### What’s Standing in Your Way?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/Class Goal</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
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<tr>
<td>This activity is an example of a needs assessment that will help learners' articulate issues that might be barriers and supports to their persistence in the program.</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome (lesson objective)</th>
<th>Standard</th>
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<tr>
<td>Learners will prioritize two forces that hinder and/or help them to achieve their goals.</td>
<td>Solve Problems and Make Decisions</td>
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<tr>
<th>COPS</th>
<th>Activity Addresses Components of Performance</th>
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<td>Anticipate or identify problems</td>
<td>Individual class members choose 2 forces from an original brainstorming list and then work through a consensus process to determine the most important or common issues for the class to explore.</td>
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<td>Use information from diverse sources to arrive at a clearer understanding of the problem and its root causes</td>
<td>Sharing of a diversity of experiences from peers and other sources as well as brainstorming a list and sharing personal experiences.</td>
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<td>Generate alternative solutions</td>
<td>Build consensus as group works together to choose forces.</td>
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<td>Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of alternatives, including potential risks and benefits and short- and long-term consequences</td>
<td>Determine steps to be taken to address each concern. Work with peers and teacher to find resources to help generate solutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Select alternative that is most appropriate to goal, context, and available resources</td>
<td>Judge the value of attending class by rating importance of each concern.</td>
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<td>Establish criteria for evaluating effectiveness of solution or decision</td>
<td>Identify barrier as opposed to excuse for class attendance and determine means to make necessary changes.</td>
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<th>Materials</th>
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<tr>
<td>What’s Standing in My Way? Handout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chart paper/markers</td>
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<tr>
<td>What’s Standing in Your Way Learning Objects</td>
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<th>Learner Prior Knowledge</th>
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<tr>
<td>There are many problem-solving methods, and this standard is just one of them. The problem for most people is that they do not use one process to solve problems and issues or to make decisions. Another problem is that people aren’t consistent in how they solve problems. Discuss the steps of the Standard with students, asking which ones they use and which steps seem unfamiliar.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Instructional Activities</th>
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<td>Step 1 - Ask learners to think about what it takes for them to continue to pursue their educational goals. Write &quot;Pursuing Educational Goals&quot; at the top of a large sheet of paper you have posted on the wall. Then, draw a vertical line down the middle of the paper, and write a plus sign (+) over the left-hand column and a minus sign (-) over the right-hand column. Ask the learners to brainstorm all of the things that make it hard for them to stay in the program and continue to pursue their educational goals. As they brainstorm forces, write them, one by one, on the right side of the paper under the minus sign. Use the question: Who or what gets in the way of (hinders you from) continuing to come to this program? Then ask the learners to brainstorm all of the things that help them to attend class or to continue to pursue their educational goals. Write these on the left side of the paper, under the plus sign. Use the question: Who or what helps you (supports you) to continue to stay in this program? Ask learners to look at the lists and talk about what they see. For example, are there more negative or positive forces? Where do the forces come from (class, family, work, etc.)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Note Try to tackle one problem at a time. Work with students to gain consensus, but don't force it.</td>
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<td>Step 2 - Using the handout What’s Standing in My Way? ask learners to write down the answer to the question: What two forces from the list or from personal experience do you most want us to work on in class? Point out that they can take their forces either from the positive list (forces they would want to work on strengthening/increasing), or from the negative list (forces they would want to work on weakening/decreasing), or a combination of the two. Have the learners get into pairs and discuss the</td>
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forces they have written down. They must reduce the number of forces from four (two each) to two – the two forces that are most important to work on in class. One person in each pair should write their new list of two forces on a piece of paper.

Step 3 - Have sets of pairs join to form small groups of four. Each pair shares its list of two items with the other pair in their group. The group of four now has several minutes to come up with a new list of two forces on which all four agree. One of them should write their new list of two forces, which represents their consensus on a large piece of paper and post the paper on the wall. Have the class look at the papers for similarities: Are there any forces that appear on all the lists? If so, write them on a fresh piece of paper. These represent the consensus of the class. Continue looking for forces that appear on more than one list until all the forces listed on more than one sheet are on the fresh, consensus list. Are there any other items still remaining on the original list that are important enough to include on the fresh list? When completed, this list represents all the forces the class wants to work on in the coming semester.

Step 4 - If there are more than two forces, have learners vote for the two forces they see as the highest priority. Voting can be done with sticky dots put next to their priorities, or any other means of voting. The next step is to brainstorm with the class the various ways in which you can work together as a class to address these forces by strengthening the positive and weakening the negative. Students can do a think-pair-share about possible solutions. They could list them, prioritize them, note which needs more information (e.g., if transportation is a challenge, might need mass transit information), make plans to get the information, etc. Students could write in their journals about the problem and steps in the solution.

**Assessment/Evidence (based on outcome)**

*What's Standing in My Way? Handout*
Two forces chosen by consensus by group
Teacher observation.

**Teacher Reflection/Lesson Evaluation**

*Not yet completed.*

**Next Steps**

Use these issues or concerns as the context for real-life learning activities. What's Standing in Your Way Learning Objects will give students additional practice in critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills.

**Technology Integration**

Problem Solving Modules [http://literacy.kent.edu/salt_fork/](http://literacy.kent.edu/salt_fork/)

**Purposeful/Transparent**

Students and teacher work together to build awareness of possible roadblocks to class participation or persistence.

**Contextual**

This [Force-Field Analysis](http://literacy.kent.edu/salt_fork/) provides a method for students to use when solving problems in their daily lives or as a class.

**Building Expertise**

Problem solving skills must continually be honed to increase skill application and successful achievement of goals.
What forces from the list or from personal experience do you most want to work on?
1.
2.

Choose one
1.

What do you already know about this concern?

How can you use what you know to make sure your attendance remains a priority while attending ABLE?

What steps will you take to address this concern? Work with your teacher to find some resources to help you generate solutions.

The next step is to brainstorm with the class the various ways in which you can work together as a class to address these forces by strengthening the positive and weakening the negative.

What's Standing in My Way? Handout
Critical Thinking Skills for Decision Making
Author: Therese Nemec
School: Fox Valley Technical College Date: 9/11/2007
Description: Learners follow a five-step process for using critical thinking. In matching exercises, they identify barriers to critical thinking. They may also submit reflections on their own critical thinking skills.
http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/index_tj.asp?objID=CCS3507

Barriers to Critical Thinking: Basic Human Limitations
Author: Therese Nemec
School: Fox Valley Technical College Date: 11/8/2007
Description: Learners examine seven basic human limitations that prevent people from seeing or understanding the world with total clarity. In an interactive exercise, learners identify ways to overcome those barriers to critical thinking.
http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/index_tj.asp?objID=CCS2707

Barriers to Critical Thinking: Faulty Logic or Perception
Author: Therese Nemec
School: Fox Valley Technical College Date: 10/10/2007
Description: Learners examine eight different kinds of faulty logic or perception that interfere with critical thinking. They are superstition, ignorance, clustering illusion, false analogies, gambler’s fallacy, irrelevant comparisons, post hoc fallacy, and slippery slope fallacy. In an interactive exercise, learners identify ways to overcome these barriers.
http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/index_tj.asp?objID=CCS2807

Barriers to Critical Thinking: Psychological and Sociological Pitfalls
Author: Therese Nemec
School: Fox Valley Technical College Date: 11/8/2007
Description: Learners examine the psychological and sociological barriers that interfere with clear communication. They select examples of ad hominem fallacy, bandwagon fallacy, emotional appeals, red herrings, irrelevant appeals to authority, suggestibility and conformity, “poisoning the well”, and “shoehorning.” In an interactive exercise, learners identify ways to overcome these barriers.
http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/index_tj.asp?objID=CCS2907


Barriers to Critical Thinking: Use of Language
Author: Therese Nemec
School: Fox Valley Technical College Date: 11/8/2007
Description: Learners examine how language can interfere with clear communication. They select examples of ambiguity, assuring expressions, doublespeak euphemisms, jargon, emotive content, false implications, meaningless comparisons, and vagueness. In an interactive exercise, learners identify ways to overcome these barriers.
http://www.wisc-online.com(objects/index_tj.asp?objID=CCS3007

Problem Solving and Decision Making
Author: Robin Rathsack
School: Fox Valley Technical College Date: 12/21/2001
Description: Learners will list three decisions they have made and the methods they used when making their decisions.
http://www.wisc-online.com(objects/index_tj.asp?objID=PHR2701

Problem Solving with SWOT
Author: Rosie Bunnow
School: Fox Valley Technical College Date: 11/24/2008
Description: Learners create and analyze a SWOT diagram showing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for their work or personal lives.
http://www.wisc-online.com(objects/index_tj.asp?objID=CCS6108