



Mindquest Matters

Mindquest Academy Newsletter

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Moodle Training

Four Moodle trainings have been held for MQA teachers to assist them in making the switch from FirstClass to Moodle. FirstClass will be phased out at MLC by the end of June. Contact Bella about options for enrolling in Moodle.

Online Modules

At this time nine new teachers have completed the six online training modules. Congratulations! We scheduled the last module to be completed in March. However, take the time you need to complete all modules by the end of June.

New Mindquest Program at Adult Options in Education By Sue Ann Rawlins

Adult Options in Education has implemented a new Mindquest offering. It is a hybrid class, a combination of a mandatory bi-weekly lab and remote work. The students meet with their Mindquest teacher to select an appropriate course and then they work independently. Currently we have 9 students enrolled and room for 1 more. I am coordinating the program as well as serving as one of

the Mindquest teachers. Jeannie Amundson and Randee Gurban are the other Mindquest teachers currently working with students; Pam Nelson will hopefully be joining us in the future.

The program is intended to be ongoing with the capability of starting a new student any time there is a space available and a student interested. The students go through a referral process with their regular classroom teacher or at registration. They then meet with the assigned Mindquest teacher to do the personal learning plan. They come to the next scheduled lab and receive orientation. Once orientation is completed, they use the subsequent labs to work on their courses. The students are expected to work remotely as well.

This hybrid plan is working very well. The students really enjoy choosing their own course and having the bi-weekly lab really keeps them working. It is a good time to touch base with them to make sure they understand the assignments and the process.

We plan to continue our Adult Options Mindquest Academy program into July and then start again in the

fall. To expand, we will be marketing to recent GED graduates as well as advertising in the Community Education bulletin. In the fall, we will explore adding an evening lab option to our current Friday morning lab in order to serve all those who are interested in Mindquest.

College Prep Program plays a key role in FastTRAC grant project at NHCC

NHCC recently received a \$45,000 “FastTRAC” (Training, Resources, and Credentialing) grant that will provide select students free college prep and career development courses. Chosen programs are offering students, ages 25-44, support services and curriculum that will help move them into high-demand and skilled professions.

Each student receives a \$700 stipend to take continuing education courses for which she may receive certificates, thus improving her employability.

“NHCC’s College Prep Program was instrumental in securing this grant, which prepares students for college by enhancing their reading, writing, and math skills,” explains Mary Diedrich, Dean of Student Success Programs. “Our partnership with Osseo Adult and Family Learning

that started three years ago enabled us to offer prep classes for free.”

The College prep program acts as the hub for students participating in the FastTRAC pilot program, overseeing the intake, learning plan, and case management of each participating student.

Terry Jaakkola, College Prep teacher, gives an example: A recently dislocated worker needs to get a job ASAP but also wants to attend college in the future. She enrolls in College Prep, goes through orientation, and receives her individualized learning plan. She starts immediately in the College Prep math course and the MQA College Planning course. Upon completion of the College Planning course, she continues with the math and is enrolled in the Career Exploration course with the NHCC Adult Education Specialist who works with her through the course and counsels her in her continuing education selections. The student continues working with College Prep and is enrolled in additional MQA courses which will help her to prepare for college.

Testimonial to Mankato College Prep

I am glad I took College Prep right before I enrolled in college. Not only did it let me get familiar with online

Courses, but also the ideas it covered were just helpful. Some strategies and skills helped me manage success through college, such as note taking, setting goals, dealing with procrastination and keeping motivated. What's more, my reading comprehension and writing were improved. I learned to use prefixes and suffixes to infer the meaning of a word, and I increased my reading speed by using context clues instead of looking up words in the dictionary. Finally, successfully finishing the program gave me confidence to start college.



~Hui Xin Ou

Karen Walters writes: Hui Xin attended the Mindquest Academy College Prep Program at South Central College from March through September of 2007. She tested out of 3 developmental courses after completing her plan in College Prep. After taking some time off to work in her parent's restaurant business, she is now completing her second semester at South Central College and eventually plans to transfer to Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Ideas for motivating potential college students as they work on MQA

By Karen Wolters

- ° Invite the students to attend a college class with you at the local community college. Sitting in on a class is very exciting for the students, as they get the opportunity to hear the level of vocabulary used, see the pace of the instruction, and observe the students' interactions with the instructor and with each other. It might help to give the student some reflection questions ahead of time to heighten their awareness of the experience.

- ° Call a local community college and ask a financial aid advisor to host "informational sessions" about Financial Aid at your ABE site. Students get all their questions answered in their own comfortable environment. Research studies indicate that ABE students report a lack of advising in the areas of financial aid and career planning. Many ABE students are first generation college students and therefore don't have adequate advising from their parents or guardians.

- ° Have the students create a portfolio of their most meaningful assignments in their Mindquest Academy experience. The

assignments do not need to be perfect, polished pieces, rather a representation of their growth and evidence of learning. Seeing evidence of progress is very rewarding and motivating for students (and staff!)

Writing in Context

There were years of debate over whether to or how to teach grammar. Most researchers now agree that grammar instruction can improve student writing if the grammar is taught in context. Rather than teaching grammar with drill and practice, grammar is taught through the writing itself.

Kathrynn Di Tommaso has suggested approaches to teaching grammar in context in her paper, "Contextualizing Grammar Instruction for College Transition Students," (Issue 3 - January/February 2005, National College Transition Network, World Education, Inc.).

Some of her suggestions follow. (These approaches would be focused on working on grammar rather than the content of the assignment.)

1) Sentence Combining:

Ask the student to combine two sentences in his essay to practice sentence structure.

2) Transformational Exercises:

Students practice correct usage by taking sentences from their essays and rewriting them, e.g. change present tense verbs to past tense or change first person pronouns to third person.

3) Sentence Expansion:

Students are asked to add various syntactical structures like modifiers.

4) Sentence Rewriting:

Teachers mark which sentence on a student's draft is in need of revision but do not state what the error is or how to correct it. Students rewrite the grammatically incorrect sentence(s) along with an explanation of why each error is an error. They can practice by writing several sentences using the pattern correctly. Keeping a journal of their most common errors is helpful.

5) Discovery of Approach:

For instance, for a fragment lesson students can be given a list of 5 related sentences (4 fragments and 1 complete sentence) to read and identify the complete sentence.

6) Essay Editing Models:

Teacher models how to edit.

7) Self-Correction Strategies:

Teachers can develop an individual editing checklist for each student, depending on particular difficulties, and then have students correct grammar errors in their own essays. Students can also read their drafts aloud slowly noting any oral corrections and then editing their

draft accordingly. Students can also circle specific words in their essays, like past tense verbs or dependent clause markers to develop grammatical awareness.

Write back to the editor describing what approaches you use to teach grammar in the context of MQA assignments. Have you used any approaches listed above? That works well?

Consider a Collaborative College Prep Class at your Local College

We have two College Prep classes which have been operating for several years, one with Mankato ABE and South Central College and one with Osseo ABE and North Hennepin Community College.

One of the activities of Mindquest Academy staff is assisting ABE programs to collaborate with their local community or technical college in implementing a College Prep program. Mary Diedrich and Bella Hanson will meet with you to assist you in initiating steps in the process.

Benefits a College Prep Program brings to your ABE program:

- Provides you an opportunity to engage in a collaborative effort with a community/technical college in your

area using a model that is already developed

- Expands your program's services to adults in your community by dedicating space and resources on a college campus for the sole purpose of giving them a chance to develop academic and school-ability skills free of charge

- Creates an ABE site on your college campus strictly for college prep where students can feel part of the campus and can enjoy certain benefits, such as library cards, student I.D., and a feeling of "belonging." Students become familiar with college staff, facilities, and expectations, and it reduces their anxiety about enrolling in college.

In addition, you'll be participating in a statewide effort with ABE and MnSCU to develop a network of college prep centers in Minnesota to extend postsecondary opportunities to all adult learners.

Calendar

- April 30 Moodle training at MLC
- May 1 Third training for metro teachers at MLC
- May 8 Third training for northern MN teachers
- May 15 Seminar for teachers trained in previous years