or key concepts would be helpful for you to use in the next class?

Anticipated Response: — The STAR method.
— The Shewhart Cycle.
— Teamwork.
— The 5 W’s and 1 H.
— “Thought for the Day”

All of these tools and concepts will be helpful to you in your next class. Let’s talk about how you could use these tools and concepts in your next class.

Question: The STAR method stands for what?

Anticipated Response: — Stop, Think, Act, and Review.

Question: How could you use the STAR method to write a paper about a specific topic?

It’s important for anyone to stop and think before they act. Stopping to think will help you to be more prepared to do well.

You acted when you started to write your paper. You were creating your rough draft.

The next step is the revision and editing step in the Writing Process. In many ways this step is just like the review step in STAR. You completed your rough draft and are now reviewing your paper and presentation. You may be reflecting on what went well, what was difficult, and what you will improve.

Let’s think about some other tools.

Question: Your teacher may ask you to think about a short-term or long-term goal. What tool could you use to think to prepare for that goal?

Anticipated Response: — We could use the Shewhart Cycle to plan for our goals.

We used the Shewhart Cycle to help you improve your test-taking strategies, but it can be used for anything that you want to accomplish. You will probably be asked to use the Shewhart Cycle for different things that you want to achieve.

Question: How could the Shewhart Cycle help? Can you give me an example of how you can use it?
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Question: Why is having a plan necessary?

It is important that you plan for the next class. There may be one long-term goal that you have set for yourself, but there could be several short-term goals that you need to plan for.

Question: What’s the next step of the cycle? First you plan then you…?

Anticipated Response: — Do.

Question: What happens during the do step?

Anticipated Response: — You start doing what you’ve planned.

The do step is when you put your plan into action. You are no longer just thinking about it. You are actually going through the motions of doing what you planned. Maybe one of your goals will be to improve your writing, so you come up with a plan and begin to follow that plan. Let’s say that you plan to write independently and on your own time, every day for a certain amount of time.

Question: After you have gotten to the end of the time frame that you have set, you then need to stop and begin to…

Anticipated Response: — Study how it’s going.

That’s right, study. Ask yourself, how is it going? Have I stuck with my plan or did I make adjustments and if I did, why? Studying how your goal is going will help you act, the last step of the Shewhart Cycle. The act step asks you to learn from the experience and keep doing what worked well and improve on things that should have gone better.

Let’s think about another tool.

Question: How could you use the 5 W’s and 1 H?

Anticipated Response: — We need to ask questions.

The 5 W’s and 1 H also links to the Communication Process. It is important to ask questions of yourself and others. There are no stupid questions. Many times someone else has the same question that you have but they are afraid to ask. Feeling comfortable enough to ask questions is very important. You will be more capable of receiving a clear message if you ask questions. It is just as important to try to answer questions when you are writing about a specific topic. Answering the 5 W’s will help you to think of all the things that need to be incorporated into your paper. The 5 W’s...
and 1 H also relate back to effectively communicating with your teacher. Always give your teacher feedback. This will let them know how they’re doing and how you’re doing.

Remember to use these tools in your next class. Don’t leave what you have learned in this room. You need to take the tools with you. Use them in your next class, for your family, and at work or in the community. Don’t limit their effectiveness to just education. Remember that learning is everywhere, not just at school.

Let’s take a minute to talk about the 3 A’s.

**Question:** What are the three A’s?

**Anticipated Response:** — Attitude, Attendance, and Achievement.

The way you feel will affect what you do. Try to keep your attitude positive. Your attitude is probably the most important thing. Don’t let barriers get in the way of your goals. Don’t allow your attitude to be the barrier.

Being here is very important. We want you to be here at least 90% of the time. We’ve found that a person has the opportunity to learn more if she is here as much as possible. When you are here, you aren’t missing as much, you have support from the class, and you may remember what you have learned more easily simply because there is structure and your teacher is here.

Try to achieve something every day. Set small goals for yourself. Achieving what you want and need will not only get you to your goal but will also boost your self-esteem and attitude.

Doing these three things will help you to succeed.

**Question:** Why would teamwork be important?

Being able to work as a team is very important, not just for your education but for any part of your life. Teamwork is even required for most jobs today. Last week you learned about the Five Stages of Team Growth.

**Question:** What are the Five Stages of Team Growth?

**Anticipated Response:** — Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, Transforming.
Being aware of the stages in team growth will help you to understand what teams naturally go through.

**Question:** What things may occur when you are working on a new team?

The *Forming* stage may occur when you first are asked to work as a team. It may feel awkward, anxious, or nervous. You may have a lot of questions. Just remember that it is normal to feel these things.

The *Storming* stage comes when you have disagreements within the team. No team is always going to get along. Just know that it is important to work out any disagreements so that you can move on the next stages.

*Norming* is when the team gets on track. They have adjusted to the group and are feeling more comfortable as a team.

The *Performing* stage means that the team is doing what they need to do in order to accomplish your mission or goal.

Finally, the *Transforming* stage in many ways is what you are going through now. You are getting ready for change. You may feel some anxiety or sadness because you are leaving your team and moving on to something new.

All of these stages are normal. No team is immune from disagreement or stress. But being aware of these stages may help you to overcome any barriers.

Any team goes through changes. Not only will other peers be your team, but so will your teacher. Many of you will have different learning styles, personalities, strengths, and weaknesses. It’s important for everyone to stay open-minded and realize that we are all different. We need to respect the rights and responsibilities of everyone alike. You may not be able to get along with everyone as easily as some. That’s okay too. Just remember to respect others and if it still isn’t working, communicate that to your teacher. She will be able to help you figure out what to do.

**Question:** Why is the “Thought for the Day” important? **Question:** Are there any other questions or concerns that you want to share?
Conclusion

Summary:

Question: So what did we learn during this lesson?
Anticipated Response: — We learned about the next steps and class.
— We learned what to expect in the next class.
— We talked about what tools we can use to help.

Question: So what things are you going to do to make sure that your class experience will be a positive one?
Anticipated Response: — We need to communicate with the new teacher and others.
— We need to work as a team.
— We will ask questions.
— We can use the STAR method and the Shewhart Cycle to do things better.
— We need to respect others’ differences.
— Work hard.

You may have more questions the closer that graduation gets, and that’s okay. Just remember to voice those questions so that we can try to get answers for you.

Today we talked about what might happen in the next class that you are going to. We talked about some of the things that you are thinking about and we discussed some things that you found helpful in making you feel more comfortable in Learning Skills.

We hope that you will continue to feel comfortable enough in your next class to learn new things. Be sure to communicate to your teacher or someone else that can help if you are ever having trouble.

We also talked about the key concepts and tools that you learned here in learning skills and how you could apply them to the next class. These concepts and tools are a “common language” for our program, meaning that all teachers are aware of them and may ask you to use them.

You also need to remember that as you move forward you are responsible for your learning. Let’s review the Take Responsibility for Learning Standard.
You have learned some tools and strategies to help you get started on your educational journey. But most importantly, you have learned it is your responsibility to make it happen. As you go into your next class you will begin phase two of your journey: applying the skills, concepts, and strategies you have learned. You will begin to identify which strategies work best for certain tasks. This will help you monitor your progress and move forward toward your goals.

Re-Motivation: The next class will become more challenging for you but if you remember to do the things that we talked about, it might be a little more comfortable situation for you. We want you to use what you have learned in this class. That is why we are always reviewing things with you. Being able to use what you have learned is very valuable and is the most important reason for learning.

Close: Remember to keep these notes and review them before you begin the new class. We want you to succeed and know that it is easier for someone to succeed when they are happy.

Homework Assignment: Practice presentation
Homework Review: Practice presentation

Thought for the Day
“It takes courage to push yourself to places that you have never been before…test your limits…to break through barriers.” —Anonymous

Continue to push yourself to the top. Don’t get stuck in a comfort zone. Take pride in where you are going in your life. Believe in yourself and know that you can do it.

ACTIVITY: Test-Taking Strategies Using the Act Step of the Plan/Do/Study/Act (PDSA) Process

Objective: The objective of this activity is for the student to (1) act and implement general and specific test-taking strategies, as well as the student’s independent study work on a mini-post-test of his or her short-term goal, (2) review pre-test, post-test, and student’s evaluation of progress on short-term goal, and (3) have student summarize entire PDSA test goal activity.

Procedure: Each student selected a subject specific short-term goal during his or her TABE test review and began working independently. Now it’s time for them to develop and implement an action plan to achieve that short-term goal.

1. **Implement (Act) the general and specific test-taking strategies**: The students put what they have learned into action with a mini-test to test progress. Provide enough test items so the students can reflect and evaluate if they have progressed toward achieving their goals.

2. **Students review the mini-test and evaluate progress toward their test-taking short-term goal**: After the mini-test allow time for the students to write down their feelings, reflect, and evaluate how they did with their test-taking strategies. Have the students report back to the class their evaluation of themselves, their strategies, and the mini-test. Provide each individual with his or her results and your evaluation of progress.

3. **Summary – Students summarize the entire PDSA and goal-setting activity**: Guide the students through a summary discussion of what they have learned. Be sure they provide feedback on goal setting, PDSA process, taking responsibility for their own independent action, and the results.
   - A. What have you learned about yourself, your goal, and the process to achieve this improvement?
   - B. Why was it important to do this activity?
   - C. How can you use what you have learned?

The teacher should conclude with an appropriate motivational challenge.

Teaching Tip
Begin each day with a review of the previous day’s homework. Give 15-20 minutes to review the homework. Then begin the “Thought for the Day.” Give students time to answer the four questions. Then discuss the “Thought for the Day.”