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# Professional Development Self-Change Power Project Worksheet

Name of participant:

Email address: Institution:

## **Overview of Activity**

This Self-Change Power Project can be applied to a variety of developmental and adult courses. After a whole group discussion brainstorming contextualized skills and behaviors, students will work in small groups to list the importance of contextualized behaviors. After choosing a contextualized behavior to monitor, students will set goals and graph data to monitor change.

## **Objectives aligned with the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards**

* Students will engage in scholarly inquiry and dialogue while brainstorming contextualized behaviors in small and whole group discussions.
* Students will discuss the importance of the contextualization behaviors listed in the brainstorming activity. Through this activity, students will better know and understand the use of mathematics, problem solving, and language arts in a variety of careers and professions.
* Students will use multiple representations to demonstrate links between mathematical and real world situations, including graphing behaviors and brainstorming in writing.
* Students will use graphing skills to collect data on contextualized behaviors.
* Students will work with a peer to apply probabilistic measures to practical situations to make an informed decision about what behavior to graph, as well as the frequency of the behavior.
* Students will work with a peer to discuss data collected and use gathered evidence to support arguments, findings, or lines of reasoning.
* After discussing results with a peer, students will support or modify claims based on the results of an inquiry.

## **Time Required**

Lesson Preparation:

* Read related literature.
* Watch the Self-Change Power Project video.
* Investigate where this activity fits in your current curriculum. This will take several weeks to complete.
* Plan lesson and print materials.

Lesson Implementation:

* Introduce the Self-Change Power Project to the class and complete the Contextualized Behavior Worksheet.
* Check in with students each week about graphing their behaviors. Provide an opportunity for students to check in with peers.
* Discuss results as a class after the projects are completed.

## **Why Teach Contextualization in the Developmental Education Classroom?**

Contextualization can provide students in developmental education courses with intrinsic motivation and task engagement because the subject is deemed useful, enjoyable, or interesting to the learner (Perin, 2011). Perin claims transfer of learning theories and learner motivation theories suggest that contextualization is one means of improving instructional methods within the postsecondary context. Adult Basic Education has also benefitted from using contextualized instruction including teaching skills such as writing reports and forms, reading articles in company newsletters, and preparing for tests related to job promotions (Perin, 2011). The contextualization modules created by The Education Institute (TEI) for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) were composed with this transfer of learning in mind, focusing on how to utilize instructional methods that motivate students by focusing on future career goals (Perin, 2011).

The importance of contextualization has been embraced by the state of Texas, as shown by the THECB’s Accelerate Texas Initiative (THECB, 2016). The THECB’s “Accelerate Texas programs are designed to integrate or contextualize basic reading, math, and writing skills with workforce training, providing the student with opportunity for college transition and entry into high demand occupations” (THECB, 2016, para 1). TEI has provided educators with contextualized professional development modules that can be utilized in a variety of courses with the workforce transition in mind.

Instructors and employers note the importance of soft skills, including communication skills and time management (Audant, 2016). Programs often include assistance with job searches and networking, including internship courses where “…students develop their resumes, work on interview skills, and discuss workplace etiquette” (Audant, 2016, p. 304). While traditional students may be attending courses to begin their first career, many students enter college when choosing to switch or advance their existing career. Older students have entered college from the workforce with the goal of receiving a credential, an option that research “consistently found positive financial benefits, either through increased wages or employability, from obtaining a credential” (Cummins, 2014, p. 267). Accelerate Texas provides entry-level career pathways for students (THECB, 2016). Career pathways “are especially important for older adults who have inadequate retirement savings and need to remain in the workforce to reduce their risk of poverty in retirement” (Cummins, 2014, p. 272).

## **The Purpose of this Module**

The Self-Change Power Project, adapted from *Academic Transformation: The Road to College Success*, can help students monitor progress to help reach behavioral goals (Sellers, Dochen, & Hodges, 2015). The Power Project was adapted in this module to focus on work-related behaviors. This contextualized approach allows for an opportunity to brainstorm requisite behaviors for future employment. Contextualization can increase students’ “mastery of basic skills as well as the likelihood of transfer of basic skills to content courses that is not occurring in traditional, decontextualized learning environments” (Perin, 2011, p.286). This activity uses several cross-disciplinary skills from the Texas College Career and Readiness Standards, including graphing behaviors and brainstorming in writing and using graphing skills to collect data on contextualized behaviors.

## Step 1: Self-Change Power Project Video (before class)

Watch this **video** on a Self-Change Power Project, where students graph behaviors they want to change. This will be an example of how to implement the project into your own classroom.

## Step 2: Apply the Self-Change Power Project to one or more of your classes

**Discuss possible contextualized behaviors listed for a future career:** Model an example on the board. An engaging example may be the role of a sales manager. Ask students what skills someone would need for that job. (Examples: timeliness, checks emails regularly, communication skills). Ask students to brainstorm other contextualized skills and list them on the board. Examples may include:

* Arriving to work 15 minutes early
* Turning in reports on time
* Participate constructively in small group discussions
* Checking work email several times a day

Discuss the importance of the contextualization behaviors listed in the brainstorming activity. Talk about how these behaviors translate into workplace behaviors. For example, checking one’s work email several times a day and responding in a timely manner would ensure that employees are informed and able to answer questions or perform additional requested tasks when needed. Remember that through this activity, students should better know and understand the use of problem solving and English/language arts skills in a variety of careers and professions.

**Have students brainstorm a behavior to graph.** Students will work in pairs to decide which contextualized behavior they would like to graph. Students will fill out the **Self-Change Power Project Graphing Worksheet.** The person a student pairs up with will act as the student’s accountability buddy each class period during the project.

**Model how to graph work behaviors.** Show students how to graph behaviors using the attached Self-Change Power Project Graphing Sheet. Model how to graph data for week one, which will be called the “baseline week.”

An example to graph is arriving 15 minutes early to work. If a student arrived early to work three out of five days, there would be three activities graphed on the chart.

Explain to students that they will use multiple representations to demonstrate links between mathematical and real world situations, including graphing behaviors and brainstorming in writing. Students will use graphing skills to collect data on contextualized behaviors.

**Collect Data.** Collect the project after at least three weeks of data collection. Remember that the first week of collection is a baseline. This means a three-week commitment is one week of collecting baseline data and two weeks of collecting data. During this process, students will apply probabilistic measures to practical situations to make an informed decision about what behavior to graph, as well as the frequency of the behavior.

Allow a chance for Students to work with their assigned partner to discuss data collected and use gathered evidence to support arguments, findings, or lines of reasoning. Explain to students that after discussing results with a partner, students may want to support or modify claims based on the results of their data collected.

**Class Reflection.** Reflect as a class on the activity and potential changes in contextualized behaviors. Discuss the importance of the contextualization behaviors the students selected. Talk about how these behaviors translate into workplace behaviors. Remember that through this activity, students should now know and understand the use of mathematics, problem solving, and language arts in a variety of careers and professions.

 Allow class time for students to share the results of their projects in small groups.

## **Step 3: Finish the Professional Development Requirements**

Please list the course (subject area) and dates in which this activity was implemented.

Course Subject:

Date the Self-Change Power Project was introduced:

Date/s of the student check-in for the Self-Change Power Project (for example: a discussion or reflection on the Self-Change Power Project):

Date of completion for the Self-Change Power Project:

***Send all materials (make sure your name is on all of them) via email to TSI-PD*** ***theedinst@txstate.edu******. This includes the Reflection Form, and any “teaching artifacts” like links to websites, worksheets, and/or student work that is applicable to the professional development activity. Please remove students' names from any submitted artifacts and follow FERPA guidelines. Please feel free to share any materials and student work that was developed by implementing this activity in your classroom.***

There are resources listed on this page, should you want to learn more about contextualization. You can also visit our [References for Developmental Education and Learning Assistance](http://depco.wp.txstate.edu/references-for-developmental-education-and-learning-assistance/) page for additional articles and resources.

## **Resources**

Audant, A. B. (2016). Stackable credentials and career/college pathways in culinary arts at Kingsborough Community College, CUNY. *Community College Journal of Research & Practice, 40*(4), 299-309. doi: 10.1080/10668926.2015.1056918

Cummins, P. A. (2015). The role of community colleges in career transitions for older workers. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 39*(3), 265-279. doi: 10.1080/10668926.2013.843144

Perin, D. (2011). Facilitating student learning through contextualization: A review of evidence. *Community College Review, 39*(3), 268-295. doi: 10.1177/0091552111416227

Sellers, D., Dochen, C., & Hodges, R. (2015). *Academic transformation: The road to college success*. Boston: Pearson.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2016). Accelerate Texas. Retrieved from <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=896FFFBE-FD7B-786E-FC7B9F8F4EC245AE>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2009). Texas College and Career Readiness Standards. Retrieved from <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/collegereadiness/crs.pdf>