



Childhood Education
International™



CENTER FOR
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Asset-based Pedagogies for Quality Holistic Learning

Educator has effective methods to get to know students' assets (strengths) and can incorporate students' strengths, interests, and goals into the curriculum.

Competency Info

Multilingual Guidance

Des cours pédagogiques axés sur les compétences pour un apprentissage global de qualité

<https://digitalpromise.box.com/s/6bvyh5nptv70nbhi03wmz0zue8zsbnucl>

أسس علم التربيّة القائمة على تعزيز نقاط القوة لتعلم شامل عالي الجودة

<https://digitalpromise.box.com/s/w21rzkhvukgh8m6512eigaaxjcw7n2qxl>

Key Method

The educator completes a knowledge inventory for at least 6–8 students to learn about the students' (and also, ideally, their families') assets. The educator will explain

how their emerging knowledge of students' assets informs their teaching practice, and will cite specific examples to demonstrate their competency in this area.

Method Components

Getting to know one's students is essential to designing and implementing a curriculum that is meaningful, relevant, and culturally responsive to each student, thus ensuring quality holistic learning. There can be a tendency to focus on students' needs and challenges, also called a deficit-based pedagogy. Asset-based pedagogies, in contrast, focus as much or more on students' strengths, interests, and funds of knowledge. Educators can design lesson objectives, activities, and assessments with their students' assets in mind.

Core Components of implementing asset-based pedagogies

The following components can support the asset-based approach when designing learning activities with students' assets in mind.

Note: These are the required steps you must take with your students and in your classroom for completing Part 2 of this micro-credential: "Work Examples/Artifacts". A description of what to submit is included in that section (for Part 2). In addition to these steps for your work examples/artifacts, you must also include written components for Parts 1 and 3.

1. Identify students from different cultural backgrounds

The educator identifies **6–8** students of diverse cultural backgrounds.

- The group of selected students should be culturally, linguistically, and gender diverse, with different migration stories, including some of refugee and/or displacement backgrounds. (Ideally, there is a gender balance in the group and at least half of the students come from a different cultural background than the educator.) Diversity allows the educator to learn about students from different perspectives and to try different strategies for getting to know students based on their cultural/social norms and personal communication preferences.

2. Use Funds of Knowledge Inventory

Educator uses the Funds of Knowledge Inventory provided or creates a student knowledge survey that fits their teaching and learning context, to learn about the strengths and interests of the selected students and, ideally, their families.

- Learners from refugee and other displaced contexts enter classrooms at all times of the year. By creating or adapting a specific tool to get to know students, educators build a *consistent* strategy for learning about students' assets regardless of when they join the learning space.

- The inventory should ask about learners' strengths in and out of the classroom, their academic and non-academic interests, and their goals for the future.
 - The inventory can be conducted in the school's primary language or the student's preferred language, depending on available resources and the student's linguistic abilities. It can be conducted orally or in writing, depending on the student's relationship with the interviewer and their literacy skills.
 - The inventory should be conducted with individual students to minimize peer influence on student responses.
- 3. Develop lesson objectives, activities, or assessments**
- Educator begins to build on the strengths and interests identified in the (Funds of) Knowledge Inventory to develop lesson objectives, activities and/or assessments that draw upon their students' strengths and assets.
- Not all lessons may reflect students' strengths, interests, and goals, but when possible, small changes to a lesson—the inclusion of a student's name in a math problem, the opportunity for a student to be the teacher, conscientious group formations that create opportunities for students to "shine", giving students choice, and so on—can make a big impact on student learning. Students who see themselves reflected in the curriculum are more likely to pay attention, engage in more cognitively rigorous tasks, and find meaning in the lesson objectives.

Supporting Research and Rationale

Supporting Rationale

Unlike a deficit-based approach, asset-based pedagogies focus on and build upon students' strengths. Institutions, educators, and students are valued for what they bring to the learning experience as opposed to what they lack ([Lopez & Louis, 2009](#)). Lived experiences and cultural assets of individual communities are valued contributions to education. Students are able to assimilate new information with prior knowledge in a way that is personally relevant and meaningful. Unlike deficit approaches to teaching and learning, asset-based pedagogies use strengths to help learners build confidence, which in turn encourages the risk-taking and pursuit of challenges necessary for higher achievement.

Supporting Research

- Glasgow Centre for Population Health. (2012). [Putting asset based approaches into practice: identification, mobilisation and measurement of assets.](#)
- He, Y., Bettez, S. C., & Levin, B. B. (2015). [Imagined community of education: Voices from refugees and immigrants.](#) *Urban Education* 52(8), Article 2.
In this article, authors engaged community members about their educational experiences, including supports, challenges, and aspirations. Analysis used asset-based framework to highlight the cultural wealth of the community and more.
- Renkly, S., and Bertolini, K. (2018). [Shifting the paradigm from deficit oriented schools to asset based models: Why leaders need to promote an asset orientation in our schools.](#) *Empowering Research for Educators* 2(1), Article 4.
- Scott, D. L., et al. (2020). [Building on strengths to address challenges: An asset-based approach to planning and implementing a community partnership school.](#) *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 24(2), 69.
- Shapiro, S., & Montero, M. (n.d.). [Deficit vs asset discourse in discussions of refugee-background students.](#)
- Shawna, S., & MacDonald, M. T. (2017). [From deficit to asset: Locating discursive resistance in a refugee-background student's written and oral narrative.](#) *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, DOI: 10.1080/15348458.2016.1277725
- Gerstein, J. (2016). [Approaching marginalized populations from an asset rather than a deficit model of education.](#) User Generated Education.
- Lopez, S. & Louis, M. (2009). [The principles of strengths-based education.](#) *Journal of College and Character*, 10(4).
- Murray-Orr, A. & Mitton, J. (2023). [Learning routines that reflect teachers' asset-based pedagogies: Creating breathing spaces for students.](#) *Cogent Education*, 10(1). DOI: 10.1080/2331186X.2023.2197664

Resources

Asset-Based Approaches/Pedagogies & Developing Lessons

- [Hazira, R. "Refugees Want Empowerment, Not Handouts".](#) (TED Talk – video)
- Dhungel, Om. (2020). [ABCD in action: Strength based approach to refugee settlement.](#)
- Di Michele Lalor, A. (2020). [3 steps to developing an asset-based approach to teaching.](#)
- Alvarez-Ortiz, L., Haynes, J., & Zacarian, D. (2020). [Meeting student trauma with an asset-based approach.](#)

- [Comparison between asset and deficit based approaches.](#)
- Dryden-Peterson, S., Chopra, V., Talhouk, J., & Geha, C. (2021). We see you: What Syrian students wish their teachers knew. Refugee REACH Initiative, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, USA.
 - [Link](#) (includes link to video and versions in Arabic and English):
 - [PDF](#)
- Institute of Education Sciences. (n.d.) [What is culturally sustaining pedagogy?](#) [Infographic]. Regional Educational Laboratory Program. Retrieved December 11, 2023
- Di Michele Lalor, A. (2020, October 22). [3 steps to developing an assets-based approach to teaching.](#) Edutopia.
- Milner, R. (2020). [Asset vs. deficit.](#) [video] MIT Teaching Systems Lab.
- Oakland International High School Learning Lab. (2020). [OIHS Learning Walks](#) [video].

Funds of Knowledge: Identifying strengths — in yourself and in your students

Funds of Knowledge Inventories

- Bank Street College (this inventory is also offered as an example in the Asset-Based Pedagogies online course):
 - [Link](#)
 - [PDF](#)
- Washington State Department of Education:
 - [Link](#)
 - [PDF](#)
- Inventory written as interview questions:
 - [Link](#)
 - [PDF](#)

Others

- Omakada, D. K. (2015). [Community funds of knowledge in enhancing curriculum instruction in early childhood development centres in central division,](#) Turkana county Kenya.
- [Funds of Knowledge Theoretical Model](#) (video).
- Lindahl, K. (2015). [Tap into funds of knowledge.](#)
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). [Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms.](#) *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132–141.
- [Tapping into community funds of knowledge](#)

The following resources may be helpful templates for getting to know students who are learning your/a new language. While these resources are written for English Language Learners (ELLs), the approach behind them is relevant for other teaching and learning contexts in which a language difference may present a challenge in getting to know students' strengths and interests.

- [Getting to Know Your ELLs: Six Steps for Success](#)
- [Connecting with ELL Families: Strategies for Success](#)

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing evaluation in Part 1 and Part 3. For part 2, you will need to earn a "Proficient" score for ALL criteria.

Part 1. Overview

(300-word limit)

Provide a brief but detailed description of yourself as an educator, paying particular attention to your work with refugee, displaced, or migrant students (as well as other vulnerable populations, if applicable). Please answer the following questions to help paint a clear picture for the assessor.

- How long have you been living and teaching in your local context?
- In what ways do you work with refugee, displaced, or migrant students and/or other vulnerable populations now? What other experiences have you had working with students of these backgrounds?
- Describe your student population. Include information about how many students are in your class(es), where they are from, what language(s) they speak, the gender breakdown of your class(es), and any other information you think is relevant to painting a clear picture of your student population for the assessor.
- **Passing:** Educator clearly describes their teaching and learning context and their students, with rich contextual detail. The educator highlights how they work with refugee, displaced, or migrant students (as well as other vulnerable populations if applicable).

(200-word limit)

What strengths do you bring to the role of educator for refugee, displaced, or migrant students (or other vulnerable populations, if applicable)?



- Consider your content knowledge, linguistic skills, interpersonal skills, life experiences, and any other strategies and skills you may have for connecting with and teaching students of refugee, displaced, or migrant backgrounds and/or other vulnerable populations.
 - You might consider using one of the Funds of Knowledge inventories presented in the Resources section as a guide.

- **Passing:** Educator describes their own strengths in relation to their work as an educator with rich contextual detail. The educator highlights how their strengths help them to connect with and teach refugee, displaced, or migrant students (as well as other vulnerable populations if applicable).

Part 2. Work Examples / Artifacts

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following two artifacts for review.

1. (Funds of) Knowledge Inventory for 6–8 students:

Directions:

Use or adapt one of the Funds of Knowledge Inventories included in the Resources section or create a new tool (and include this in your submission) to get to know the strengths, interests, and goals of 6–8 students and, ideally, their families.

- Of the 6–8 students, at least half (3–4) should come from a different cultural background than you. As much as possible, try to have a gender-balanced group of students who have different cultural backgrounds, speak different languages, and have different migration stories.

You must submit:

1. An explanation of how you collected information about your students. You may attach an inventory or describe how you interviewed them, etc.
2. Demographic information for your 6-8 students that shows they are a diverse group (see bullet point above).
3. Responses from your 6-8 students. These can be summaries, transcripts, or charts if you used an inventory provided.

Notes:

- Try to spend time with each student individually. In this way, they have a chance to share their story, strengths, interests, and goals with you without the influence of hearing the answers from others. As you interview and observe students, take care to be sensitive in asking about their life experiences, especially as it relates to traumatic events. If a student does not seem comfortable sharing details about their life, please do not push them to do so. You may still be able to learn about their talents and interests without knowing a lot about their background story.
- Remember to protect and respect the privacy of all students, whether for this micro-credential or in any context where sharing information about students may arise. For this micro-credential specifically, please keep all information anonymous (no names). Initials or changed names are both acceptable.

2. A written explanation or video describing how you used/are using your emerging knowledge of students' assets in your teaching and learning context:

Directions: design or adapt a lesson (or lessons) that incorporate your students' interests, strengths, and goals.

You must submit: a one-page (300–500 words) essay or short video (3–5 minutes) describing how your lessons are beginning to reflect your growing knowledge of your students' assets.

Notes:

- Consider these questions as you explain what you did to include your students' assets in your teaching. Do not simply answer yes or no for the questions below. Rather, your explanation should describe clear examples of what you did in your lesson plan and lesson delivery to demonstrate your developing competency in asset-based pedagogies.
 - Were you able to create space for students to showcase their talents as part of a lesson?
 - Did you revise or reformulate any lesson objectives to connect with student interests and/or aspirations?
 - Were you able to involve any family members as "experts" or leaders in some way after learning about their strengths?
 - Did you adapt any lesson activities or assessments to reflect student interests or strengths?
 - Where did you change a lesson because of something you learned about students' assets?
- While you do not need to specify how every student you interviewed is now reflected in every lesson, your explanation should be clear. You should draw connections between students' unique talents, interests, and/or goals and your lesson objectives, activities, and/or assessments.
- As you provide examples, please do not use students' names, but refer to them as you did in your Funds of Knowledge Inventory (with initials or changed names).
- Use your own words. If you include information or ideas from another person, please give them credit. If you use their exact words, please put these words in quotation marks as well as giving them credit.

Criteria	Proficient	Almost	Not Yet	Missing
Knowledge Inventory: Depth of information gathered	Educator learned about 6–8 students’ strengths, interests, and goals. Ideally, educator also learned about some assets that students’ families bring to the learning community.	Educator is beginning to learn about their students’ assets, but could do more to learn about their strengths, interests, and goals that are “below the surface”. OR: Educator was able to learn about 3–5 students in depth.	Educator learned about 1–2 students.	Educator has not included information about individual students.
Knowledge Inventory: Group demographics	Educators chose students who reflect cultural, gender, and linguistic diversity. They have different migration stories. If a diverse group was not possible in one or more of these areas, the explanation shared why with good reason.	Educator chose students who are diverse in some ways related to culture, gender, language, or migration story, but they are homogenous in other ways.	Educator chose students who come from similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds and/or they are all the same gender (without explanation for the homogeneity). OR: All of the students share the educator’s culture.	Educator did not share information about student demographics.
Explanation of how educator incorporated students’ assets in their teaching.	Educator’s essay or video includes clear and specific examples of how they incorporated knowledge of multiple students’ strengths and interests into lessons. Examples may come from adaptations to existing lesson objectives,	Educator’s essay or video includes a clear and specific example of how they incorporated new knowledge of at least one student’s strengths and interests into the lessons. OR: Educator has multiple examples, but it	The essay does not include examples of incorporating knowledge of students’ strengths and interests into lessons.	Educator did not include an explanation of how they incorporated new knowledge of their student(s) into their lessons.



	<p>activities, or assessments. OR: The educator may have created entirely new lesson components. The key is that the narrative shows where and how the educator is teaching differently because of what they learned about their students' assets.</p>	<p>is not clear how the aspects of the lesson reflect students' strengths and interests.</p>		
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Part 3. Reflection

(500-word limit or 5-min max. audio/video recording)

Reflect on your experience implementing a Funds of Knowledge Inventory and submitting a narrative essay that describes how your teaching uses an asset-based approach. Be sure to address the following:

- What did you learn from this process in general and, more specifically, about how to adapt or create lessons to reflect the strengths and interests of your students and their families?
- When considering asset-based pedagogies, what do you find challenging, and how will you continue to grow?
- Why does competency in this area matter, specifically in the context of teaching students of refugee and migrant backgrounds?
- How might your efforts to learn and practice asset-based pedagogies impact your future work as a refugee educator?
- **Passing:** Reflections clearly connect theory to practice. Educator critically addresses their experience learning about and incorporating students' strengths and interests in their lessons. Educator reflects on their own strengths and learning in this process, and considers how learning about asset-based pedagogies will impact their future teaching.