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ABSTRACT

This collection of techniques used in adult English-as-a-Second-Language instruction consists of practices that complement or supplement regular instruction. These techniques have been contributed by classroom teachers, and are categorized by language proficiency level (beginning, intermediate, and advanced). The activities focus on: vocabulary development; introductory map reading; time cards and paychecks; sentence structure (a card game); signs and insignia; using 20 questions to identify famous people; family relationships; role playing; development of a system for keeping in contact with the students; cooperative learning; communicating personal information; shopping; repeating requests to communicate comprehension; competency-based instruction; understanding bumper stickers; listening skills; peer tutoring; employer-employee dialogues; current events; literature appreciation; proverbs; substantiating opinions; storytelling; and reading the want ads. Each activity is described and its contributor's name and address are presented. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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PRACTICES USED IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
CLASSES FOR ADULTS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF ADULT EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

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JULY 1988

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INTRODUCTION

Because we have received a number of requests from teachers asking for information on practices used in adult English as a second language classes, we have asked ESL teachers to share some of their practices with us. For our purposes, the term "practices" refers to lessons, teaching devices, games or instructions for limited English proficient adult students to help them acquire English language skills.

The practices described usually complement or supplement instruction in adult ESL classes and have been grouped according to levels: beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Some of the practices cover more than one level. Several of the topics for intermediate and advanced levels can be adapted for the beginning level. These practices are not intended to be exhaustive, but do represent the creativity of ESL teachers across the nation. If there are practices that you would like to add to this list, please send them to me.

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TOPIC : Vocabulary Development
LEVEL(s) : Beginning
PRACTICE : Have students cut pictures out of magazines and newspapers. All pictures should be labeled and most can be categorized. The pictures can be used as flash cards, alphabet books, dictionaries, posters, shopping wish list, and games. Some suggestions for topics on ways to use the pictures include: clothing, colors, foods, holidays, and occupations.

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TOPIC : Understanding the Community
Introduction to Map Reading
LEVEL(s) : Beginning
PRACTICE : Have students familiarize themselves with each other's towns or cities of residence. Then reinforce this by taking the class on a trip from which all or most of the students' towns are visible. As a follow-up, the teacher presents a simplified "neighborhood" map of those town and city sessions already practiced. Students can use the map to talk about where they live in relation to their classmates.

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TOPIC : Using Time Cards and Paychecks In The
ESL Class

LEVEL(s) : Beginning

PRACTICE : Everyday when students arrive, they fill out a simplified time card with the day's date, time of arrival, time of departure, and the total number of hours they will spend in class. After three weeks, time cards are collected to determine the total number of hours each student spent in class. Then, "gross pay" is calculated. To create more variation in the amount of payment, students receive an hourly rate of \$8. The next day, each student is presented with his or her paycheck and a blank deposit slip. Students are given an enlarged xeroxed copy of a savings account passbook page with their own account number on it. The students fill out the deposit slip using the account number, endorse the check and deposit it into their savings account. (All of the passbooks are kept by the teacher and returned at the end of the semester.) The students are paid with play money once every two or three weeks so that over the course of the semester, they review the skill five to eight times. Eventually, when there is enough money, redeposit it using the lines for currency and coin on the deposit slip.

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TOPIC : Make A Sentence: A Card Game

LEVEL(s) : Beginning

PRACTICE : Give each student an envelope containing three words: MY NAME IS and two blank pieces of paper so that the students can write their first and last names. Ask the students to spread the words out in front of them. Dictate the sentence, "My name is _____." Students are asked to arrange their words to make the sentence. After the students have mastered that sentence, give them two new words. Add more words as the students' vocabularies increase. Do not forget to include punctuation marks. Practice new sentences until students can make five or six sentences.

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* * * * *

TOPIC : Environmental Print

LEVEL(s) : Beginning

PRACTICE : First, look around the classroom and identify no smoking signs, light switch signs, directions for what to do in the event of fire, brand name on pencils, as well as slogans on T-shirts and sweatshirts. After the items of environmental print have been identified, list them on the board or display them on an overhead projector. Second, leave the room, either as a group or in pairs. Walk through a couple of streets noting (by writing) everything there is to read on the street (license plates, bumper stickers, automobile insignia, tire insignia, no parking sign, bus stops). If there are stores, note their names; on store doors note the VISTA and Master Charge logos, the hours the store is open, etc. What else can you do? Categorize the examples. Have students make one 3x5 card for each example. Making the cards requires them to translate their notes into readable examples. They probably will confer with each other to make sure that their spelling and capitalization are accurate.

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TOPIC : 20 Questions
LEVEL(s) : Beginning
PRACTICE : Prior to class, the teacher writes the names of famous people on slips of paper and folds each several times.

In class, review yes and no questions such as "Is it a man?" "Yes, it is." "Is he an American?" "No, he isn't." "Is he a scientist?" Supply any new vocabulary they may need such as occupations (like politician).

A student chooses a slip of paper and reads it silently. (The teacher may go first to demonstrate.)

The other students ask questions and the student may only answer using yes and no short answers. The teacher keeps track of the number of "no" responses on the board. If the number exceeds 20 before the students can guess who the person is, the class loses that round.

Students may try to guess the person's name at any time. Whoever guesses correctly gets to choose the next name.

For fun, throw in one name that is not a person, such as E.T. If some of the students are not familiar with a famous person, those who are can help explain who that person is and why he or she is famous.

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TOPIC : Living Family Tree (Family Relationships)

LEVEL(s) : Beginning

PRACTICE : Give a strip of paper with a family member name on it to each student in the class (i.e. father, cousin, niece). In case you do not have enough men in the class, bring neckties to change the women instantly into men. Start with the mother, father, brothers and sisters (who are also uncles and aunts). The husband and his side of the family are given blue strips and the wife's side are given yellow strips. The grandparents stand in the back of the group on both sides. In front of the original parents stand the children, who are also cousins, nephews, and nieces. They all get green strips. The class ends up standing at the front of the room and the teacher is facing them. Then the teacher asks the parents, "who is your daughter?" ("Mary is my daughter.") or "who is Mary?" ("She is my daughter.")

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TOPIC : Strategies To Integrate Drama Into The ESL Lesson Plan

LEVEL(s) : Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced

PRACTICE : Some steps that one can take to conduct a sociodrama in the ESL classroom are to (1) introduce vocabulary, (2) present the dilemma or problem, (3) discuss the situation, (4) state why the conflict is not being resolved, (5) enact the situation, (6) discuss the enactment, (7) select new players, (8) re-enact the dilemma, (9) summarize and assign follow-up activities. Role playing, charades, dialogues, cartoon enactments, simulations, and improvisations are some strategies that can be used to create drama in teaching and learning situations for limited English proficient adults.

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TOPIC : Student Contact System

LEVEL(s) : Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced

PRACTICE : Adults who are interested in the ESL program attend an advising session. At this advising session, a student master file is started. When a student does not report to the first class session, he is contacted by telephone to find out why. If a student misses three consecutive class sessions, another follow-up telephone call is conducted. Once the student has completed the instructional program, he or she is recorded as a program completer. Where appropriate, students are referred to other educational or training programs. On the other hand, if a student does not complete the program, he or she is contacted after two to four months to see if he or she wants to re-enter the program or if the student has entered another program.

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TOPIC : Cooperative Learning

LEVEL(s) : Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced

PRACTICE : Cooperative Learning provides a classroom model, where students work together in learning teams to master academic content and develop interpersonal skills. Key components of Cooperative learning are:

- (1) the structuring of heterogeneous groups so that students of different backgrounds, abilities, and languages are brought together to work.
- (2) the creation of positive interdependence which requires students to work towards a common goal.
- (3) the ensuring of individual accountability by requiring individual responsibility for some part of the task.
- (4) the implicit and explicit teaching of interpersonal skills requiring students to develop specific skills for successful interaction.

In an ESL classroom that follows a Cooperative Learning model, students are divided into teams of mixed-language ability and mixed-ethnic background. By carefully structuring team tasks, each team member is interdependent and accountable to other team members. Tasks that require each member of the team to: (a) help others understand the content (peer-tutoring), (b) be responsible for one section of the content and teach others that content (jigsaw) and, (c) work together to achieve one goal (cooperative products).

Promote the idea that I succeed only if you succeed too! By working in cooperative groups, ESL students have the opportunity to increase the amount and variety of language practice, become more self-confident of their abilities, and become more accepting of each other and of individual differences.

Cooperative Learning has received much attention at all levels of English as a second language instruction because of its potential for enhancing a greater student communicative and cross-cultural interaction.

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TOPIC : ESL Techniques Modules

LEVEL(s) : Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced

PRACTICE : The ESL Teacher Institute is a skill based training program for teachers of English to speakers of other languages. Training components are divided into two categories: competency-based classroom management and ESL techniques. Focused listening, Speaking: Early Production, Speaking: Dialogues, Speaking: Information Gap, Speaking: Role Play, and Speaking: Problem Solving are ESL technique modules that are available from the ESL Teacher Institute.

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TOPIC : Personal Information

LEVEL(s) : Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced

PRACTICE : Fold 12 blank sheets of paper lengthwise. Inside each sheet, write a question for personal information (i.e How old are you?). On the outside flap write a number, and post them around the classroom. Do not post them in numerical order. After practicing the questions and answers with the class, pass out the other paper. Tell the students to number their papers from 1 to 12. Explain to the class that they must walk around the room, lift the flap to each questions and write a corresponding answer on their papers. As the students finish answering the questions, have them to compare their answers with other students. Then have the students try to recall the questions by looking at their answers. When all the students are finished, group them into units of four. Pass out newsprint, felt pens, and masking tape to each group. Tell the students that they need to make a personal information chart. You may wish to model the chart for them.

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TOPIC : Let's Buy It - A Team Game
LEVEL(s) : Beginning, Intermediate or Advanced
PRACTICE : Divide the class into teams. Each team should have (1) sale circulars, (2) a specified amount of money, (3) order blanks, and (4) a list of items to be purchased written on the blackboards, e.g., something for the kitchen, something to wear, etc. Each team must buy the required items, fill in the order blank, and spend the given dollar amount.

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TOPIC : Helping Students Provide Feedback
LEVEL(s) : Beginning, Intermediate or Advanced
PRACTICE : Write a message or direction on 3x5 cards. For example, "Please turn off all the lights except the one in the hall." Have the student play the part of the employee. After the message or direction is presented, the student has to provide feedback by repeating just enough of the message to indicate understanding. A short phrase or one or two words is sufficient. Students can work in pairs, changing parts. The messages and directions can be made more complex or simplified depending on class level.

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TOPIC : Competency Based ESL

LEVEL(S) : Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced

PRACTICE : A competency-based education program is made up of the life skills needed by an individual to function in the world outside the classroom. A competency based language program focuses on the linguistic and communication skills needed by the individual to master those life skills. In this curriculum, general competencies, performance objectives, functions and structures are combined to promote mastery.

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TOPIC : Cultural Information Basic Bumpers

LEVEL(s) : Intermediate or Advanced

PRACTICE : Introduce the subject with a drawing or a photograph of a car with a simple, commonly seen bumper sticker or window decal. For example, in the Washington, D.C. area, most of the students understands a reference to the Redskins. Ask your students what they can tell about the driver of the car. They should be able to tell that the driver likes football and, in particular, the Redskins team. You may wish to ask them to bring in bumper stickers for the class. Be prepared to supply bumper stickers if students come in empty-handed. Write all of the contributions on the board, elicit their ideas, and elaborate if necessary.

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- TOPIC** : Cartoon Memory Game
- LEVEL(s)** : Low Intermediate and Advanced
- PRACTICE** : Take cartoons and paste the cartoons and text on separate 3x5 cards. Make a minimum of 12 sets, each containing one card with the picture and one with the matching text. Keep the picture cards and the text cards in separate groups face down.

Divide the students into two teams or more. A student on the first team turns a card in the group with the pictures. The student then has to describe and talk about the pictures. The student then goes on and turns a text card from the other group. He or she has to read the text aloud and confer with his or her teammates and determine if the text matches the picture. If it matches, that student has to explain why it is a match. Then the student removes the two cards and holds on to them until the end of the game when the team with the highest number of matches wins. If the text does not match the picture, the student has to say why it is not a match and then put both cards in their original places, face down. It is now up to all of the players to try to remember what was on each card so they can match them with the other cards later on.

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TOPIC : Listening Stories

LEVEL(s) : Intermediate or Advanced (Adaptable for Beginning)

PRACTICE : o Talk about questions used to find important facts or write a story -- who, what, when, where, why.

o Read a story out aloud at a normal conversational pace while students listen. Do not allow them to take notes.

o Repeat the story once. Then have students write answers to the questions.

o Ask students for their answers. If students do not agree, read the story again.

o Give students copies of the story and read it together.

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TOPIC : Cooperative Learning Readings: Peer Tutoring

LEVEL : Intermediate or Advanced

PRACTICE(s) : In this exercise, there are three phases: reading and planning, teaching, and reviewing. In the reading and planning phase, students are divided into groups. Each group is given an article to read. After students have read the article, they are instructed to jot down the main points of the article. When everyone has finished reading, the group discusses the main points in the article. A teacher is available to answer questions and check comprehension). Next, the teaching phase requires the teacher to reform the groups. Each student is responsible for teaching the rest of the group what he or she has learned from his or her article. In the reviewing phase, the teacher reviews the articles with the group.

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- TOPIC** : Using Socio-Drama With ESOL Students
- LEVEL(s)** : Intermediate or Advanced
- PRACTICE** : Have students imagine themselves in a situation, i.e. "Your ideal job." This may be prompted by an illustration, such as a wedding. Ask students which is the most interesting person in the picture.

Ask for volunteers to talk about their "fantasy."

As people describe their "fantasies," listen for someone who has a clear mental image of the situation.

Select that person and ask him or her to describe in more detail by: (a) describing the physical surroundings, (b) giving names to the people involved, (c) talking about specific things that they are doing, i.e., "I own a restaurant in the Dominican Republic." You may have to prompt by asking for details, i.e., "Where is the restaurant?" or "Who are your customers?"

Listen for other characters who might be introduced into the situation and ask the person to describe them. (Note areas of possible conflict. For example, a group of students at York College recently viewed a picture of a wedding. In the ensuing role play, students explored a possible conflict when the bride's mother wanted the newlyweds to live with her.) Ask other students in the class to take the role of the other characters. The drama develops from the conflict between the two characters.

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TOPIC : Employer and Employer Dialogs

LEVEL(s) : Intermediate or Advanced

PRACTICE : Explain to the class how the dialogs work. Decide who will be the employer and who will be the employee before strips of paper are given to students. Give out the strips of paper. Let the students discuss the situation and the possible conflicts. After the students have discussed the situation, have them write the dialog. Put two groups together (4 people). Have them exchange the dialog , reading each other the dialog first. Do they understand them? If not, why not? If something is good, tell the other group about it. The teacher checks the other group strips to see if the dialog resolves the given situation. Finally, the groups check their dialogs for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. At this point, dialogs are returned to their owners.

After the dialogs have been corrected by the teacher, have the students act out the situation before the class or read the dialog to the class.

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TOPIC : Current Events From Newspapers or News Magazines

LEVEL(s) : Advanced

PRACTICE : Ask the students to bring articles from a newspaper or news magazine that they think will be of interest to the class. Ask them to pick out vocabulary words to explain to the class if necessary. They should also prepare some questions to stimulate discussion of the article. (If you have a class with fluctuating attendance, you could select some articles yourself to bring to class.)

Select one or several articles. (You can use the others later). Have the students read the article silently. Have the student present needed vocabulary by writing words on the board with a definition.

Discuss the questions that either the student or you have prepared.

You can follow up by having them write a summary of the article, or their opinions about the topic. They could incorporate the same or all of the vocabulary.

Check their writing.

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TOPIC : Teaching the Classics

LEVEL(s) : Advanced

PRACTICE : This unit will take about two weeks. Every day, begin class with a mental warm-up (an activity aimed at preparing students for learning). During the first few days, background on the Renaissance is discussed, followed by facts on Shakespeare's life and works. Next, have students read and study several sonnets. Then, have students write their own sonnets and post them on a displayed red heart, either signed or anonymously.

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-16-

TOPIC : Proverbs; Substantiating Opinions;
Storytelling

LEVEL(s) : Advanced

- PRACTICE** :
- o Get six pictures (taken from magazines and newspapers) which could exemplify one or more of the proverbs chosen. For example: haste makes waste or no news is good news.
 - o Number the pictures from one to six and letter the proverbs A-F randomly.
 - o Present the pictures to the class one at a time. Pass them around the room. Encourage comments concentrating on vocabulary.
 - o Display the proverbs on the blackboard or on poster-board. Present them to the class one at a time.
 - o Give students 3-5 minutes to match each proverb to a picture on a one-to one-correspondence.
 - o Using one picture at a time, each student must tell the class which proverb he or she thinks best matches and give reasons for his or her choice.
 - o The other students decide if the choices are well-founded and discuss whether they agree or disagree.
 - o Follow the same procedure with the other pictures.

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TOPIC : Opinions

LEVEL(s) : Advanced

PRACTICE : State an issue such as "Should smoking be banned in public places?" Elicit and list the students' reasons for agreeing and disagreeing on the board. Discuss their reasons for agreement or disagreement ranging from grins to complete structures such as "I strongly disagree". State the issues surrounding the topic. Then, have students agree or disagree using those listed on the board. Go over the list on the board and put the responses in order of "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" Next, arrange the class into three or four groups. Have students write the responses to facilitate group discussion.

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TOPIC : Reading the Want Ads
LEVEL(s) : Advanced
PRACTICE : Hand out copies of the employment section of the classified ads.

Review pertinent vocabulary and abbreviations (i.e. FT, PT, exp.).

Discuss the way the different jobs are classified (i.e. technical, professional, clerical).

Ask students to choose an area that interests them and find a job in that particular area that they might apply for.

Then they are to tell the class about the job they have chosen and why. Also, talk about the important facts that were given in the ad.

A follow-up activity could be to have them work in pairs and role play a job interview situation for the job they are interested in.

Another follow-up activity could be to have them fill out job applications, making sure they understand all the necessary vocabulary.

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GLOSSARY

- Beginning ESL - Instruction designed for adults who have limited or no proficiency in the English language. Instructional emphasis is on listening and speaking.
- Intermediate ESL - Instruction designed for adults who have some competence communicating in English. Instruction in reading and writing is introduced along with continued emphasis on speaking and listening.
- Advanced ESL - Instruction designed for adults who are able to communicate in English but who need instruction in usage. At this level emphasis is placed on idioms, language for specific purposes, and grammatical structures. Reading and writing are integrated with speaking and listening.