
Empowering Learners:



Teaching Essential 21st Century Skills with a Project-Based Approach

Who We Are

Sara Finesilver (she/hers), Instructor, English as a Second Language, Equity Coordinator, Outline of Instruction Curriculum Coach at Madison College
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Objectives

- Understand Teaching Skills That Matter and how it connects to WTCS ESL/AE priorities
- Define project-based learning
- Examine a sample lesson
- Develop lesson adaptations from your practice



Agenda

- Overview of Teaching the Skills That Matter
- Warm up
- Definition and example of project-based learning
- Project creation time
- Share out project-based ideas
- Resources



What is TSTM?

“The Teaching the Skills That Matter in Adult Education project (TSTM) trains teachers to integrate the **skills** that matter to adult students using **approaches** that work across critical **topics**. Using the project's tools and training, adult educators can teach the transferable skills students need in these critical contexts.”

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Why Teach the Skills That Matter?

WIOA Section 23: Instruction must be tied to ‘activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment. “

Teaching the Skills That Matter (TSTM) Training Model



To provide training and technical assistance to teachers in *adult basic skills education* to target the skills that matter in the areas of *civic education, digital literacy, financial literacy, health literacy, and workforce preparation with approaches that work.*

National level

- Academic year
- Coaching
- In-person & online training
 - 2 WI cohorts in 2020 & 2023

State level in Wisconsin

- Webinars - Spring 2022
- Asynchronous PD training
 - Pilot - Spring 2024
 - Current - Fall 2024
- Look for more information on future TSTM trainings!



The 9 Skills that Matter are:



Adaptability and willingness to learn

Communication

Critical thinking

Interpersonal skills

Navigating systems

Problem solving

Processing and analyzing information

Respecting differences & diversity

Self-awareness

The 5 Topic Areas:

- Civics education
- Digital literacy
- Financial literacy
- Health literacy
- Workforce preparation



The 3 Approaches that work are:



- Integrated and contextualized learning
- Problem-based learning
- Project-based learning (Today!)



Warm Up Activity



What stops us from doing more project-based learning?

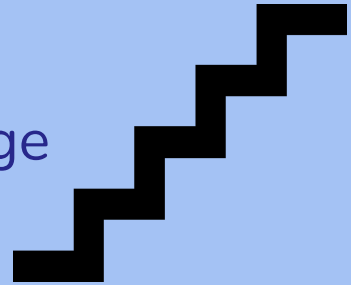
Why?

Scan the QR code and share your thoughts!

Project-Based Learning



- Learners create a product that demonstrates skills and content knowledge (e.g., a report, presentation, video, etc.)
- Questions, goals, and tasks cohere with progress toward final project
- Projects usually require communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity; are typically multidisciplinary
- Approach aligns with life skills/ applied knowledge
- Students crave hands-on learning experiences



How Do We Begin Developing a Project-Based Lesson or Activity?

Starts with a student need (or even content area)

What kind of project would...

- encourage research, creativity, and collaboration?
- showcase skills and knowledge around that need or topic?
- make learning feel grounded and authentic?

Project-Based Lesson Steps



The teacher:

1. Poses a meaningful question
2. Lays out project details: steps, timeline, and final product
3. Monitors and guides progress
4. Facilitates presentations
5. Develops final project assessment

The student or group:

1. Follows the line of inquiry
2. Develops specific plan to meet project requirements
3. Completes project steps
4. Presents final product
5. Completes final project assessment

Example Project-Based Lesson from the TSTM Toolkit

Financial Literacy: Eating Healthy on a Budget Project-Based Learning Lesson



Background: Eating healthy on a tight budget can be a challenge for some individuals and households. This project relates to the concept of spending plans and cash flow in a personal finance unit. It can also be used in a relevant health education or civics education unit.

NRS Level(s): Low Intermediate ABE to High Adult Secondary Education, High Beginning to Advanced ESL

| | |
|---|---|
| Project Title: Eating Healthy on a Budget | Approximate Instruction Time: Dedicate an hour to kick off the activity and allow time for teams to tackle the first three or four stages of the project. Thereafter, schedule time over several weeks for team meetings and the final report-out. The students also will complete assigned independent work on their own time. |
| Instructional Objective <i>(written in teacher language primarily derived from content standards and includes evidence of mastery):</i> By the end of this project, students will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify healthy and less healthy foods.• Gather information about healthy foods, where they are sold, and their costs to calculate the cost of a meal.• Work with a team to complete and share a group project (visual representation) comparing food prices. | Learning Target Statements <i>(written in student-friendly language and helps learners reflect on what they are able to do as a result of the project)</i> for learners' exit tickets, learning logs, or reflection: Content objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can ask and answer questions about buying healthy foods.• I can choose healthy food options.• I can use resources to find information about food prices and amounts.• I can calculate the cost of a healthy meal. Language objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can collaborate with a group to finish and share a healthy foods project.• I can present the results of my healthy foods project to an audience.• I can adapt the language I use to match my audience. |

Example Project-Based Lesson for ESL



Meal Plan Reflection

Enabled: Statistics Tracking

Click the link above to look at the meal plans that we made in class.

Then think about the meals and answer the questions.

Thank you for your work today!



Grocery Store Ads

Enabled: Statistics Tracking

Use these links to look at grocery store ads in Milwaukee this week:

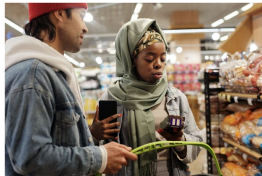
[El Rey](#)

[Sendik's](#)

[Meijer](#)

[Pick 'N Save](#)

A local store or a chain store?
Why?



Group #2 Meal A - Shrimp and Potatoes

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------|
| vegetable & Dip Trays | = | 4.99 |
| Yukon potatoes 5LB | = | 3.99 |
| Gulf Shrimp 1lb bag | = | 7.99 |
| Kaiser Rolls 6 ct | = | 2.49 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | 19.46 |

Group #2 Meal B - Pork Ribs and Salad

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| pork Back Ribs | - | \$4.99 |
| Asparagus | - | \$2.99 |
| Fresh express salad blends | - | \$6 |
| Philadelphia cream cheese | - | \$1.99 |
| Juicy Juice | \$ | 2.49 |
| Red Cherries | \$ | 5.99 |
| Pringles party stack | - | \$1.49 |

Example Project-Based Lesson for Corrections



FoodShare: Your Income Could Make You Eligible

FoodShare benefits are available to many families across Wisconsin. Your family may be able to get benefits if you don't earn enough money to pay for basic things you need. Family income is one factor we use to determine if you're eligible.

Gross family income

To find out if you can get FoodShare benefits, you need to know the amount of money your household earns each month. Gross income means the amount before taxes.

Monthly income limits

This chart will help you learn if you might be able to get benefits. Check the chart to see how much money your family earns or receives each month. Then check the chart to see if you are eligible.

Effective October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025

| Household size | *200% FPL Gross Income Limit |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | \$2,510 |
| 2 | \$3,408 |
| 3 | \$4,304 |

SHOPPING LIST (\$150.00)

MEALS

- Spinach 2lbs \$12.99 (\$6.49)
- Chicken 5lbs \$10.97 (\$5.48)
- Ground chuck 2lb \$12.99 (\$6.49)
- Canned tuna 4 cans \$3.99 (\$1.99)

SIDES

- Carrots 5lbs \$3.99 (\$1.99)
- Onion 5lbs \$3.99 (\$1.99)
- Garlic 1lb \$1.99
- Butter 1lb \$2.99
- Mayo 1lb \$2.99
- Mustard 1lb \$2.99
- Salad dressing 1lb \$2.99
- Hot sauce 1lb \$2.99
- Spices 1lb \$2.99

BREAKFAST

- Eggs 1 dozen \$2.99
- Milk 1 gallon \$3.99
- Yogurt 1 gallon \$3.99
- Waffles 1 box \$2.99
- Flour 5 lbs \$2.99
- Sugar 5 lbs \$2.99
- Vanilla 1 bottle \$2.99

FRUITS & VEGGIES

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CONDIMENTS

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- Mustard 1lb \$2.99
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AD COUPON

2/\$7 Fresh Express Chopped Salad

AD COUPON

68¢ Kraft Macaroni & Cheese Dinner

AD COUPON

88¢ Birds Eye Steamfresh Vegetables

AD COUPON

4/\$4 7UP or A&P Products

AD COUPON

4.79 Cameron's Coffee

AD COUPON

5/\$5 Creamette Pasta or Heart's Pasta Sauce

AD COUPON

2/\$9 Tide Laundry Detergent

AD COUPON

5.98 Cooked Perfect Meals

AD COUPON

3/\$7.99 Family Size Softies, Barley or Instant Noodles

AD COUPON

13.98 Tide Laundry Detergent

AD COUPON

2.48 Goli's Granacha or Synergy Drink

AD COUPON

2/\$5 Nature Valley Granola Bars

AD COUPON

3/\$13 Coca-Cola Products

AD COUPON

2.98 Ultimate Mini Cookies

AD COUPON

2/\$5 Fellowship's Cheese & Baked Snack Cookies

AD COUPON

7.98 PER LB. Kretschmer Honey or Regular Turkey Off the Bone

Create your own project!



Think of one project and one objective based on your students' needs.

- Choose your **teaching context**: Adult Learners, K-12, Tutoring,
- Choose your **focus area**: Workforce Preparation, Civics, Financial Literacy, Health literacy, Digital literacy
- Choose 1-2 of **the 9 Skills that Matter**: Adaptability and willingness to learn, Communication, Critical thinking, Interpersonal skills, Navigating systems, Problem solving, Processing and analyzing information, Respecting differences & diversity, and Self-awareness
- Create an **objective** for your project-based lesson: **By the end of this lesson, my students will be able to _____.**

Identify 2-3 benchmarks that students will work through to complete the project.

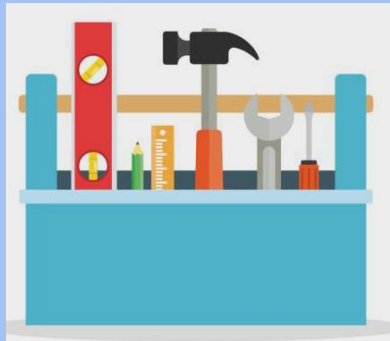
Share with others near you

Teaching the Skills That Matter (TSTM)



Toolkit Walk-through

- Description of skills, subject areas, and instructional approaches.
- Templates for unit and lesson plans.
- Vetted lessons that effectively integrate the Skills That Matter.



Information and resources related to TSTM can be found on the LINCS website under **Federal Initiatives**.



What's available to use?


- 5 downloadable lessons plans for each topic area
- developed by nationally-recognized subject matter experts and reviewed by ABE content specialists
- examples & videos of each of the 3 instructional approaches



TSTM Instructional Videos

The TSTM Project is developing a series of eight instructional videos focused on improving teacher practice. The first three of these videos focus on the three approaches that work. The other five videos will be developed around each of the five topic focus areas. They will be found under their related topic—civic education, digital literacy, financial literacy, health literacy or workforce preparation—as they are developed.

- **Teaching the Skills That Matter: Approaches That Work—Project-Based Learning**
This video shows the steps and structure of a project-based learning lesson in the context of a financial literacy lesson called "Eating Healthy on a Budget." You'll see Lia Olson guide her multilevel ESL class through each step of the process as they plan a meal that is both low cost and healthy. Dr. Olson is a Teaching Skills that Matter Coach in addition to being an ABE and ELL teacher at The Ronald Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning. In the video, you'll also hear from Dr. Patsy Egan, an adult education subject matter expert and the director of the Adult Basic Education Training and Learning System (ATLAS) at Hamline University. For more information about project-based learning, check out documents on the approaches above. You can also find the lesson that Lia taught her class in the Financial Literacy section of the toolkit.
- **Teaching the Skills That Matter: Approaches That Work—Problem-Based Learning**
This video provides the steps and structure of a problem-based learning lesson in the context of a workforce preparation lesson titled "Unmet Workplace Performance." You'll see Lia Olson guide her multilevel ESL class through each step of the process as the students decide how to respond to an angry boss. Dr. Olson is a Teaching Skills that Matter Coach in addition to being an ABE and ELL teacher at The Ronald Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning. In the video, you'll also hear from Dr. Patsy Egan, an adult education subject matter expert and the director of the Adult Basic Education Training and Learning System (ATLAS) at Hamline University. For more information about problem-based learning, check out documents on the approaches above. You can also find the lesson that Lia taught her class in the Workforce Preparation section of the toolkit.
- **Teaching the Skills That Matter: Approaches That Work – Integrated and Contextualized Instruction**
This video shows the components for integrating and contextualizing instruction in the context of a financial literacy lesson titled "Household Cash Flow." You'll see Stephanie Sommers guide her intermediate and intermediate-high (NRS levels) students through each component of integrated and contextualized instruction as the students decide how to save and manage money. Ms. Sommers is a Teaching Skills that Matter Coach in addition to being Adult Diploma Coordinator & Writing Curriculum Lead for Minneapolis Public Schools. In the video, you'll also hear from Dr. Patsy Egan, an adult education subject matter expert and the director of the Adult Basic Education Training and Learning System (ATLAS) at Hamline University. For more information about integrating and contextualizing instruction check out documents on the approaches above. You can also find the lesson that Ms. Sommers taught her class in the Financial Literacy section of the Toolkit.

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**What questions do you have about
TSTM or project-based learning?**

Contact Information



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THANK YOU

A string of ten colorful paper strips, each with a letter, hanging from a thin twine string against a dark, textured wooden background. The strips are held in place by small wooden clothespins. The letters are written in a simple, hand-drawn blue font. The colors of the strips are: red (T), light blue (H), lime green (A), light blue (N), yellow (K), light green (Y), yellow (O), and light green (U). There are two empty slots between the 'K' and 'Y' strips.

Language Acquisition Project-Based Learning Examples

- Presenting on a chronic illness after evaluating websites and researching reputable sites
 - [Reflective Project](#) grammar & job skills
 - [Diamante Poem](#)
 - [Medicine Label](#)
 - [Story Corp Interviews](#)
 - [Sharing Our World - MATC Book Project](#)
 - [Graph Creation Project](#)
 -
-