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ABSTRACT

              This handbook is for volunteer tutors, student
interns, and VISTA volunteers working with adult basic education
(ABE) and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learners. The
community-based handbook contains information about adult literacy
and tutoring--what tutors do, who the learners are, and how the
literacy learning process works. Introductory pages describe the
Adult Academy of Rhode Island, its literacy programs, community-based
education, and an overview of literacy learners, ESL, and reading and
writing. The next section covers the following: a comparison of
traditional and learner-directed education models, an introduction to
problem solving in tutoring, an overview of learners' literacy and
educational needs, and suggestions for observing learners. A section
on getting started explains the rationale behind a learner-centered
approach to adult literacy learning, presents some basic teaching
tools, and provides activities and materials to use with specific
topics such as family housing, work, and transportation. Included
with this section is a sample curriculum and lesson plan. Specific
practices for ABE and ESL form the content of the next two sections,
followed by a discussion of tutors' roles and responsibilities. The
next section catalogues a wide range of approaches and activities:
audiotapes; bingo; cloze; dialogue journals; dyads; flashcards;
grids; interview/information grids; alphanumeric grids; hangman;
language experience approach; operations; pair work; photos; picture
stories; realia; scrambling/sequencing; total physical response;
visuals; and writers' groups. Four learner-generated publications and
21 books/materials from publishing houses are included. The
concluding section provides suggestions for tutors and learners and
tutor responses from workshops using this handbook. (NLA)

ADULT ACADEMY TUTOR TRAINING MANUAL

.BROWN UNIVERSITY

PROVIDENCE, RI

2

The Adult Academy of Rhode Island

Established in 1978, the Adult Academy is a statewide adult literacy project with its administrative offices at Brown University's Center for Public Service. The Adult Academy offers a wide range of innovative literacy programs designed to meet the needs of special populations ranging from senior citizens to the developmentally disabled, with models ranging from peer-based instruction to group tutoring to one-on-one tutoring. Programs include several Writers Groups, the New Readers and Writers Project, and college volunteer programs for the developmentally disabled and the homeless.·

The Academy advocates a learner-centered pedagogy, or educational approach. This approach takes into account the specific culture, background, personal experience, and immediate needs of the program participant. Adult literacy learners come from a wide range of areas -- geographically , professionally and personally. Learners come from countries as different as the U.S., Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Columbia, the Dominican Republic, Taiwan, Poland, and Malaysia. Some people are learning to read for the first time. Some are learning not only to read, but also to speak English. Learners are married, single, widowed, divorced, older, younger, working, unemployed, homeless, parents, relatives, physically challenged and all are motivated to learn. Some people have had no previous education in this or any other country; others have had negative experiences with schooling and yet others had their educations interrupted due to family or economic constraints.

The Adult Academy approach revolves around learner centered practice. Two overriding assumptions shape learner centered practice: **Literacy exists within a sociocultural context,** and **classroom content is driven by learners' needs.** Teaching practice divides into two broad strands: recurring events (such as generation of weekly classroom news, journal writing, and other language experience activities pertaining to regular, ongoing events) from which **themes** evolve. Learners experiences, needs and concerns dictate content. As students learn how to learn, they gain independent learning strategies and their learning options and opportunities increase. Through this process, learners develop a critical consciousness of their own skills, strengths, and progress in learning.

Academy staff realize that a narrow definition of literacy can be inflicted upon learners by well-meaning but under-prepared volunteers and tutors; the idea that there are many literacies requires an examination of <u>learners'</u> views of literacy. How do literate people view and interact with the world differently from those who are not literate, and by extension, how do literate people view opportunities for education in literacy differently from those who are not literate? At the Adult Academy, we ask these questions over and over again.

· Parts of this article have been adapted from <u>A Handbook for Practitioners: ESL/literacy for adult non-native speakers of English.</u> Literacy/ESL Program, International Institute of Rhode Island. Isserlis/1991, and from the Adult Academy's FY91 annual report.

Literacy Programs

• The Adult Academy has successfully researched and developed the first **basic literacy program for the Deaf** Rhode Island has seen since the 1970's. The program was developed by a broad coalition of community leaders and service providers in the adult Deaf community.

Program structure and design stem from the idea that sign language is an independent language of the Deaf which carries an independent Deaf culture. Therefore, classes run on a model of bilingual education; the teachers are Deaf - native speakers of sign language - and provide all instruction in sign language.

Classes are team-taught by pairs of Deaf teachers. Learners, professionals, and community members advocate strongly for this model, asserting that it offers the most effective communication between learners and teachers, ensures cultural sensitivity on the part of the teachers, and offers crucial role models to adults who have experienced years of school failure.

• The Adult Academy and Progreso Latino have developed a program offering **basic literacy instruction in Spanish** to the Spanish speaking communities of Central Falls. The program is based on peer-instruction and operated in coordination with ESL programs offered through Progreso Latino, SER/Jobs for Progress, and Brown ESL Student Tutoring. The program met with such enthusiasm this year that both volunteer tutors and learners decided to continue classes through the summer of 1991.

The program is particularly successful in developing leadership within the local Latino community. Tutors work in pairs to present bi-weekly presentations and workshops to one another on topics, techniques, or issues they find important in their work as tutors. This approach creates a clear sense of ownership and involvement in the program. Simultaneously, the approach prepares tutors to conduct similar trainings for volunteers at other Spanish speaking agencies interested in duplicating the model at their own sites.

• The Adult Academy is developing an innovative approach to training and utilizing tutors at three sites. Professional staff train, coordinate, and support some 50 volunteers to lead **collaborative learning activities** with **small groups of learners** in the basic literacy classrooms at Cranston Adult Education and Traveler's Aid, a program for the homeless in Downtown Providence. Volunteers also work in the ESL classrooms at Pawtucket Adult Education. Volunteers, learners, and teachers in these programs are unusually enthusiastic about the value and effectiveness of this approach. The effect on learners' self-esteem, their level of involvement and classroom participation, and their rates of progress transformed the classrooms where this project operates.

4

Community-Based Education

The Adult Academy focuses strongly on community-based education. Workshops and trainings take place in the communities immediately surrounding the sites, if not actually at the site. Volunteers and learners sit on the Adult Academy Advisory Council as well as on planning committees for individual programs such as the Spanish Literacy Program.

The Adult Academy involves learners in project implementation and development at several levels. Learners in all programs are the primary source of instructional materials as the programs focus strongly on learner generated writings. Most become involved in some form of collaborative or peer instruction. Advanced learners participate in tutor trainings, and some go on to tutor themselves. Learners are the core staff for *Expressions*, and serve on hiring committees for Academy staff.

The Adult Academy involves volunteers in many leadership roles as well. In addition to sitting on the Advisory Council, tutors assist in training workshops. In some instances tutors run workshops for one another. In many projects, tutors are the driving force behind community-based recruitment. Tutors play a strong role in the evaluation and refinement of program and training design through their feedback. In many cases, tutors move into paid positions as program coordinators.

The Adult Academy finds that this level of structural involvement, for learners, tutors, and interested community members, adds tremendous strengths to its programming. Participants feel their contributions and knowledge are respected. As a result, they often draw in friends and peers to join programs. Equally importantly, the organization benefits from the vast range of perspectives, cultures, and experiences which participants bring to the classroom. Our goal is to see programming which is inclusive, supportive, and respectful of the strengths, skills, and needs of learners and their communities.

To become involved with the Adult Academy, please call 863-3986.

Copies of the journal, *Expressions*, are available at
The Adult Academy, 25 George St, Providence, RI 02912.

Literacy Programs

• The Adult Academy offers **one-to-one tutoring to developmentally disabled learners** at Brown University and Providence College. Twenty-six learners participated in these programs last year. Learners come to the program from group homes and sheltered worksites around the country. Through literacy learning, they develop vital social and independent living skills.

• The Adult Academy supports the **New Readers and Writers Project.** In this project, adult learners from programs across Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts submit writings to and produce a journal of learner writings. The Adult Academy distributes this journal, known as *Expressions*, to hundreds of literacy learners and programs across the state.

Expressions is an entirely learner-directed program. The Editorial Board members are all literacy learners themselves. The Board makes decisions regarding topics, criteria for selection, layout, and other editorial policies for the journal. Adult Academy staff assist the Board with administration, coordination, and production of *Expressions*.

The Providence Journal-Bulletin's Office of Public Affairs recently completed printing a compilation booklet of *Expressions* as a public service to the state. This booklet will offer vital classroom and reading material to Rhode Island's adult literacy learners. The Editorial Board and program staff plan to use and distribute the booklet at outreach workshops and multiple community-based sites over the course of the next year.

• The Adult Academy offers **Writers' Groups** as an alternative model of adult instruction based on learner participation and peer education. The Writers' Groups run within other human service agencies, and are staffed by a VISTA Volunteer and one student intern. Groups run at two mental health treatment and support facilities - Providence Center and the Veteran's Community Care Center - and two community programs for the elderly - the North Providence Seniors Center and the Central Falls Community Center. Roughly 50 people participate in these programs. They are major contributors to the Academy's journal, *Expressions*. One participant is also an editor for the journal.

Writers' Groups programs offer a learning environment which is simultaneously therapeutic and educational. The groups are integrated carefully within the daytime therapy programs at mental health centers. At senior centers, the groups serve more of a community support function. In both cases, individuals who might not otherwise participate in literacy education become enthusiastic and involved. The groups play a central role in individuals' development of self-esteem and overall sense of community.

6

preface

The handbook you are holding was written for volunteer tutors, student interns, and VISTA Volunteers working with ABE and ESL learners. In it you'll find information about adult literacy and tutoring -- what tutors do, who the learners are, and how the literacy learning process works.

Many people have contributed to the handbook, including tutors and learners. Your feedback is important to us, too. You will receive the handbook in sections; we have not put it in a permanent binding because we want to include your comments and suggestions as they arise. We have the entire text on a computer disk so that we can easily add, delete and change pieces of the handbook to make it more useful to you.

Once you've received all the sections, you may want to re-read them all, or you might focus on particular sections as your interests dictate. Some sections are repetitive, so that, for example, you might find similar information in both ABE and ESL sections. As you continue to work as a tutor you might want to review earlier sections, or look into the *for further reading* articles found at the end of several sections.

contents

This handbook has been designed to be read in sections. Each section accompanies workshops which tutors attend prior to tutoring, as well as follow up workshops that occur during the course of the year. The handbook fits into a three-ring binder so that additional sheets can be added.

The sections in this handbook appear in the following sequence:

- preface
- introduction
- overview
- models of education
- getting started
- ABE (Adult Basic Education) literacy approaches and techniques
- ESL (English as a second language) literacy approaches and techniques
- tutor's roles and responsibilities
- approaches and activities
- materials
- conclusion: stepping back, looking ahead

The handbook is designed for tutors of adult learners in both adult basic education (ABE) and in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Although methods and suggestions for ABE learners are often adaptable to ESL settings, occasionally an arrow

ESL ⟩ ABE ⟩
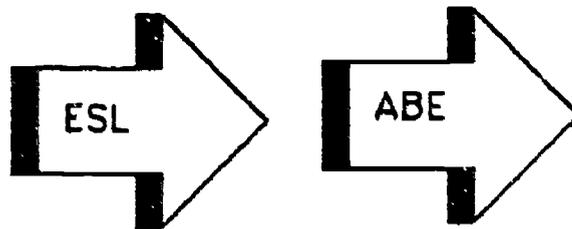
will indicate that a particular section is more directly aimed at one or the other group of learners. Where no arrow appears, the information pertains to both ESL and ABE tutors.

introduction

Welcome to literacy tutoring. Adult literacy learners
come from a wide range of areas -- geographically,
professionally and personally. Some people are learning
to read for the first time. Some are learning not only to
read, but also to speak English. Learners are married,
single, widowed, divorced, older, younger, working,
homeless, unemployed, parents, relatives, physically
challenged, developmentally disabled, Deaf and hearing,
and all are motivated to learn. Some people have never
been to school in this or any other country; others have
had negative experiences with schooling and yet others
had their educations interrupted due to family or other
constraints. In short, adult learners have had a wide
range of experiences with educational settings.

Assumptions

In thinking about learning and teaching literacy and language, it is important to examine our own assumptions about learning and learners; to think about differences and similarities between our experiences and those of our learners. These are some assumptions we make:

-- learners come to class knowing a lot about the world, and already know how to do many things;

-- reading and writing occur in larger social contexts -- we don't read without written words in front of us, and we don't write with-out having some reader in mind;

-- adults do things with reading and writing; part of the ongoing work between learners and tutors has to do with finding out about learners' own uses of reading and writing;

-- there are many skills and needs around interaction with print, from functional literacy
  -- *decoding* (reading out sounds) & *encoding* (writing down sounds) --
  to a more critical use of reading and writing to understand the word and the world (Freire[1]);

-- learners want to learn to read and write for many reasons;

-- classroom content develops from learners' needs;

-- reading and writing for meaning and communication does not exclude developing subskills (sounding out, spelling, grammar) in a context with meaning;

-- the learning process is enhanced when learners and teachers work together from strengths each possess, when learners and the learning process are valued, and when community is established among learners and teachers.

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[1] Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, notes frequently that learning to read the word is one step of an educational process of learning to read the world.

As you get to know the learners you'll be working with, you'll find that a certain bond develops between and/or among you. This bonding is very important in building a community of learners who trust and support each other in their common goals of learning to read and write. Their reasons for learning may vary greatly, but their motivation to learn is consistently strong. Because learners' reasons for wanting to learn are such strong motivating factors, a <u>learner centered</u> approach to literacy learning is most useful in helping the tutors to build community with (not <u>for</u>) their learners. The following questions are frequently asked by many people working with literacy learners:

• <u>How do people create a learning community?</u>

• <u>Why is such a community valued more by some learners and not as much by others?</u>

• <u>How can learners make the transitions from language experience writing</u> (writing based on learners' own words, stories and experiences) <u>and unconventional spellings and forms to more mainstream literacies?</u>

• <u>Do all learners see a need to make these transitions?</u>

What are your assumptions?
What questions can you add to these?

what does it look like?

The typical adult learning center/classroom/facility is often found in an unused schoolroom during evening hours, in a church basement, at a library table, and sometimes in a learner's kitchen or livingroom.

Some spaces have large blackboards or newsprint pads. In other places the tutor and learners share a pad of lined paper and maybe some books or worksheets.

What makes adult learning situations vital is the **exchange** between tutors and learners. The literacy learning process is dynamic. People ask questions, get frustrated, solve problems, figure things out -- at a small table, at desks and chairs, on sofas, on benches.

Learners are highly motivated. They are largely undaunted by cold rooms in the winter and hot rooms in the summer. They come to classes and tutoring sessions because they truly want to learn. Their desire is a powerful thing.

Learners and tutors become comfortable with each other in a relatively short period of time. What takes longer is the actual learning of literacy. Learning literacy in English (for people who don't speak the language very well, and for people who have spoken it all their lives) is a long and laborious process. Literacy is much more than phonetic reading and writing.

The tutor's role is to provide extra assistance and encouragement. The tutor helps learners see and appreciate their own progress.

In the pages that follow you'll read more about learners -- who they are, what they hope to accomplish, and how tutors can assist them in meeting their goals. You'll also read about reading and writing and you'll be asked to think about your expectations and concerns about tutoring. We hope that your tutoring experience will be productive and positive.

Questions for reflection

• What kinds of roles have you had in the classroom(s) you've worked in? (as learner, tutor, teacher, etc.).

• How have you felt in these roles?

• What kinds of interaction would you like to have with learners in the classroom?

• What kind of support do you think you will need?

overview

[Workshop one for participants in Adult Academy workshops]

During this workshop, facilitators will be asking you to think about who adult literacy learners are, what reading and writing are, and to discuss who you are, your expectations about tutoring.

Who are we, who are our learners?

Please use the space below (or a separate sheet of paper) to write about your goals and objectives as a tutor. Please use these questions as a guide -- don't expect to answer all of them.

- What interests you about being a tutor?
- What do you think the experience will be like?
- What experiences do you bring?
- What do you hope to learn during the training sessions?
- What do you expect to learn from tutoring?
- Have you tutored or been tutored before?
- What do you think your learners will want/need to learn?
- What do you hope will happen?
- What defines a good teacher?

You can write as much or as little as you like; you might want to write a few notes -- this is for your own thinking and future reference.

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about learners

Native speakers of English who are looking for assistance with literacy may or may not have had positive experiences in school, or may have had little experience at all with formal education. They have functioned in the world for a long time and have many strengths, skills and abilities. They speak the language which they are learning to read and write.

The following was written by a native speaker of English, who was working on gaining reading and writing skills:

School Experience   by Tommy C.

When I was in elementary school that was the time when a friend would read softly and I would read aloud to the class. Sometimes I would get the students to read paragraphs from today's lesson and I could memorize questions and answers and I could participate in class.

High school was very much similar but a little more advanced. But time had passed too, and I had passed with the time. I had passed up on reading yet I was more concerned about covering up than learning how to read. Now that I see reading is a necessity in life, I must learn how to read in order to progress in my life. For reading is a necessity in my life and I can't just let time pass by like I did in elementary school and high school with social promotion because in life there is no social promotion.

Tommy used many coping strategies in school to get by. Eventually he realized that he needed more independence as a reader. What other strategies do you think that people who can't read might use to avoid asking for help? Why would people not want others to know that they have trouble reading or writing?

15

The following was written by a non-native speaker of English, who was working on gaining reading, writing, and communication skills:

My name is Gudom Thagnabouth. I am from Laos. I was born at Savannakhet Provence, on October 12, 1942. Before in 1975 I was a soldier my last rank is MAJOR. After 1975 my country tooke cover by Communist Govement. I had captured and then their send my to the consentration camp at north Laos. Everybody call Vieng xay Camp. Over there I was worked hard every day. Until 12 years ago. In 1987 I had released. Their send my to the Vientiane City. I stay there for one month only. Then I was escaped to the THAILAND. I stay in the refugee camp at Thailand for 4 months. Then their send my to the BATAAN Provence in PHILIPPINES refugee camp. Everybody call P.R.P.C. for study English second language for 6 months. NOW I live in Providence, RHODE ISLAND.

Thangnabouth, Laos: Smith Hill Community Center

Gudom uses many coping strategies in his new country to get by. He realized before coming that he would need English language and literacy skills to survive here. What other strategies do you think that immigrants and refugees might use to survive here? What feelings do you think they bring with them when they come to a classroom to learn? What might English represent to them?

The following article, written by Andrew Gross, reviews issues concerning refugees and immigrants. How are these issues similar to or different from the problems raised by Tommy and Gudom? Are problems with literacy similar to the problems of people who do not speak English very well?

Community Matters

March 1990

Immigrants, Refugees, and ESL Education

Andrew Gross

Education plays a crucial role in determining access to power in our community. Education can be a process which develops skills, strengths, and knowledge fundamental to survival in this society. Education can also be an active, supportive, and participatory process which brings together members of a community. This kind of community-based education can teach community members to work together to understand their differences, to learn about one another's resources, and to teach one another about their cultures and histories.

Immigrants and refugees have a particularly urgent need for this kind of active and supportive education. As members of cultural, linguistic, and, most often, racial minority groups, Providence's refugee and immigrant populations have fewer tools than most Americans to confront the urban realities of racism, discrimination, and the struggle for economic security. English as a Second Language (ESL) education, for both adults and kids, can develop the skills, strengths, and knowledge necessary to face these realities. At the same time, ESL education can build students' self-confidence and self-esteem in such a way that they feel that they can contribute culturally and personally to building a stronger community.

ESL education does not take place in a vacuum, nor is it divorced from the issues which cultural and linguistic mi-

ESL

norities face every day. Cross-cultural and racial relations in Providence are complex and often volatile. The mid-January shooting at Central High School is only the most explicit and the most recent reminder of the strains and tensions which exist between recent (in this case Southeast Asian) and more established groups of immigrants in Providence's inner city[1] In order to define the role of ESL education in confronting this kind of violence, it is crucial to understand its roots. It is important to understand also, that violence is most often an act of desperation, a reaction to the feeling that all other doors are closed. To understand that feeling, we must look at the position of immigrants and refugees in the Providence community.

The kind of violence that exploded at Central does not start within the immigrant communities - it is a response. As a Cambodian bilingual counselor told me yesterday, "Cambodians are afraid to drive through many neighborhoods because the people throw rocks at the Cambodians' cars". She explained that there is significant competition between Cambodians and other racial groups in Providence for factory work. This competition extends to housing and the control of small businesses as well. The resulting inter-racial tension is not hard to spot. One need only look at the city paper to find incident after incident of intimidation and harassment of adult immigrants by members of the surrounding community. The bilingual counselor pointed out that this competition reverberates powerfully among the kids in the school system in the form of racial harassment and violence.

Racial discrimination, linguistic discrimination, and cultural hostility fed the feelings which exploded in the Central High incident. They also feed the tensions and hostilities which develop along the assembly lines and on the streets in Olneyville, Central Falls, South Providence, Elmwood, Federal Hill, and many of the other neighborhoods in the Greater Providence area. Furthermore, Cambodians are not the only language minority or refugee group in Providence. There are also thousands of Latinos who have fled from economic or political oppression in all parts of the Caribbean Basin. Although each group has its own distinct position, all confront similar hostilities. Periodically, these tensions erupt in incidents of focused violence.

To students of urban America, or even of Providence alone, this story is a familiar one. Recent immigrants with little knowledge of the English language, workers' rights, or the U.S. labor system are pushed to accepting lower paying jobs, longer hours, and poorer working conditions than more established members of the urban working class. Thus job competition breeds hostility.

Similarly, economic pressures often force immigrants to move into neighborhoods where competition for housing is already fierce - and slumlords are all too happy to rent to residents who don't know their housing laws. Resentment on the part of neighborhood residents builds. These feelings appear most often in the form of racist harassment and fierce hostility to the language and culture of the new immigrants.

It would appear that the new immigrant is caught in a vise. On the one hand, immigrants face exclusion from both institutional resources and higher paying jobs, and on the other hand they face hostility from surrounding community members. Without the power, knowledge, or resources to utilize institutions to combat massive discrimination and hostility, some immigrants, particularly the young, can become so desperate that they resort to violence as a means of self-defense. Without control of English or knowledge of urban laws and culture, the immigrant frequently faces a real state of crisis.

Although this situation sounds truly dire, it is far from hopeless because not all immigrants face all of these problems all day, every day. Most face them in some form or another at some point in their lives. I have drawn the picture to this degree of severity in an attempt to illustrate the sort of pressures which make this month's shootings no surprise. The challenge for all members of our community is to work together to develop ongoing outreach and educational programs which develop the strengths and skills of Providence's immigrant communities in such a way that these individuals can establish a base of security and power, and a sense of community.

As a community with several tens of thousands of recent immigrants and refugees, Providence faces both ongoing and impending crises of cross-cultural and racial relations. As members of this community who have access to tremendous resources, Brown students, faculty, and administrators face both the challenge and the responsibility of working together with other members of the Greater Providence community to develop greater linguistic skills and cross-cultural understanding within the immigrant community. One of the most important skills on the road to self-sufficiency and strength for immigrants is control of the English language. English is essential for access to the most basic urban resources: transportation, health care, employment, education, and government services. English enables immigrants to speak for themselves in the community and work for

ESL continued

themselves to broaden community understanding of their cultures, experiences, and knowledge.

ESL education becomes the route through which immigrants learn to access the resources available to them and to regain control of their lives. The ESL classroom is often the place where immigrants and refugees can gain a greater knowledge and understanding of the majority cultures and American power structures so that they can take advantage of the resources available to them. The ESL classroom is generally a place where members of different immigrant groups can come together and learn about one another and share resources to form a stronger community. One-to-one ESL tutoring, on the other hand, provides a place for language learners and English speakers to form friendships and share in one another's lives. ESL education, then, works toward a stronger community and more independent, powerful individuals.

Equally important, ESL education is a place for members of the majority cultures to learn about some of the many other cultures, histories, and experiences which constitute urban America. We live in a multi-cultural society, whether the media and the government acknowledge that fact or not, and the best way to understand that reality is for the members of our many cultures to come together and learn from one another. On the street level, violence and racism stem greatly from ignorance, fear, and misunderstanding. The ESL classroom can be a place to build bridges between cultural and racial groups.

At this point, I hope that you are wondering just what all this has to do with you. Knowledge of an opportunity to work with members of your community to improve a difficult, even oppressive, set of conditions translates into a mandate to act. I would also say that there are not many times in our lives when we have a chance to form close friendships or trusting, learning relationships with people from backgrounds and cultures entirely different from our own. Teaching ESL is such an opportunity. As a community, Providence has generated a vast array of agency level responses to the needs of its immigrant and refugees. These agencies are largely not-for-profit agencies which rely on volunteers to carry out their work.

The Center for Public Service has access to a large number of programs which enable members of the Brown community to work with immigrants and refugees of all ages to develop skills in English as a Second Language (ESL). The Center houses a cluster of six community based, volunteer, ESL programs which are known collectively as Brown ESL Student Tutoring

(BEST). In addition, both BEST and Brown Community Outreach network with a large number of community based ESL programs in Providence which offer an even wider range of tutoring and teaching opportunities. The Center, BEST, and BCO exist to foster and encourage the Brown community's active involvement with the issues of the larger Providence community.

1. See Providence Journal-Bulletin from week of 1/12/90, both headline and inside stories. Two Cambodian teenagers, a Central student and a friend from Lowell, fired ten shots from a .357 Magnum and a .38 revolver into a crowd of Central students. They were aiming at a white student who had been harassing Cambodian students. They missed their target and hit two uninvolved students. Both survived the incident.

Andrew Gross is a VISTA Volunteer who coordinates the Brown English as a second language Student Tutoring Program

What are some questions you'd like to pursue? What information would you like about refugees and immigrants? What information would you add to Andrew's writing?

How do you think that learning literacy is different for native speakers of English and for people whose first language isn't English?

Some of the questions above are answered by literacy learners who have written in *Voices,* a magazine containing writings by many new readers. They discuss their feelings about coming to literacy classes, strategies they had used to get by before coming to school, and changes that occurred in their lives as they gained the ability to read and write. Your learners may or may not want to discuss their feelings about learning; particularly in the beginning they may be reticent to share their feelings. Every learner is different and has different reasons for coming to a class. The more we understand the range of reasons that prompt learners to seek help with literacy, the better prepared we are to find effective ways of helping them learn.

What is reading?   What is writing?

Reading and writing are processes of deriving meaning from print. They are connected processes; in order to read, something needs to have been written, and in order to write, there needs to be a reader.

reading

As you read this page, you may have certain expectations about what will be written here. You know that this is a handbook about literacy learning, and so you expect to see words like 'literate', 'reading' and 'writing' frequently. You expect to learn about the learning process, and about adult education. You think about what you already know about learning, and you relate your own experience to the reading you do. This use of previous knowledge and experience, predicting and expecting has to do with a schema, or framework, you already have in your mind about the topic at hand.

Schema helps us read, by allowing us to use what we know to process what we encounter in print. Good readers use schema all the time, unconsciously. We don't read each and every word, sounding it out, but we move our eyes quickly across a page.

When we first learned to read, many of us learned with a phonics-based approach. Our teachers taught us the letters of the alphabet, and their corresponding sounds. We sounded out words, but we also read very simple sentences, because our teachers wanted to help us learn to read words in a meaningful context. This whole language approach recognizes that it is difficult to learn words if the words are not arranged in some way that has meaning that we can remember. For example, read this next line only once:

```
There fast how not some very staples table
next before green.
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How much of what you just read do you remember? Chances are that you've remembered very little, and

you may have just gone back to re-read the sentence, because it made no sense. It was just a string of words. Similarly, sentences like, "Pat, put that hat on the cat at bat," are not terribly useful (particularly to adults) because they contain little connection to adults' experiences nor do they contain meaningful information. Although the sentence does a good job of drilling -*at* sounds, it may not help someone to make meaning from print.

Reading is really a combination of looking, understanding that letters represent sounds which represent words, understanding those words, and connecting many of them while also trying to accomplish a certain thing. We read for many purposes: to find out how to put something together by reading instructions, to see what time or day it is (reading a clock or calendar), to see what's on TV or at the movies, to find out about someone far away (reading a letter), to see how much money we owe someone (reading a bill), or to see what happens at the end of the story.

writing

When we write we generate some of the same informa-
tion mentioned above; our purposes for writing may
also include letting someone know where or how we
are, (leaving a note, writing a letter), passing along a
telephone message, complaining about a mistake in a
bill, signing a pay check, filling out an insurance form,
writing a check or money order.

Thespacesbetweenwordstheirarrangementonapagean
dvariouspunctuationmarksalsohelpustodealwiththe
visualimageofprintNewreadersmaynotbeawareofsp
acesbetweenwordsoruseofcapitallettersorotherki
ndsofpunctuationwhentheybeginwriting

The spaces between words, their size and arrangement
on a page and various punctuation marks also help us to
deal with the visual image of print. New readers may
not be aware of spaces between words, or use of capital
letters or other kinds of punctuation when they begin
writing. Many learners like to copy passages from a
book or blackboard; their orientation to the use of the
page and the line for writing will tell you a great deal
about their ability and experience with writing.

reading and understanding

We use schema, knowledge of print conventions
(punctuation, capitalization, etc.) and phonics to make
sense of what we read.

Please read the passage on the next page and answer the
questions that follow:

A Pardstan Giberter for Farfie

Glis was very fraper. She had denarpen Farfie's pardstan. She didn't talp a giberter for him. So she conlanted to plimp a pardstan binky for him. She had just sparved in the binky when he jibbed in the gorger.

"Clorsty Pardstan!" she boffed.

"That's a croustish pardstan binky," boffed Farfie, "but my pardstan is on Jenstan. Agstan is Kelstan."

"In that ruspen," boffed Glis, "I won't whank you your giberter until Jenstan."

1. Who was very fraper?

2. Did Glis talp a giberter for Farfie?

3. What happened after she had just sparved in the binky?

4. What did she boff at first?

5. What did Farfie boff in reply?

6. When is Glis planning to whank his giberter?

Because you know how writing is structured, and you used cues like punctuation, subjects and objects (who said or did what to whom), you could probably answer all the questions correctly. But what was the story about? What's a ruspen? What's fraper? We know fraper is an adjective because it followed the word very. We suspect that boff means said, because it followed words in quotation marks. But what about non-native speakers of English, or people with little prior experience with such school-like questions?

Some people with previous experiences with school understand the kinds of comprehension questions you just answered, and like you, can answer them correctly. Students with little experience in such question and answer activity may have trouble not only answering the questions, but more importantly in focusing in on the main idea(s) of the reading. Without discussion into the heart of a story, it is possible that some learners might not follow everything they read. Before learners are asked to respond to questions about specific, isolated details of a reading, it is important that they discuss what the reading is about overall.

   With both native and non-native speakers of English, it's important to encourage learners to talk about what they read.

reading and writing in the classroom and beyond: what learners see, say, read and write

Very beginning level ESL learners need a combination of work on phonics and exposure to high frequency (often used) sight words, such as name, date, address, Providence, Cranston, Pawtucket, Rhode Island, exit, emergency, etc. The language experience approach (see approaches and activities) is very useful for helping people use the spoken English that they already know and begin to write and read, using their own words. They come to recognize certain sight words, and also begin to understand the connection between the letters of the alphabet, their sounds, and the ways they combine together to form words.

-- Using the immediate surroundings -- signs around the learning center, in the classroom, etc. -- as well as asking learners to talk about the reading and writing they do everyday, are helpful ways of learning about their reading abilities, and about what they want to learn.

-- Listening to and writing learners' stories (through the language experience approach) helps learners to get to know more about each other, and also helps you learn about their lives as well as their abilities with language and literacy.

As you continue to read through this manual, you'll find suggestions for working with literacy learners at all levels. One helpful thing to remember is that people learn to read once. Learning to read a second language consists of transferring one's understanding of the reading process to another language (and sometimes another alphabet). The principal process of reading (as discussed above) is the same in any language. ESL learners will be learning to read in English, for the most part, but some will choose to learn to read in their native language*. Learners who already speak English will be learning to read and write many words with which they are familiar. For both native speakers and ESL learners, learning to read and write is a process that takes time. Your patience and encouragement will be greatly appreciated by the learners with whom you work, and plays a critical role in helping them maintain motivation and energy.

Above all, remember that your input -- both as a tutor and as a friendly and supportive presence -- will be valued by the learners you work with and by the classroom teachers whom you assist. Individual and small group attention does make a difference to the learning process.

*The Adult Academy has programs for people learning to read and write in Spanish, and is looking into programs for people who speak other languages as well. Most learners in Adult Academy programs want to learn to read in English, and it is for people who are working with those learners that our comments are addressed.

models of education

There are different models or frameworks of education, which reflect teachers' beliefs and assumptions about learners. The Adult Academy, like many adult education providers, advocates a learner-centered approach to adult literacy instruction. In this section we compare and contrast traditional education and learner-directed education. We also look at different ways of implementing learner-centered tutoring sessions.

This section covers:

• a comparison of traditional and learner-directed education models;

• an introduction to problem-posing;

• ways of using problem-posing in tutoring;

• an overview of learners' literacy and educational needs

• suggestions for observing learners in classes, in preparation for beginning to tutor.

Adults start or return to schools for many reasons. Adult educators have developed many models over the years, which range from traditional teacher-centered/ book oriented models to more participatory approaches. Working with adult learners -- native speakers of English, immigrants or refugees -- demands constant attention to the fact that adults have already formed many of their own ideas. Adult learners have lived independently in the world for many years. Adults don't necessarily need teachers to tell them what to do. They may, however, want help learning how to use written or spoken language to do the things they need and want to do.

Traditional education often involves a 'banking approach' in which teachers deposit their knowledge and skiils into the students. The teacher decides what is of value and when it should be deposited. In the **problem-posing approach, or learner-directed education,** a facilitator helps learners define their goals, pursue the knowledge and skills they need, and works with them to achieve their goals. Traditional education focuses on memorization; problem-posing focuses on communication, critical thinking and action. Traditional education focuses on preserving the status quo; problem-posing education focuses on learning new skills to meet concrete needs. The following contrasts the two approaches:

Banking Approach	Problem-Posing Approach
• The teacher determines the goals	• The learner determines the goals with the teacher.
• The teacher is knowledgeable and the students are ignorant.	• The teachers and learners all have useful knowledge and skills.
• The teacher gives knowledge and skills, and the students receive them.	• Teacher and learners collaborate in the acquisition of knowledge and skills.
• The students memorize and store the knowledge and skills for future use.	• The learners apply the knowledge and skills in the pursuit of their own daily and long term goals.
• The teacher talks and the students listen.	• The facilitator and learners discuss issues together.
• Learning prepares students to fit in and adapt.	• Learning develops learners' ability to speak up and stand up.
• The teacher directs the class and the students comply.	• The facilitator and learners jointly decide the direction of class sessions.
• The education process perpetuates the status quo.	• The new education process helps create new realities.

adapted from *Literacy for Empowerment: A Resource Handbook for Community Based Educators.* (1988). Association for Community Based Education. Washington, D. C.

What the previous page refers to as problem-posing can be viewed as a form of learner-centered, or learner-directed education. We approach education as an ongoing dialogue between tutors and learners, and among learners themselves. The banking model (which many of us faced throughout our own schooling) leaves the teacher with the responsibility of deciding what learners should know, and how and when they should know it. A more participatory approach encourages and permits learners to express what it is they need and want to learn.

As you continue to read and learn more about the adult learner populations in your area, you may find yourself with an increasing number of questions and concerns. Cross cultural issues, mental health and community resources, differences in educational and economic backgrounds -- among learners, between yourself and your learners -- may become topics for you and your learners to explore.*

Learners may wish to discuss problems they have in dealing with neighbors, or misunderstandings at the workplace.
A problem-posing approach leads learners through a process of **identifying a problem, discussing the problem, identifying common problems among learners, finding resources and taking action.** Sally Gabb, a literacy practitioner and teacher trainer has developed a guide to problem posing, which has been adapted on the following pages.

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* You may want to learn more about agencies which address these issues, or read about them yourself. Adult Academy staff should be able to point you in helpful directions.

A Guide to Problem Posing
The process is a simple one:

1. look at a common daily experience of conflict
2. discuss the experience
3. identify and name the problem(s)
4. discuss it
5. find out more about it
6. work with others to understand it
7. think of action to change the situation
8. think about results/consequences of actions
9. take action to make concrete change

In order to focus concretely on a problem that learners identify, tutors develop *codes* so that learners can go through the steps listed above.

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code writing: identifying common problems

A code is a representation of an issue or concern which might be the cause of particular problems. Newspaper pictures or stories work well. Pieces written by learners' experiences can be very effective. Usually, an open-ended visual representation -- such as a photograph of a street in a typical neighborhood, or of a boss and some workers -- serves as a useful code. Learners examine the photo and discuss what, if any problems, they feel are identified in the photo.

For example, a photo of a street in a run down neighborhood may lead to discussion about problems of urban crime, low income housing, concerns about children, etc.

On the other hand, learners might not particularly view the situation as problematic, in which case the process changes slightly. The code might then be used to generate discussion or writing about how learners feel about their own neighborhoods, or ESL learners might contrast the photo of a US neighborhood with recollections (and photos, if they have them) of their own countries.

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code writing: identifying common problems

If learners do identify problems within the code, these steps outline a way to approach the problem:

1. naming: what is happening?

2. How do people with this problem feel?

3. Have you had a problem like this? Has anyone you know ever had this problem? What did you/they do?

4. Why did this happen? What are the reasons for this kind of problem?

5. What can be done?

finding resources and taking action

These questions can help you with the process of taking action to solve the problem:

1. What do you need to know?

2. Who can you work with?

3. Where can you get more information?

4. What are possible actions that can be taken?

5. What might be the results?

These questions and discussion can lead to very productive writing activities. Learners can read and discuss each others' ideas, and write further. Tutors support and encouragement here is crucial.

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evaluating your actions

After taking action, you can ask these questions:

1. What new information did we learn?

2. What do we understand better?

3. What did I learn about myself?

4. What did we learn about how we learn as a group?

5. What was the result or impact of the action?

6. Can we address the causes better now?

7. What new problems did we uncover?

Once again, these questions and discussion can lead into very meaningful writing and reading activities, and develop critical thinking skills.

Learners may not always be interested in discussing issues. Their privacy and learning needs must be respected. As they become more comfortable with the learning situation, with themselves, with each other and with you, you may find that issues will be voiced within the learning context. A problem-posing approach -- wherein a learners identify, discuss, and consider action on problem -- may be helpful. In other cases, allowing learners to discuss their concerns, generate writing, or look for additional information may be all they need. Learners decide which issues they want to pursue, what action, if any, they want to take. At times, the fact that they can discuss their concerns, is sufficient. Their action may be the discussion itself, and/or writing that emerges from it. It is important, too, to reinforce the idea that writing can be action.

32

problem-posing/problem imposing: encouraging thought without imposing an alien point of view

Many of our learners come from countries where oppression, fear and persecution are commonplace. Others are voluntary immigrants, who chose to leave their countries of origin for a number of reasons. Some lack legal status. Some are legal citizens who own stores and homes. Adult learners confront a wide array of life circumstances and respond to them as individuals.

There may be instances where a group, or several individuals will want to pursue a problem and seek ways in which to resolve it. They may want to band together to write to an elected official, or to help someone deal with an unscrupulous employer or landlord. They may, however, chose not to pursue a course of action that a tutor might feel they should undertake, or that the tutor might themselves undertake under particular circumstances.

Although the decisions we make in terms of nurturing, encouraging or coercing our students into making choices can be controversial, the bottom line is to consider not only the usefulness of our interventions but also the responsibilities tutors incur through the ways they encourage learners to act.

A case to consider:

Learners working with an ESL teacher at a jewelry factory reported that they were being docked 15 minutes pay if they were as much as five minutes late for work. The teacher investigated the legality of this action, and informed learners that they could challenge their employer. She suggested they invite a personnel representative to the class, to discuss policy in general terms. Learners opposed the suggestion, and further opposed taking any action whatsoever.

As an adult educator the teacher was in no position to take responsibility for supporting the six learners should an action result in their subsequent loss of employment. The learners had made their choice. Although she spent a considerable amount of time at the plant, she was not on their payroll and had no right to instigate any action. Had she pushed the learners to take steps they were unwilling to take, she would have been imposing her views upon the learners inappropriately; she would have been *problem-imposing*.

Tutors and facilitators need to know how and when to step back and respect our learners as fully capable adults. Presuming to know 'what's right' doesn't necessarily help another person handle their own struggles. Therefore, it is important to be particularly careful about respecting the rights of our learners, and accepting the choices and decisions they make.

getting started towards the classroom

Tutors need to consider the role of the classroom in the larger community -- and in learners' lives -- when making decisions about content and methods. Attentive listening and observation helps tutors to learn from and with adult learners. A first step in the listening process occurs when tutors first meet the learners.

Who are the learners?
learners and their literacies

Tutors usually do not meet learners during the initial intake process -- (the interview and form-filling period that occurs when learners enter a program). Nevertheless, the information about learners detailed below can be useful. Some of this information appears on learners' intake sheets. Learners may choose to reveal other information during the course of the tutoring sessions. It is important to be sensitive to learners' rights to privacy and keep in mind that their lives and experiences must inform any effective teaching. As tutors and learners get to know each other, many of the questions below will arise as part of the natural course of events. It is very important to allow learners to become comfortable with the tutor and with each other before the tutor attempts to elicit information about learners' backgrounds.

Learning about learners -- through listening to their stories, and sometimes through direct questioning -- helps the tutor to understand why the learners have come to class and what their needs might be.

Listening, understanding, and respecting learners' needs and interests is basic to a learner-centered model of education. Through dialogue with learners, tutors can focus on relevant and interesting topics which strengthen the learners' existing skills and develop new ones.

During the workshop sessions, tutors discuss their expectations about who the learners might be, and what they want. Before observing a class or beginning to tutor on your own, the following questions should help you to get a clearer idea of the possible range of learners' needs and abilities.

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background -- rural? urban? Is the learner a native speaker of English? What was the role of education in her/his life? Is the learner an immigrant or refugee? Did s/he attend school in the native country or in the US?

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literate environment -- What reading/writing occurs outside the classroom? What is the interaction around reading/writing in the home, among household members?

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family roles
• when young: who was responsible for helping with literacy activity, if any? (for example, was there one person in the household who was responsible for reading letters from relatives, or keeping track of money?)

• as parent/older person: who is responsible for such literacy work now?

• re: children -- what are learners' goals for their children? What are their children's goals/hopes for themselves?

Who is in the household?   _____ children
_____ spouse,   _____ significant other
_____ other family members
_____ others (friends, friends' children, roommates, etc.)

school
Any previous education and/or school in native country?

What do learners remember about school? (hours, environment, roles of teachers and students, etc.).

Have they attended school locally or elsewhere in the US?

What expectations do they bring about learning?

What expectations about teachers? about themselves?

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learning
What learning environments work for learners? (e.g. Do they like to learn/study in the kitchen, living room?, etc.).

What about learning styles? Do people like working in small groups, learning individually, writing, listening to someone read while they follow along silently? Do they like to listen to tapes?

What are learners' barriers, worries, fears about school?

How do they use media -- books, tapes, TV, magazines, circulars, newspapers? What media are in the house?

What supplies are in the house?

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goals:
What are learners' goals? Why do they want to learn?

How have they identified their goals?

Do learners have a clear sense of their own strengths?

Where do learners need to read or write regularly?

How sophisticated or formal are the skills they need?

Classroom observation

Before you begin working with your learner(s), you may be invited to observe a class session. The following questions are designed to help you focus your attention. Please read through these questions before you visit the class; then decide which of the questions you want to focus on. You may come up with your own list of questions as well.

The purpose of the observation session is to give you a concrete example of teaching and learning in action, and to give you a sense of how an adult learning session happens. After the observation period, you are invited to discuss what you saw with other tutors and facilitators.

You may find that a teacher's approach reflects different educational models at different times. Think about the suggestions and comparisons at the beginning of this section. See how or if they are evident in an actual classroom.

While observing classes, consider the following, and jot down notes on these and any other points which interest you.

Pre-observation questions
I. General observation:
For about 15 minutes, observe the whole class:
    1. Describe the activities: What is the lesson about?

    2. How do the people interact?
        a. Who talks most?
        b. Who listens?
        c. Do the students work cooperatively? independently? both?

    3. Specific patterns of interaction:
        a. Where is the attention focused? (teacher, learners, materials, activities?)
        b. How does the teacher interact with the learners? (formally, casually, affirmation verbally/affirmation by touch, focusing on active students/focusing on quiet students/ working for balance, etc.)

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notes

I. General observation:

> II. **Focus on one learner** involved in verbal interaction
> for at least 15 minutes. Note as much information as you
> can about the learner's interaction, and include, if you'd
> like, the following points:
>   1. Interaction (see 2c, 3b, above)
>   2. What do you think this learner's needs are?

> III. **Post-observation questions:**
>   1. Your general impression
>   a. Would you be comfortable as a learner in
>   this class? Why? Why not?
>   b. Would you be comfortable as a teacher in
>   this class? Why? Why not?
>   2. The lesson
>   a. What were the teacher's objectives? What
>   goals do you feel the activities were designed
>   to meet?
>   Consider these factors:
>   linguistic (language);
>   paralinguistic (gestures, body language);
>   metalinguistic (talk about language);
>   survival, affect, thought, culture
>   think about the relationship between
>   anguage and its cultural content.
>   b. How did the teacher evaluate learners'
>   progress during the lesson? Do learners
>   evaluate their own progress?
>   c. Based on your perceptio of the learners'
>   observed/observable needs, what would your
>   next step/lesson be with this class?

How would you characterize the learning model in the
class you observed? Would you say it was more
learner-centered or more teacher-centered, or
someplace in between? Were you surprised at anything
you saw?

notes

II. Focus on one learner:

III. Post-observation questions:

other thoughts

summary

A collaborative approach to adult education encourages learne:s to draw on themselves and each other in finding ways to solve particular problems. They work together to find new information to gain new learning. The tutor often deflects learners' questions back to other learners. (If someone asks a tutor how to spell a particular word, for example, the tutor might then ask other learners if they know how that word is spelled).

Sometimes a collaborative approach includes the use of codes and the problem-posing process explained above. A collaborative approach fosters cooperative learning among students and a constant awareness on the part of the tutor and learners that the learning process is one in which everyone has something to contribute to the rest of the group.

The Adult Academy advocates a range of models and approaches. We have attempted to illustrate these ideas through the activities and approaches detailed in this handbook. Through your continued participation in workshops, and continued reflection on and discussion of the handbook, you will come to find approaches to adult literacy learning that work best for you and your learners.

In the next section, *getting started,* you'll read more about adult learners and literacy education.

for further reading

learner centered practice

Two overriding assumptions shape learner centered practice: Literacy exists within a socio-cultural context, and classroom content is driven by learners' needs. Classroom organization breaks out into two broad strands: **recurring events** (such as generation of weekly classroom news, journal writing, and other language experience activities pertaining to regular, ongoing events [week-end, workday, etc.]) from which **themes** evolve. Learner activity, needs and concerns dictate content. These organizational strands provide a framework within which content finds structure and form, in the larger framework created by learners' goals.

Literacy facilitators in England delineate various aspects of student participation in adult basic education (ABE) programs, [1] and examine the various components of (student-centered) literacy practice, including access, assessment, environment and the points of view of students, tutors and organizers. They call attention to the importance of students initiating various parts of their study process and the need for facilitators to aim "to be treated as a resource in someone's learning program - to be made use of, then discarded when no longer needed. We should be aiming to make people ultimately independent of us, rather than the opposite." (p. 1). As students learn how to learn, they gain access to additional/alternate ways of coming to gain the skills and knowledge they need; as they gain independent learning strategies, their learning options and opportunities increase.

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[1] Student Participation: Some of the features of the A.B.E. model as developed in a number of centres over a number of years. (no author, no date. Received, 6/89). ALBSU: The Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, Kingsbourne House, 229/231 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7DA, England.

Carmen St. John Hunter[1] points out that in learner
centered education each situation will demand a
particular set of events and activities to occur in order
to meet learners' needs in a given context. Alison
Murphy [2] recounts the development of literacy curricula
negotiated by learners to meet their needs as members
of a tenants' association. Their involvement in
community action generated and shaped literacy work
needed within the scope of the tenants' campaign. In
organizing to improve access to housing, learners
needed to read and writing a variety of things; they
"used [literacy] immediately in a practical context". A
narrow definition of literacy can be inflicted upon
learners by well-meaning but under-prepared volunteers
and tutors; The idea that there are many literacies
requires an examination of learners' views of what
literacy is and does. Francis Kazemek speaks of
differences between learners' and tutors' notions of
literacy. An understanding of these frames of reference
is critical to the development of student centered
learning. How do literate people view and interact with
the world differently from those who are not literate,
and by extension, how do literate people view
opportunities for education in literacy differently from
those who are not literate?

Learners' first experiences with many educational
programs occur upon their arrival into the program,
when they participate in intake interviews and testing
and assessment processes. The role of assessment is
shifting and becoming more explicitly learner centered.
Wallerstein points out that a true needs assessment is
"not completed before the first day of class, nor is the
listening done by the teacher alone. As content is drawn
from learners' daily lives, listening becomes an ongoing
process involving both teachers and students as co-learn-
ers and co-explorers." [3]. Susan Lytle and others at the
University of Pennsylvania describe the importance of

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[1] ACBE, p. 158.

[2] Murphy, A. (1987). Is student centered learning a form of tokenism?
Viewpoints , No. 7, p. 23.

[3] Wallerstein, in ACBE, p. 21.

learners' roles in the assessment process; Lencre Balliro
at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute has done
extensive work on assessment, particularly for non-
native speakers of English in a learner-centered context.

Generally, research studies point to many possibilities
within all aspects of literacy learning for inclusion of
student input; the amount and degree of such inclusion
varies as well. Practitioners need to gain awareness of
the fact that their very practice, although drawing on
student input to some extent, still perpetuates a power
base: the teacher knows how and what s/he will have the
class do; the learners then do it. "It is too much of one
person knowing what the other would like to know and
keeping it that way." [4] Murphy suggests that
practitioners make their methodologies known to
learners. She cites Robert Merry's speculation that
"many tutors may not (make methodologies available to
students) because they themselves do not fully
understand what they are doing" (p. 24).

There have been few opportunities to clarify our own
thinking. Consequently we have not been able to make
our assumptions explicit, to share them with students or
to elicit students' understandings of these relationships
and processes. Until we do this it is difficult to envisage
how we can respond adequately to students' perceptions
that there are things about language and how it works
that they need to know but that we are unwilling to
share. Murphy, p. 24.

Educators at the Independent Learning Project at
Morley College found that the most meaningful way in
which learners could take control of their learning was
to engage in "discussion about what learning is; setting
goals and assessing progress; sharing knowledge about
the strategies and techniques we use; and exploring areas
which may be unfamiliar to many tutors and students"
(ibid). They found that one result of demystifying the
teaching process may be that practitioners find ways in

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[4] Gardner, qtd. in Murphy, p. 24.

which to include learners in that process -- as peer
teachers, as part of a teacher education team, etc.

Alison Murphy defines student-centered learning "to
mean collaborative learning which validates students'
skills, experience and potential and is directed according
to students' choices and purposes. This approach en-
ables students to take responsibility for their own
learning in which tutors[5] act as facilitators and a re-
source" (p. 23). Simply put, the material that learners
study must relate to their needs, lives and interests, and
the methods used to help them learn must be designed
for adult learners, with prior experience in the world.
Readers will have their own definitions of student-
centered learning, and of literacy and literacies. It is
our purpose to encourage reflection on the issues raised,
which we hope will lead to further reading, research
and ongoing dialogue.

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[5] A tutor is a teacher/facilitator in the UK, and the term does not have the
connotation of 'volunteer tutor' that it has in the US. Volunteer tutors in the
UK are referred to as volunteers.

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getting started

*In this section we explain the **rationale** behind a learner-centered approach to adult literacy learning. We discuss some basic tools you will find useful in teaching adults to develop and improve their reading and writing skills. Later, we suggest **activities** and **materials** to use with specific **topics** such as family, housing, work and transportation. Finally, we have included a sample curriculum and lesson plan which you may use as guides for your own work.*

Literacy facilitators often combine different approaches, and find themselves adapting and expanding activities to meet the needs of their learners. Facilitators pull these elements together in a literacy learning context. For our purposes, *method* describes a way in which something is done. *Approach* is the larger umbrella under which various methods may be loosely framed together. Some practitioners label the what and the how of instruction/ implementation as *techniques*, which might be particular ways of doing things in the classroom to move learners towards their literacy goals.

rationale: why?

It is important to ask what teaching is and maybe what it isn't, when we think about teaching practice and assumptions implicit in the approaches teachers employ. Maybe teaching is a process of learning from: at times, people are self-taught, at other times they learn from others, constructing knowledge jointly.

Frameworks have been suggested for examining 'good' practice, as distinguished from 'bad' practice. Top-down is contrasted against bottom up; top-down represents the 'banking' approach to education where learners are viewed as empty vessels in which knowledge is deposited, bottom-up describes learners constructing their own learning programs. Competency-based is pitted against participatory learning. Competency-based education lists objectives (such as "learner will be able to write name, address and phone number"), as measurable skills which are taught as competencies. Skill-centered learning (where topics are organized by various reading/writing/ language skills) is viewed against a meaning-based approach, and so on.

Clearly, there is no one best method by which learning occurs. The Adult Academy is committed to a participatory, learner-centered approach to literacy learning. Needs and concerns of learners are primary; dialogue about their interests and goals forms the curriculum.

A number of factors influence the learning process. Both learners and facilitators are active participants in this process. Their age, gender, previous educational experience, health and mental health, vision, hearing, learning style, expectations, orientation (visual, aural, tactile), immediate life situations, past/recent changes/ transitions all affect the interaction. Now factor in the consideration that each class or tutoring group will consist of learners whose backgrounds, learning styles, preferences, etc., will vary widely, and it seems unlikely that one teaching approach can be satisfactory for all. One single approach won't work for all people. You will see as you read this manual and continue through workshops with the Adult Academy, that we ecourage tutors to develop a variety of techniques which can be mixed and matched in each class and activity.

Teaching practice has to do with an understanding of the complexities of the individual participants involved in the learning process, and also of the different processes that emerge through the interaction of learners with each other and with their teacher or facilitator. Building knowledge in a group/social setting is a powerful thing -- one which can be hoped for, but rarely planned for in a precise way. A willing teacher begins to realize that his or her role is that of facilitator as she attempts to guide learners to their own knowledge, sharing that knowledge with that of others and finally moving towards advancement of knowing for all.

In some settings, non English speaking learners want to become literate first in their own languages, and native language literacy cla_ses are available to them. In other settings, where non-native speakers of English are learning literacy, learners may use their native language in many ways to access literacy in English and to find their voices in their native language. ('Finding voices' describes the process of learning to express oneself in another language, and/or in writing).

Learners may use their native languages orally with each other and in writings for clarification, for expression, for practice and for communication. Learners can and do determine ways in which they need to learn. For some this includes using the native language -- either for *transliteration* (writing out the sounds of a word in English in the native language) or for *translation*, as a means through which to approach writing in English. It is important to observe and respect the strategies learners find helpful. It is also important to encourage learners to find their own strategies and strengthen them.

getting organized

A curriculum is a guide for planning a course of instruction and organizing content -- topics, themes and/or grammatical items, depending on one's focus. There are many ways of setting up curricula, but few are realistic in their view of the ways an adult learner's world operates. Some literacy curricula integrate grammar and language usage, others focus on communicative activities, others imagine ideal learners in ideal settings and provide model dialogues. Certain models reflect an unrealistic view of the way in which things occur in the world (particularly within the context of adult education).

curriculum guidelines

The purpose of any curriculum is to guide the teacher through a scope and sequence of learning events and activities, the goals of which are to lead learners to the accomplishment of some measurable outcome(s). Outcomes typically include increased knowledge and ability which can be demonstrated by the learner and measured by the teacher.

Factors which affect curriculum implementation include: class size, multiple skill levels, and the presence or absence of multi-cultural and multi-lingual learners. These factors are tied to the organizing function of curriculum.

For example, a tutor might not need to cover very basic information to be covered under the topic of housing if none of the learners have questions or concerns around that topic. On the other hand, if one learner wants to know about complaining about a landlord, the tutor might engage all the learners in a discussion about their experie: ce with their landlords.

A teacher will organize and 'cover' various parts of a curriculum by paying attention to the learners' prior experience and knowledge of the world. The tutor will work on component skills and drills (spelling, reading/writing activity) in a meaningful way, but using the topic of housing as the context in which the exercises are framed. The suggestions later on in this section provide other examples of ways to include learners needs within numerous topics.

Several existing literacy and literacy/ESL curricula can be found in the Academy's resource library. Because of the particular needs of Academy learners, and the Academy's commitment to learner-centered instruction, this section is intended as a guide to curriculum development.

curriculum and the learner

Participatory educators value the importance of community among learners so that their concerns can be clearly voiced and shared. Subsequent language and literacy work can be developed around learners' issues and concerns.

Nina Wallerstein describes community literacy as "an educational process which takes curriculum from community and student needs and, through dialogue and co-education, suggests changes back to the community".* This process is most commonly known as one of problem-posing (as opposed to problem solving).

Many pre-set curricula use topics as organizing devices (usually these topics fall under the umbrella of life skills) and 'teach' literacy within the context of personal information, shopping, transportation, health, etc. In a learner-centered classroom topics are generated by learners. The process of dialogue and co-education occurs jointly among learners and facilitator[s]; a problem-posing approach is implemented around topics of interest and importance to learners.

Cross topics (topics which are applicable to a number of situaions and fall under numerous headings) such as time, money or clarification, can be taught separately and/or in contexts such as banking, transportation or work. Within the scope of ESL/literacy, a cross topic such as *time* might appear within numeracy work, within document reading and writing, as well as within a discussion of work, eating, sleeping and/or leisure habits.

A cross topic, as such, represents language/literacy useful in more than one specific context. Housing, for example -- a specific topic -- might embrace the cross topics of seeking clarification (the rent is how much?); numeracy ($500); document literacy (lease, house/ building rules) and money (check? cash? money order?).

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* Language and Culture in Conflict, ©1984, Addison-Wesley, p. 10. This book is in the Adult Academy library. It contains many sample lesson plans.

curriculum and the learner

Participatory educators advocate connecting any mandated topics to the wider framework of a problem-posing approach in order to connect learners' knowledge and experience to the topics (or grammatical items, etc.) at hand.

A curriculum cannot be predetermined. Given the multiple needs of learners and the often restrictive focus of many pre-set curricula, lesson planning and curriculum development are inter-related.   The curriculum is a guide to the learning process. The facilitator guides learners through various language and literacy events and activities derived from learner-generated content. As such, curriculum is a guide to developing and expanding the process of organizing a body of study to which learners actively and consistently contribute, and with which they interact.

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curriculum and the learner

Curriculum guidelines reflect a processive, learner-centered approach to curriculum and materials development. Tutors organize class time around **recurrent events** (conversations, dialogue journal writing, language experience activity). **Content** (themes and topics) emerges through these events and generates further activity.

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recurrent events

Recurrent events are regular repeated activities which allow learners to generate writing. This writing can later be expanded into different kinds of reading materials. These materials might then be further expanded or adapted into more reading and writing matter. Often, the materials will help generate new topics of discussion and new writing. Learner activities, needs and concerns dictate content.

Recurrent events include dialogue journal writing, generating language experience stories at the beginning of class as learners relate events/information occurring prior to class that day (which often overlap with themes and topics).

Additionally, smaller, repetitive events, such as the writing of the date or the weather report ("Today it's cold"), at the beginning of each class serve to encourage learners to take preliminary steps towards independent writing and reading within a relatively controlled (i.e., limited) range of vocabulary and within a safe and supportive learning environment.

themes and topics

Tutors and teachers organize literacy activity around themes and topics according to learners' needs, interests and concerns. These themes and topics generally emerge during conversations held at the beginning of class sessions. Such conversations frequently raise questions or issues that learners wish to discuss or to know more about. The facilitator generally invites learners to share whatever they might know about a topic at hand and often engages learners in some writing about that topic.

Through the use of language experience, tutors and learners organize collective knowledge into a story or paragraph. This story becomes the first reading material on that topic. Depending on the extent of learners' interest in the topic and/or the availability of other appropriate/relevant materials, 'authentic' texts and/or further reading materials may be used to extend or expand the topic at hand.

Additionally, tutors or teachers will generally type up the class writing, reproduce it, and distribute it at the following session. This practice provides additional interaction with the learner-generated writing. Using learner-generated writing also validates the learners' contribution to the body of reading material used by the group. The facilitator often adds open-ended questions to the sheet on which a writing appears, thereby extending learners' interaction with both content and additional writing and reading.

The themes listed are often of interest to learners -- although not to all. Attention to learners' concerns, elicited during a few minutes or more of (warm up) conversation at the beginning of the class session, may reveal particular questions, concerns or interests.

typical topics

Themes tend to follow in a similar pattern among learners universally.[1] The progression of topics seems to work best when it begins with the learner him or herself and grows outward to family, neighborhood, classroom, community, workplace, etc.

What follows are some typical and/or predictable topics and possible questions to ask or directions to pursue. **In every instance, the learners' knowledge is a good place to start:** What knowledge and experience do they have of the topic at hand? What do they need to learn? What can they tell each other? How can they find information they don't have? What action might they want to take in pursuing information or changing a negative situation?

The suggested lesson plans that follow are intended as suggestions for tutors, as possible beginning points. Questions which might help elicit information from learners are listed below. The list of brainstormed ideas and questions that appears here may or may not be of use to your particular learners.

The **process** of creating and asking their own questions is **central** to (integral to and inseparable from) the entire process through which language and writing are generated. Too much of traditional schooling is about other people identifying problems and then asking learners to solve them. For adult learners, especially, it is critical to recognize and encourage their identification of issues of importance.[2]

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[1] Gary Pharness, MLA: Responsibilities for Literacy, Pittsburgh, September, 1990.

[2] "Textbooks and tests do not, with rare exceptions, ask students to identify problems; instead, they ask students to *solve* problems already identified and stated by others." Heath, in Lunsford, Moglen and Slevin (eds.). (1990).*The Right to Literacy.* p. 293.

57

family / leisure

If asked, many learners will bring in photographs of family members, events or trips to class to share with classmates. Learners will naturally want to talk about the photos.

Initially, you can guide the discussion by posing questions and trying to elicit information from the learners who brought in photos. As learners come to kno each other, they will take on more of the interaction. From the discussion, language experience approach (LEA) writing develops. Again, you can initially model ways to shape the discussion into writing. As learners gain confidence they will begin acting as scribes for each other -- transferring oral to written language. Additionally, you might bring in magazine or other photos/illustrations depicting different families engaged in different activities. You can invite comment, questions, contrast and comparison between and among learners' ideas of family and those in the visual images.

You can develop generative questions around the idea of family, including:

- what is a family? ; how do family expectations affect our lives?

- who do you consider a family member?

- what are the roles of significant others, community people, friends and neighbors in your lives?

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useful texts / materials *

Voices   Expressions learners' family photos
Starting to Read   Personal Stories   Remembering
Double Action Picture Cards   In Print
Picture Stories   Lexicarry
Language and Culture in Conflict

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*materials listed in this section are available in the Adult Academy library.

house / home

• Where do you live? Can you make a map of the routes from home to class?

• Who rents? Who owns? Who found the place you live in now?

• What can learners tell each other about owning and renting?

• What problems have you had? Are you familiar with US cultures and customary ways of doing things?

• How do language and literacy impact on your home lives?

• Which learners can advise others about a particular aspect of housing based on their previous experience?

• Might learners want to discuss, write and/or read about:
-- moving -- borrowing/renting a truck or van; ---- activities in the home -- who does what? (overlap with family/ roles);
-- furniture -- new, used (may overlap or connect with shopping); ---- problems with the landlord/repairs; neighborhood

• What about homelessness? Why are people homeless? Who are the homeless? What has the government done to help? What would happen to homeless people in learners' home countries?

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useful texts / materials

photos of learners' homes/ magazine photos
real-life print (for sale/for rent signs, newspaper ads)
Starting to Read   In Print
A New Start   The New Arrival
Language and Culture in Conflict
Look Again Pictures for Language Development and Life Skills

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cars and transportation

How do you get to school? Is driving a car in this country very different than in your countries/community of origin?

• What about public transportation? What are the costs, availability, convenience, schedules? Are there rules of conduct (such as not eating, spitting, smoking) on public buses in their communities/countries?

• Do people commonly hitchhike?

• Are symbols and road signs used in the same manner in other parts of the world?

• What about parking bans, parking meters, alternate side/ overnight parking?

Might learners want to discuss/read/write about:
-- obtaining learning permits and drivers' licenses, driving lessons,rules of the road;
-- buying a car: new? used? mileage, body work, able to pass inspection, etc.
-- insurance, accidents/problems.

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useful texts / materials

Lifeskills 1   LEA
road signs/ graphics   drivers' manuals
newspapers and magazines (photos, buy/sell ads)
Look Again Pictures for Language Development and Life Skills

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work

Who are the learners? Who is employed? If your learners are a group of elderly widows, would jobs be an issue?

• In a group where only some people have jobs, is it important to validate the worth of work in the home?

• Have they worked before? Have they any interest in working in this country? Changing jobs?

• What are the cultural attitudes among learners vis-a-vis work? Are there issues with documentation and 'legality'? Are people exploited in their places of work?

• What's minimum wage and who earns it? Is there equal work for equal pay?

• What are contrasts between work here and in other countries?

• Do they want to learn more about salaries, benefits, upgrading?

• What about being laid-off or being fired? How do people deal with conflict at the workplace?

• Do learners want to discuss and write about positive and negative aspects of their jobs, or jobs they might like to have?

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useful texts / materials

LEA   print realia/information from the worksite
pay stubs   want ads   application forms / social security cards
        proof of authorization to work
ESL for Action: Problem Posing at Work
Let's Work Safely   Speaking Up at Work
In Print   Picture Stories   First Words
Voices   Expressions   Remembering

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family: intergenerational issues / conflict
gender: changes in roles / expectations

• Who do you live with? Who lives in your house/apartment?

• Who do you consider family? What are differences between family, friends, in-laws, blood relatives, and distant family?

• How do American families change and grow? Do you see your family as an American family? How is it different?

• What is appropriate childcare? Who takes care of whose children?

• Who does what jobs in the family? Who earns money? Who does housework? Who shops? Who cooks?

• How is marriage different in different countries, communities, sub-cultures? What are different major life events?

• Is everybody's family the same? How are they different? Why?

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useful texts / materials

LEA   school report cards   teen magazines
In Print   The New Arrival
Language and Culture in Conflict   Picture Stories
Double Action Picture Cards   Personal Stories

Finally, none of these suggestions or questions will be of any use at all if they are asked or considered in isolation from learners' goals and reasons for wanting to study.   As tutors continue to work with adult literacy learners, they try to find better means through which to include learners' explicit participation in the development of curriculum, in assessing their own progress and in deciding what is actually studied.

sample lesson plan

Looking at the questions we posed about family on page 15, we will discuss some basic ideas for developing a lesson plan.

<u>A first step is to find a way to learn about students' interest in and knowledge of the subject.</u>

At the beginning of the class, you can start an informal discussion using these questions. This discussion will reveal some information about learners' knowledge of vocabulary words in English. If you begin to write some of the questions and their responses on the blackboard or on newsprint pads, you will also start to uncover information about their ability to read and pronounce the vocabulary.

• Who do you live with? Who lives in your house? Who is in your family?

As learners discuss the people in their households, the tutor can write their responses on the board/newsprint;

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wife        cousin
daughters   father-in-law
sons        nieces
brothers    sisters
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There is so much vocabulary around family - or any subject matter, really - that you are almost certain to come across unknown words with any group of learners. You may also be able to develop some interesting cross-cultural discussion about who is considered family among your own and the learners' cultures.* You can use words from the list, and generate new questions with the learners:

Do you live with all the people in your family?

Where do the people in your family live?

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

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* You will note that much of this section focuses on cross-cultural questions. These questions are not limited to ESL learners. Even learners who were born in the US come from many different sub-cultures, and can learn from each others' experiences.

A word of caution: some of these questions might be difficult for learners whose families have been divided by immigration, or lost through war in the home country. Therefore, you might want to stop after the first question, (Who lives in your house?) and develop vocabulary and writing around that question, and around other information learners might volunteer about their families. With a group of learners who know one another well, dealing with difficult questions may be a very supportive activity. This is a question of judgement.

After learners have discussed their families, you can work with them to generate a language experience paragraph such as:

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There are [how many] people in my house.   I live
with _____

_____.

Our apartment/house has [how many] rooms.
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You can develop a grid based on the learners' information (see **approaches and activities**) and generate sentences about:

-- who has children
-- who has children in school
-- who lives with whom
-- who has family living nearby; whose family lives in/outside the US

Depending on learners' interest in the topic, you might ask them some or all of the following questions.

• How do you think American families change and grow? How do you think American families are similar/different from families in your country?

• What is good childcare? Do Americans have different ideas? How do you know? Who takes care of whose children?

• Who works in the family? Who cooks? Who does housework?

• How does marriage work in your country? Is it the same here? What are the most important birthdays?

• How are families different between learners in the group?

Use the blackboard or newsprint to note the group's responses, and then develop word lists and groupings (see below), language experience stories, flashcards, sentence strips and even bingo activities. With some creativity, there are any number of directions you can take, depending on the interests and skills of your group of learners.

For example, learners might want to discuss marriage customs. They might tell each other about marriage customs in their countries/communities, and ask about or report on weddings they've attended. You can broaden the whole group's vocabulary by listing the words they use, and add one or two of your own:

party	flowers	cake
bride	sewing	money
groom	cooking	family
presents	temple	church

If you know some letters are hard to pronounce, or to distinguish from other letters, ask learners to group all the words together using these letters (e.g., all the words that begin with the letter c):

cooking   cake   church

or all the words that list people:

bride   groom   family

or the words that list verbs/doing things:

cooking   sewing

The grouping you choose depends on the interests and needs of the learners you are working with. You can expand on this activity by encouraging learners to develop sentences using the words, or do a new group language experience story around the words. How far you go really depends on the interests and abilities of learners.

You can also encourage learners to bring in photos of family members and events; you, too, can share your own photos with the group.

If you are an active listener, and follow the lead of your learners, you will find that many discussion topics can go on for a long time. It is a good idea to keep your language experience stories, grids, and word lists in a newsprint pad so that you can bring them home at the end of the session. You can type up the class materials, and copy them for the next session. This approach ensures regular, weekly review of any material covered. It is reaffirming to learners to see that they can generate their own learning materials.

As a tutor, it is your responsibility to focus and structure your tutoring sessions. You also need ensure that activities and materials stem from the learners. You may want to break up your sessions into half hour blocks where you have specific activities to work on. For example:

Topic: Family

5:50-6:00   Come early, discuss plan with teacher (if applicable)

6:00 - 6:30 Discuss families. Generate vocabulary, two stories.
             Practice reading stories together.
             Cover grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation.

6:30-7:00   Pair off and work on specific skills with LEA stories.

                        *** break ***

7:10-7:30   Discuss specific differences between families in group.
             Look for new vocabulary, new LEA stories.

7:30-8:00   Guided or open-ended writing based on family.

It is important to balance meaningful content with a variety of activities to practice real language (in oral and written forms).

In multi-level groups, more advanced learners might write stories on the topic; others might work on basic word identification and sentence exercises with the stories. Sometimes learners can work in pairs -- reading and writing about the topic at hand. The manual section on **approaches and activities** lists numerous ways through which learners can work on reading and writing skills and tasks.

Sample Curriculum

Week	Goals	Activities	Content Areas
1	•learning about each other •setting tone •assessment: level/needs	name games, grids pair & group interviews dialogue journals set regular literacy activities (i.e. discuss/write: how was your day?)	personal information (name, address, country/community)

2	•learning about each other
	•looking for content areas
	•setting goals
		language experience stories
		interviews/grids
		  dialogue journals
		  regular activities
			personal information
			family, work, neighborhood, coming to US

3 - 4	•choosing content areas
	•building skills & vocab.
	•learning about each other
		reading based on class information
		grids and stories
		language experience stories
		  dialogue journals
		  regular activities
			Sample Content Areas:
			  Entertainment
			  Work/Unemployment
			  Community Resources
			  Shopping: food, clothes

5 - 7	•building skills & vocab. •choose new content areas •sharing info. and resources		Money Neighborhoods School & Kids Home Country Doctor/Body/Health
	•evaluation	inter-group interviews: past materials informal tests: past material (learners choose areas for test based on past goals)	Reading Newspapers
8 - 1 3	repeat week 3-7	gather material for group book xerox during week, staple in class	
14	•review	read learners' book - celebrate!!	

67

for further reading: considerations influencing curriculum

learning styles

How do you learn a language? How do you learn new things -- like setting up a computer, driving a standard car, using a fax machine, filling out tax forms? Do you prefer to read instructions, to have them read to you? Do you prefer to learn by yourself, making mistakes and troubleshooting as you go?

Understanding your own styles and preferences is key to considering the range of styles and preferences among learners.

American education tends to be very competitive. Individual work and achievement are valued greatly. Group work is only a means toward an end in many American schools.

Among many other cultures, however, learning and doing cooperatively is both means and end -- a way in which to accomplish a task that would be unthinkable to do alone. For many of our learners, reading and writing does happen collaboratively. It is important to understand how group support sustains learners.

Through attentive listening and observation we can learn how each individual learner interacts with print and language. We don't always need to see an individual 'product' (a written dictation, a worksheet, some homework) in order to understand how a learner accomplished what s/he did. We can see who turns to whom, who looks in their notebook or at posters or print in the room in order to find a needed word.

There are many questions to consider. Who sits with whom? How does a learner respond to your request that she read a passage to you alone? That she read to the others? We need to understand the difference between learning/reading and performance.

Part of our education was about displaying what we knew, showing the teacher we were paying attention by raising our hands and always filling in every answer on test forms -- even if we were guessing. For our learners, display may be frightening or it may be irrelevant. Therefore, we need to understand our own learning/ educational background in terms of the contexts in which it occurred and know that it may well be quite different from the learning needs and styles of our learners.

"but they want a book. but they want grammar"

Learner-centered practice demands beginning where the learners are, and working with them in order to help them meet *their* goals. Moving them away from less socially meaningful interaction with workbooks towards more personally relevant material is possible without neglecting grammar and vocabulary as aspects of learning.

Some commercial texts have been useful to literacy learners, with a tutor, or at home, sometimes with assistance from household or family members. Some learners appreciate bilingual grammar books; they can work with each other on various tasks in the text. Afterwards, they can work with a facilitator, generating language experience stories in English.

Tutors can develop worksheets to address grammar items learners need and want to learn, and can use exercises from grammar books, too. The issues are meaning and context. Tutors need to make the material useful for learners, and helping them move along whatever educational continuum they've established for themselves.

If adult learners intend to pursue a high school equivalency diploma, they'll need to be able to negotiate school-like literacy tasks. However, working toward the accomplishment of those tasks need not be alienating in either form or content.

Again, learners come to us with a wide range of previous experiences with schooling and with a number of goals. The space between grammar and rote learning and personally relevant content may not be so wide as some educators make it out to be. The way tutors convert content into form is part of helping learners move within the frameworks they want as they broaden the frameworks within which they can successfully learn. In other words, learners can move from rote text learning to more meaningful interaction with print as they find more interesting things to read and write while moving away from the security of rote but relatively meaningless drills.

"but it's easy for you to teach, you are so outgoing"

Everyone works differently, and personality does affect teaching style. What works well for one teacher may not work at all for another.

An extroverted teacher may keep her students entertained but is she listening to them and responding reflectively with work that will help them? Is the introverted teacher so afraid of making mistakes that she assigns worksheets all the time, so that learners go through a tightly sequenced program? Is the content of that sequence of use to learners?

As we each continue to explore learners' goals and our own responsibilities in negotiating curricula and methodologies in order to help learners meet those goals, our views and our approaches may change accordingly. Whoever the teacher is — whatever her personality, teaching style, approach — her focus is on the needs of the learner.

ABE literacy approaches & techniques

Much of this section on ABE (Adult Basic Education) is derived from workshops designed by Sally Gabb, a literacy worker at the Adult Academy and elsewhere. In it, we provide an overview of learners' experiences and goals, ways in which to relate basic life skills to print , and we suggest some specific approaches and activities to use with ABE literacy learners.

Although there are many similarities between adult learners who speak English as their first language, and those for whom English is not a native language, there are also some differences.

learners' experiences, learners' goals

Some native speakers of English have spent time in school, and may have had positive learning experiences cut short due to outside pressures. Others may have had less encouraging experiences with schooling, and may feel a certain anxiety about returning to a school-like situation. Some may feel embarrassed about their literacy skills; others might feel very good about joining a learning group. In any case, these are adults who have had extensive experience in the world. Many have developed numerous coping strategies for working around literacy-related tasks which they may not have been able to do for themselves.

Many ABE learners' want to complete the GED --
(General Equivalency Diploma) -- the high school
diploma. For some, this is a long term goal, and their
work in learning centers and/or classes is a process of
preparation for taking the tests that lead to the GED.
Others may want to improve reading and writing skills
for their own purposes, or for work-related reasons.

Regardless of learners' individual goals, the approaches
here advocate that tutors learn from the learners, and
give constant feedback. Find out what they know, how
they came to know it, what they want to know and learn,
and keep them aware of how they are progressing.

relating basic life skills to print knowledge

A large part of the process is making learners
consciously aware of what it is they're doing and how
they're doing it. Talking about how a learner reads, for
example, -- where s/he gets stuck, how s/he puts
together meaning from words in print -- is part of
helping him/her learn about how s/he learns. Talking
with learners as they deal with the GED's multiple
choice tests and logic exercises helps learners to learn
about how they actually do put information together and
learn new things.

Although specific activities and materials will differ
with different learners, (ABE or GED), the underlying
assumption is that learners can already do many things.
Tutors help learners bridge the gap between what they
already know and what they want to learn.

knowing and learning:
integrating life experience with schooling

ABE learners may or may not expect to go on to GED
instruction at some point. In general ABE courses,
learners often need assistance with reading and writing
assignments. They may want to brush up on certain
skills, or learn new ones, in preparation for a return to
the workplace. They may want to learn to use a
computer, write a business letter, or 'just learn
something'. Whatever their goals, learners need to be
aware of their own existing abilities so that they can
consciously build on them. They often take for granted
the literacy tasks they can do; these abilities need to be
brought to their attention. Encouragement to go further
and take new steps is only half the struggle.

writing

Writing is a school-related task that seems to many to be
completely unrelated to what we do in 'real life'. Many
of us are afraid of, or uncomfortable with writing, and
our learners often have these feelings, too. One way of
helping them overcome those barriers is to encourage
them to write frequently. We learn to write by writing,
and there are many forms and purposes for writing.

freewriting

Freewriting is one way to begin the needed loosening up process so that learners can just get started and can get something down on paper. People often do freewriting before or after a discussion about a topic of interest. The process is simple: when it's time to write, a time limit is set (5 minutes is a good amount of time to start) and everyone writes (tutors and learners together) -- without stopping -- about the topic at hand.

Because there's no stopping, no going back over the writing, no time to correct or re-word the writing, learner's expectations are already different from those they'd have if they were writing an essay to be turned in or graded. The tutor tells the learners that they won't have to share their writing if they don't want to. What's important here is the process of getting started -- of putting pen or pencil to paper, forming thoughts and writing down words.

Over time, learners may use freewriting as a means to work out ideas about concerns in their own lives, or to rough out initial ideas for academic essays. They might freewrite to warm up for other writing tasks, so that the task of writing itself becomes less mysterious and less frightening. They come to learn to talk through writing, (a process which is at the heart of much academic writing). They also learn to communicate their own feelings and opinions through writing as well. Freewriting is an important vehicle in bridging gaps between life experience and school-based learning.

Freewriting extends not only into academic essay writing, but can also branch out into more personal writing to the tutor in the dialogue journal. Dialogue journals are described at length in **approaches and activities**, and some aspects of dialogue journal writing are mentioned on the following page, specifically within the context of adult basic education.

Dialogue journals work from learners' existing strengths and knowledge.   Dialogue journal writing provides a means for student-tutor written interaction and communication in a non-threatening, individualized manner. Learners write to their teacher or tutor, working from their own level of ability. The journal is a place in which anything can be discussed; the focus is on content, not on correct form.

Getting started: Learners are invited to write to their tutor in the dialogue journal. The learner can choose the topic(s) and determines the length of the writing The tutor responds to the writing by asking questions, reflecting upon content, contributing his/her own information or offering sympathy, congratulations, etc.

Errors and corrections: Explicit corrections are *not*   made in the journal, but may be modeled in the tutor's responses. For example, in response to misspelled words, or incorrect grammar usage ("Yestidday I had went down-town"), the tutor models correct usage in his/her response ("When you went downtown yesterday, what did you do?"), and maintains his/her interest in the content of the writing. Some errors take time to change -- with or without explicit correction; the point of this exercise is to encourage learners to write and read for meaning and for communication.

Some learners explicitly ask for corrections; ways of correcting journal entries without inhibiting free communication include:
-- modeling correct usage in tutor's response;
-- underlining problem areas and asking learners to consider what the problems might be [verb tense, agreement, or spelling, etc.].
-- using one side of the page or notebook only for writing and using the facing side/page for corrections;
-- taking note of learners' problem areas and addressing those separately. In working out ways to individualize students' work, reading/writing problems that surface in the journal may facilitate organization of appropriate activities for individual, pair or small group work. In ABE classes, the journal provides not only an ongoing measure of the progression of learners' writing skills, but also encourages feedback about the course and the learners' work with the tutor, and with the learning experience overall.

knowing and learning for academic work: naming what you do

Preparation for academic work raises to a conscious level the kinds of thinking processes we go through in order to solve various kinds of word problems and academic exercises. A good deal of book-based/ academic work requires readers to separate fact, opinion and generalization. For many of us, this is an ongoing, unconscious process. We constantly make judgments about what's fact, what's fiction, what's opinion, what's a stereotype, etc. Our learners make those distinctions, too, in the course of their daily lives. What's different in an academic setting is that learners are being asked to make those judgements on the basis of information they receive in writing. For many learners, a first step is in asking: What does the text say? What do you know from what you've read?

word problems and other tasks

Our task as tutors is helping learners talk through the steps they take in order to solve word problems, answer comprehension questions, and make decisions about multiple-choice test items. Look at the logic exercise below, and try to work it out.

Pedro, Denise, Ray, Susan and Fred each have a favorite color. They each like a different color; no two like the same one. Who likes which color? (Colors are green, orange, blue, red & yellow).

1. Pedro's favorite color is not green.
2. Denise doesn't like red or orange.
3. Someone really likes red.
4. Susan's favorite color is yellow.
5. Ray hates blue.
6. Ray and Susan's favorite colors mix to make Fred's favorite.

This kind of exercise in logic and elimination utilizes particular thinking skills that many people may have, but are unaware of using. Using what you know to figure out what you don't know, you solve the problem.

Were you able to complete the exercise?* How did you do it? How might other people do it? It's not at all important that people approach the problem in the same way, but for those learners for whom this kind of problem is difficult it is very important that they learn to discuss the steps they take in order to solve it, so that when things break down we know where they already are, and can help to guide them to possible next steps. The steps involved in solving the problem need to be talked about aloud (a sort of 'think-aloud protocol'), in order to help make it clearer to learners for whom it is difficult.

critical thinking: from common sense to verbal logic

As you've seen in the exercise above, a good deal of academic work involves following a certain kind of logic. Clarifying the steps needed in order to work out a problem forms the bulk of the tutor's work. **Critical thinking** refers to the larger process of separating what can be true from what can't be true, and then stepping back a bit further and seeing how academic problems relate to real life problems, and how real life problems occur in larger social contexts.

The **hierarchy of thinking skills** in the box on the next page summarizes the thinking processes used in most problem solving activity. Knowing these skills well will help you support your learners as they gain awareness of their own thought process.

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* *(Pedro: blue; Denise: green; Ray: red; Susan: yellow; Fred: orange.)*

Hierarchy of thinking skills
(adapted from GED texts)

evaluation	does it all make sense?
synthesis	pulling together different information
analysis	separating information by its meaning
application	using information in new contexts
comprehension	taking meaning from information
memory	recalling information

Starting at the bottom, the six skills represent thinking processes used in solving a problem, (or fixing a leaking faucet, figuring out a pay check, filling out a form, etc.).

If, for example, _the problem is what to do to report a burglary to the police,_ there are two processes. One, actually calling the police and two, knowing what to tell the police once they arrive. Both processes require the use of these skills:

memory, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Now, to work toward solving the problem of reporting a burglary:

The first skill used is memory. It has to do with what you know or remember about a situation. You know that things were stolen, you try to remember what you had, and you know that to report the crime, you need to call the police.

Your comprehension of the problem, (understanding that you have to call the police if you ever hope to retrieve your things) allows you to complete the first two steps.

Next, you apply the information you have (what was stolen, when it was stolen, how you dial 911) and use that information to continue to get help.

Your analysis of what the information means (well, they might help and they might not, but if I don't call, I know they won't help) enables you to synthesize all this information together.

Finally, your evaluation tells you if it all make sense or not. (Well, they came after 90 minutes, they might find my things or they might not, but now I feel I've done what I can. Maybe I'll look around the neighborhood and see if the thief dropped anything).

Of course, word problems, and book-based tasks follow these steps a little differentiy, but the underlying idea is the same. You start with what you know, you try to build your understanding until you've figured out a solution -- to a life problem, to a comprehension exercise, etc.

putting it together:
problem-posing & critical thinking
skills in action

A problem-posing approach places this whole process of understanding into an even broader context, and asks why did someone rip me off anyway? Who needed my TV? Why did they come to my house? What can I do to change this situation? The problem posing approach is discussed in greater detail in the section on **models of education**. It remains an option that you and your learners may wish to pursue actively. Generally, most learning situations present multiple opportunities to engage in asking why, and to integrate life and school.

forming literacy/critical thinking patterns

Problem-posing is often useful when learners confront 'need to know' materials. These materials are written documents, letters, insurance forms, accident reports, government letters, etc., that learners encounter. Before trying to explain anything to the learners, it's important to ask what knowledge and understanding do the learners bring to the material already? What do they understand about the writing, and what do they want to know more about? How does a letter announcing an insurance company's raising its rates impact upon a particular learner? What are the larger issues behind the rising costs of insurance for everyone? Do learners want to talk about these issues?

When they are interested in exploring such problems, problem-posing (see **models of education**) provides a useful guide to facilitating those discussions. At other times, however, learners may prefer to get the important facts from a written document and may not wish to discuss those issues any further. Facilitators and tutors might try to raise learners' awareness of the larger issues surrounding such problems as paying for insurance, etc., but if learners choose not to pursue the discussion, their rights and needs must be respected.

Real life materials often provide a way into worksheets and other academic-based literacy materials, and vice versa. As you come to know your learners and their needs you'll start to balance the work you do with them around both academic and real life texts and materials.

The section on **approaches and activities** provides concrete ways to integrate literacy skills within particular topics, and the **materials** section suggests books and visual materials that may be useful.

During your tutoring sessions, you will find your own ways of helping learners tie their learning together: using critical thinking skills to talk through and solve problems; to develop literacy through meaningful content; and integrating specific skills (spelling, writing letters, reading aloud) to meet learners' needs and goals.

ESL literacy approaches and techniques

In this section we discuss some aspects of adult literacy learning for people who are learning English as their second language. We mention some basic activities you will find useful with ESL (English as a Second Language) learners, and look at ways of relating basic life skills and spoken language ability to print knowledge. Finally, for further reading, we look at some basic principles and conditions for language development.

ESL learners and their needs: a basic profile

Some ESL/literacy learners speak English fairly well, but need help with literacy skills. Others have less fluency in English, and need to develop all four language skills -- listening, speaking, reading and writing -- together. Listening and reading are *receptive* skills. You listen to someone else speak, you read something that has already been written. Speaking and writing are *productive* skills; they involve creating new language. Many learners develop their receptive skills more quickly than their productive skills. Developing productive skills can be much more time-consuming and intimidating.

two approaches

Total physical response (TPR) is an approach to language learning which allows learners to listen and respond to instructions before they produce spoken or written language, which helps develop receptive skills. (For more on TPR, see approaches and activities). Approaches such as the language experience approach (LEA) combine all four skills. As you continue tutoring, you'll see that LEA forms the basis of a great deal of learner-centered literacy activity.

Language Experience Approach -- The language experience approach (LEA) is a basic means for generating language in oral and written forms. People adapt and use the approach in many ways.

what it is:
Essentially, LEA consists of listening to learners' spoken language, writing it down (transcribing it into written form), and using it as reading/teaching material.

The rationale is that learning to read has to do with connecting one's own knowledge of the world (i.e. experience) with print. Practiced readers use reading strategies such as inferring and predicting meaning based on their own experiences. Using reading material that comes from learners' experiences and their existing knowledge of spoken language helps develop these reading skills.

The content of language experience stories is already meaningful to learners. Meaningful content and context is not only more interesting to learners, it is easier to retain.

To illustrate, read this fragment and try to recollect it without looking back: *Pat put paper, peppers, potatoes and pots in planters to protect them.* Now read this: *Yesterday I went downtown buy shoes.* The example is exaggerated intentionally -- an emphasis only on phonics has little to do with meaningful content; a sentence describing a real event using high frequency words common and known to learners contains meaning and authentic vocabulary. Such a sentence forms a basis for generating writing that learners can and will want to read.

Work on phonics (sound/symbol correspondences) and grammar forms is embedded in the content of the language generated by learners. Teachers can focus on specific forms as they arise in the activity.

In its purest form, LEA is an <u>exact</u> encoding of learners' words. The learner tells his/her story, and the tutor (or other learners) writes that story exactly as s/he hears it. With beginners, one often needs to offer suggestions for connecting words in order to form a coherent story. After the story has been written, learners then use it as the basis for their reading material for that particular session.

how to use it:

LEA can be used with an individual learner in one on one tutoring, at a blackboard, or on a pad of paper in a group learning situation.

More than one learner can construct the story. One learner might begin to talk about something s/he remembers about their day, for example. Others might then contribute their recollections until a paragraph (or several paragraphs, with more advanced learners) has been written. The tutor then invites learners to read the paragraph (and might invite them to read every two or three sentences as the story is being written).

With very beginning learners the story might be just three or four short sentences, often with several mistakes. To start, tutors often need to ask a series of open-ended questions. <u>An example:</u> Today I go work factory. Factory name Noel Stevens. Near El Inca restaurant. I operate machine press. Once this story has been encoded, learners read it through several times, together and individually.

Although it may seem that hearing ten other people read the same passage would be tedious, learners remain engaged in the process -- watching, learning from and listening to others (and learning the pronunciation and rhythm of English); preparing themselves for the trip to the newsprint or blackboard to read. The tutor has a chance to observe who helps whom, who 'memorizes' a passage by perhaps reading one word while pointing to another, who wants to read first, who needs encouragement from peers, etc.

building literacy activity from LEA:

Once the story has been read, beginning level learners might spend a good amount of time copying it into their notebooks. The tutor might invite learners whose abilities to produce language (by speaking or writing) lag behind their abilities to understand it (through listening or reading) to go to the text and circle 'work' or all the words that begin with a particular letter.

For the next session the story can be typed and distributed to learners for review. Questions might be added; comprehension questions (is the factory near the restaurant?) may be useful for learners who want visible evidence of pencil/paper interaction, for whom learning occurs very gradually. Other open ended questions (Do you work in a factory? Do you like your work?) may generate yet another round of language experience writing.

but they don't speak English...

Beginning learners might start with photos or other visual images which they label and learn. Fran Filipek Collignon, at the International Institute of Rhode Island, suggests using self-adhesive photo albums in which learners save these images and writing. As they gain more written language, the photo albums reflect a shift from visual to written forms. The photos can be used initially for labelling purposes; later sentences and stories may be built from those pictures.

LEA can also be used to encourage learners to write by inviting them to each contribute one sentence to a general topic, such as: **Last week-end I . . .** Learners will each write one sentence about their weekend. Once learners have seen the process modeled a few times -- the tutor listens, asks clarification questions, suggests words when needed and then encodes them -- learners take over the work of scribing with and for each other.

correcting errors in spelling and grammar

It is important to remember that people learning a
language will make mistakes as they learn. Learning a
language is intimidating for many. Most learners learn
English through testing their ideas about how this new
language works. This is a scary process for many as it
makes them feel like children. People will need to be
aware of their mistakes, but not all of them all at once.
Learners tend to learn correct form best through learning
to spot their own mistakes. Tutors should encourage
learners to look for mistakes, but refrain from pointing
out more than one or two at a time unless asked.

Some tutors correct learners as tutors transcribe for them.
("Last week I go", becomes a question from the tutor: "You
went?"). Others leave learners to transcribe for each other
or transcribe the exact utterances, because these are the
words learners know and use. As learners continue to
gain facility with language they will correct each other.

LEA all by itself is a starting point. It is unfair to send
learners out into the world with only a private language,
(full of misspellings, or irregular grammar usage) which
LEA can become. LEA is a bridge between learners' initial
uses of oral and written language and the wider world of
print that exists beyond the classroom. LEA is a piece of
the process of moving from learners' spoken language to
standard English usage.

relating basic life skills to print knowledge

Many of the topics, and much of the literacy activity you
undertake with ESL learners starts from LEA. Survival
('life skills') topics, such as learning to write a money
order or reading a telephone bill, can begin with simple
group stories from learners. See the example on the
following page.

> Juan has a telephone.
> Pedro has a telephone.
> Maria has a telephone.
> Sok has a telephone, too.
> Juan's telephone bill was very big.
> Juan wants to call the telephone company.

Notice the repetition of the word *telephone*. This story came from a small group of learners, each one writing his or her own name, or the name of a classmate.

Juan had a problem with his phone bill, and t rought it to class. He gave the tutor permission to discuss the problem with the other learners. First, the tutor elicited this LEA. She worked with *telephone* as a high-frequency sight word, (a word that is seen often, and is a very commonly used word).

Later, she photocopied the bill (again, with Juan's permission), and the group worked on reading the bill, figuring out the due date, the charges, and trying to guess why the bill was so unreasonably high. Learners also brainstormed suggestions for Juan -- he should go to the phone company and complain about the bill; he should write a letter; he should ask an English speaking friend to call for him, etc. This kind of activity is a typical, real life application of the problem-posing approach.

building skills from content

A follow-up activity to the work on telephones and bills might be working from a survival skills basic text to bridge learners' knowledge of the topic to other written forms. In a later section of this manual, we will outline a number of these texts, but for now we will concentrate on one.

First Words is a useful beginning level literacy text that uses photos to illustrate key sight words. From First Words, learners might then go on to explore telephone/utility bills in other survival texts, or their interest in the topic might have passed. At any rate, LEA is an excellent initial activity. It allows learners to use the language they know, to learn to read and write words they know orally, and to then go on to more complex literacy work on a particular topic, or to go on to a new topic altogether.

using English

Because literacy activity does not exist in a vacuum, a familiarity with typical ESL methods is useful. Learners use written language in a context -- to understand instructions, to pay bills, to deal with their children's school, etc. Reading and writing are only half the skills needed to use English.

Communicative competence refers to a speaker's ability to know how and when to use the language they know for specific purposes. This ability applies to reading and writing as well as to listening and speaking.

As you read at the beginning of this section, communicative competence is an ability which develops over time. Just as a native speaker of English knows that there is one way to speak to a family member, another way to address an employer, and yet another way to speak to a telephone salesperson, ESL learners also have a sense of ways to address people within their native language and culture. They may not know, however, how to use English to meet different needs. They may not understand that a note to a teacher should probably not be written on the back of an envelope, or that a utility bill can be challenged.

Working with learners to ensure they achieve communicative competence is an overall goal. Specific objectives within that goal include helping learners develop language to meet their specific needs.

grammar

A traditional approach to ESL instruction is the **grammar/translation** method, which resembles the methods used to teach many of us French, Spanish or other foreign languages in high school. (English as a Foreign Language programs often rely on grammar/translation methods.) Our teachers used English as the language of instruction, and had us learn to conjugate verbs, learn vocabulary and grammar in the target language (the language we were learning).

This approach is not particularly effective for ESL learners, because ESL uses English (the target language) as the language of instruction for non-English speakers. The problem is that the learners cannot understand the information taught because they do not yet understand the language used for instruction. Grammar/translation talks *about* the target language but doesn't focus on real or immediate use of the language. Immigrants and refugees need to use English immediately, and therefore to focus on their communicative skills.

Advanced level learners might ask structural questions about English grammar and usage. The Adult Academy resource library has texts to help you help them in their learning. However, for the most part, a learner-centered approach which begins with the learners' words (LEA), is more useful. For learners with a strong interest in grammar, solid exercises can be developed from the LEA writings without sacrificing meaning for form.

survival topics

Learners identify their survival needs through the topics they discuss. It is the tutor's responsibility to generate meaningful discussion and listen carefully for topics of importance to learners.

For example, in the telephone story above, we learn that Juan has a problem with his phone bill and needs help. Other learners know about problems with bills, and offer him solutions. They don't need a whole unit on paying bills -- they already know how to do this.

Before embarking upon any survival skills unit (such as transportation, health, housing, banking, etc.), it's very important to find out what learners already know about the topic - and what they want to learn. Some may be homeowners who don't need to learn how to go about renting an apartment, but they might want help with tax forms. Others might might want to learn about how to buy a house for the first time. The more that tutors can tap learners' knowledge -- to help each other, to build discussion and writing -- the more meaningful and useful the language and literacy activity in the classroom will be.

more grammar, more context

We can also use Juan's story to build some grammar exercises. Using the form _name_ has _object_, (Juan has a telephone) we can build other sentences using the third person singular (he/she/it) form of the verb to have, and can also reinforce the other forms:

I have	we have
you have	you have
he, she, it has	they have

Allowing this exercise to develop from the structures that learners already know strengthens their ability to absorb new learning about the verb.

This approach is very effective at helping people learn and remember new grammar information. People are able to learn the new information because it comes in a context that is already familiar and meaningful. To simply present the form of the verb to have in the present tense and conjugate it, without a context (such as who has a telephone), makes it more difficult to remember, and far less interesting to learners. It is crucial in ESL work always to build meaningful context.

for further reading

Language development:
some principles and conditions.*

1. Language learners develop language skills by using the language.

Language develops through use.

Learners need opportunities to use language; they need people with whom to speak and listen, plus situations that promote active participation.
Learners are motivated to communicate.
Learning activities should promote participation, and should be social. Tutors need to be sensitive to learners' initial fears of making mistakes, and should not confuse a learner's initial period of silence in the classroom with that learner's lack of having anything to say.

2. Language practice should be functional and meaningful.

function, meaning, interaction

Classroom activities should provide learners with something real to say and a reason to say it.
Authentic language materials, and interaction with native speakers of English provide the most beneficial practice.
Classroom organization must allow for interaction; with other learners and with proficient and/or native speakers of English.

3. Language learning is improved when its focus is on doing things with the language rather than on the structure of the language itself.

focus on meaning

Speaking the language rather than speaking about the language helps people who are beginning to grapple with meaning and communicating in that language.

_____

* * These three pages are abridged and adapted from information in the Adult Academy's resource files. A source of the original information is unavailable.

4. Language input must be understandable to the learner.

**compre-
hensible
language**

Language meaning should be evident from the context in which it is used. This means using simple, direct communication, examples, and visuals.
Learners' background knowledge should be used; language about something the learner already knows (and has a schema for) is more comprehensible than language about unknown things.

5. Making mistakes is a normal, constructive part of language learning.

errors

The fact that a particular structure or word has been taught and learned does not necessarily mean that it can be consistently used correctly. It takes months and often years for learners to integrate and truly know many aspects of language and language use. Tutors should be sensitive to learners' needs; some learners actively seek correction, others may be discouraged or ashamed if corrected regularly. Allowing learners to complete what they're saying, asking for clarification, and modeling correct responses develops their willingness and ability to use language to communicate.

6. Language is learned best in an atmosphere of trust, acceptance, high expectations and support.

**learning
environ-
ment**

In such an atmosphere, learners are willing to take risks learning
and trying out language form, both of which are necessary for language development. Fear, anxiety and competitiveness make learning difficult. Dealing with these feelings prevents learners from attending to the language input/instruction they receive.

7. Listening, speaking, reading and writing strengthen and build on each other. The four language skills should not be taught separately, in isolation from one another.

	The four language skills should be integrated in language learning.
language skills	Increased ability in one skill leads to increased ability in other skills. For example, developing speaking and writing skills do more to help reading comprehension than reading skill exercises alone.

8. Language develops in a cultural context; both the culture of the learners' first language and that of the language being learned influence the progress of language development.

	Factors such as the functions of oral and written language in the learners' culture and
language and culture	culturally familiar situations must be considered; they will influence development of the language being learned.
	The culture of the target language (English) must be learned along with the language because it determines the meaning given to language in varying situations.

9. Socio-cultural factors such as the relationship of the learner's ethnic group to the target language ethnic group can influence language acquisition.

language status

The perceived relative status of the language learning group and the target language group may either help or limit second language learning. A minority group that perceives itself as being dominated by the majority group may have difficulty learning the majority language. Majority language speakers may not feel as motivated, on the other hand, to learn a language that is not prestigious.

A *subtructive* language situation, where the native language is being replaced by a majority language, such as English, is less conducive to language development than an *additive* language situation, where a second language is being learned not to replace the first language, but to be added to it.

10. Skills in the native language support development of a second language.

language interde-pendence

The more a learner understands about the workings of one language, the easier it is for him/her to grasp the workings of another. However, proficiency in the first language is only one of many factors determining the ease with which a learner will acquire another language.

11. Language proficiency includes linguistic (or grammatical) competence, socio-linguistic competence, and strategic competence.

linguistic, socio-linguistic and strategic competence

Grammatical accuracy (knowing what to say) is the result of both the process of language acquisition and direct and indirect teaching of grammatical forms.

Learners need to know which grammatical forms to use, with whom, and under what circumstances; this socio-linguistic knowledge is needed for learners to know how, when and where to say what they want to say.

Learners also need to be competent in the use of strategies which allow them to compensate for their problems with language or for breakdowns in communication, because they must communicate years before they master the language entirely.

12. Language proficiency pre-supposes different abilities for different people in different situations.

communicative and school skills

Using English to learn content matter is very different from the ability to use English for ordinary conversation; the ability to converse fluently and correctly in English does not mean that the learner can learn academic content in an all-English setting.

Curriculum organization must take into account the learner's basic goals: every day conversational skills, the development of academic content, or writing and reading for day to day purposes, for example.

13. Language development takes time. Assessment of language development cannot be made on the basis of a single test or tests.

time factors and evaluation

Language development is a process. It occurs over time. It must be assessed and measured over time.

Ongoing evaluations should contain multiple measures of proficiency, including tutor's observations, learning logs, writing samples, and notes on interaction in class.

tutors:
roles & responsibilities

Thank you for joining the Adult Academy Tutoring roster. We hope that you will enjoy tutoring. In order to clarify what we need from you, and for you to know what you can expect from us, we are asking you to consider the following to be your job description.

Your two largest obligations are to attend training workshops, and to tutor on a regular basis. We will discuss scheduling and logistical details before the end of the training session.

Tutors' responsibilities:

• attend training workshops:
-- learn from workshop leaders and from each other;
   help, teach and support each other

• make adult education work for you and your learners:
-- help create a collaborative learning environment, both during the workshops tutoring sessions as well
-- adhere to a regular program structure and schedule
-- tutor at least 2 hours per week
-- choose a time, learner population and site that works for you.
-- develop materials with and for your learners
-- develop curriculum with your learners and with teachers whose learners you help

• provide feedback to learners, teachers and Adult Academy staff.

• consider helping to train new volunteers

Adult Academy staff are available to help you throughout the course of tutoring. Should you have scheduling problems, or concerns about your learners or the program in general, please contact us.

what tutors do: tutoring

Although the specific content might vary from learning center to learning centers, the tutor's role is to support learners by providing additional help and attention to learners in small groups or, in some cases, on a one-to-one basis. In addition to the actual tutoring work, tutors are also asked to document their sessions with learners.

what some tutors may want to do: socializing

Some tutors choose to spend additional time with their learners beyond the tutoring sessions. Some go to movies or social events together. Some have regular telephone conversations -- particularly with ESL learners who want to practice their speaking and listening skills. This extra time is completely optional, and beyond the scope of a tutor's commitment to the learners or the program. Tutors are in no way obliged to meet with learners beyond the tutoring sessions, nor should they feel obligated to extend themselves to unrealistic commitments of time or energy.

troubleshooting:
when learners need help beyond the classroom

Occasionally, learners confide in tutors about personal, financial, domestic problems. Tutors are not expected to act as social service providers. Should a learner ask for help, a tutor may offer to investigate appropriate service agencies through which the learner can find a solution to his or her problem. The Adult Academy does not recommend tutors or teachers taking on learners' problems. It is important to respect learners' privacy, and to assist in *directing* learners to appropriate agencies as the need arises. During the training sessions, tutors might wish to discuss potential problems in order to devise effective strategies for helping learners find solutions to particular problems when or if they arise.

keeping track of learner/tutor interaction

An important element of tutoring, particularly over a period of time, is keeping track of learners' activities and progress. Some tutors write up lengthy notes after each session; others jot down who was there, what they did and leave it at that. As you become more comfortable with the tutoring sessions and a certain rhythm develops, you'll notice patterns of interaction among learners and between learners and yourself. It's very useful to make note of these patterns as they occur, as well as other incidents and happenings during the sessions.

The Adult Academy provides very open-ended tutoring logs. (See sample on next page.). The logs give tutors a great deal of leeway in deciding what to note about a particular session. We ask that you fill in your log for each session, and use the section for ideas/comments/critiques at the end of each session to evaluate the session.

Lengthy responses to questions on the tutoring logs might not necessarily be written up every session, but can be helpful in framing your thoughts about your work with you learners, should you choose to keep your own teaching journal.

ADULT ACADEMY TUTOR'S LOG

LEARNERS:		
TUTOR:	DATE/TIME/SITE:	

GOALS:	MATERIALS:	ACTIVITIES:
COMMENTS:	COMMENTS:	COMMENTS:

OUT OF CLASS ACTIVITIES:

LEARNERS' RESPONSES:	TUTOR'S EVALUATION/IDEAS:
102	1̣0̣3̣

THIS FORM HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM ONE PRODUCED BY ALBSU.

learning about your learners

You might start to notice, and keep track of not only specific materials used by your learners, but also, who begins to bring in outside reading/writing materials to work on in class?

Who is interacting with whom? Is one learner usually particularly withdrawn? Outspoken?

Are people tired? Would it be helpful to bring juice and/or snacks to the sessions? Do learners respond well to a certain activity? Do they resist writing? Is someone copying everything that's written on the board into their notebook?

Is someone else trying to help other learners? Are other learners asking you for help all the time? Do they sometimes ask each other?

As you become increasingly aware of who your learners are, how they learn and interact with each other, you'll most likely develop a kind of short hand -- some way to keep track of what goes on during each session. You may not have time to write down everything in complete sentences -- brief notes on your worksheets, or in a notebook can be jotted down onto the tutor's log at the end of the session.

There are several purposes for keeping tutor logs:

1) to help you (and the teacher you assist, if any) to know what's going on with the learner over time;

2)   to help you keep track of questions you might have about learners' progress;

3) to help you keep track of materials learners have used, approaches that don't work well and those that do;

4) to help you keep track of your own progress with   tutoring sessions -- to note how you come to feel more comfortable, more confident as well as to note problem areas and questions you might have about tutoring;

5) to provide documentation to program funders that tutors and learners do meet, with what frequency and for what length of time.

Additionally, you may want to explore the potential for involving learners in evaluation of their own progress and in deciding future directions of study. (For example, a learner might look at the log and realize that s/he has done a good deal of work on one topic, and might decide to move to another; or realizes that s/he has gained a large list of sight words, and might want to work on writing sentences using these words, etc.).

questions for reflection:

These are questions which you might ask yourself now, and return to periodically. These questions reflect ongoing concerns and issues in every learning/teaching interaction.

- Who are you working with?
- What do you have in common with your learners? How are you different?
- What are learners' strengths and goals?
- What interactive/cooperative activities help to meet these goals?
- What stands out about tutoring -- is most enjoyable, unexpected, difficult, etc.?
- What questions do you have?

- Where can you go to find some answers?

approaches and activities

In this section, we catalogue a wide range of approaches and activities that are widely used with adult literacy learners. Some are well known, and others have come to us from individual teachers and colleagues. Those methods that we have touched on in other sections, such as the language experience approach, are covered here in detail. Where appropriate, we have included visual examples. We suggest you read this section briefly at first to become familiar with the variety of activities you might use, and refer to it frequently as you plan actual tutoring sessions.

The methods, approaches and activities that literacy tutors use are like tools that people keep at home under the sink or in a toolbox. You will gain experience with these activities as you work with your learners. You will find yourself adapting and expanding many of the activities to meet the needs of your learners. You can incorporate these activities into literacy learning for native speakers of English as well as for ESL/literacy learners. They are designed to be used within an ongoing learning sequence. You can use and combine activities as students' needs and interests dictate.

Many learners need to develop skills in different areas; some may be stronger readers than writers, others may need help developing their understanding of English. These approaches and activities may help you to create different kinds of interaction to help learners with differing learning styles. They work well in multi-level literacy settings, and within the context of multiple topics. Brief descriptions are given for each heading, followed by examples. They are listed alphabetically on the following page. We have indicated their suitability for ABE or ESL, but most can be used in either context.

ESL   ABE
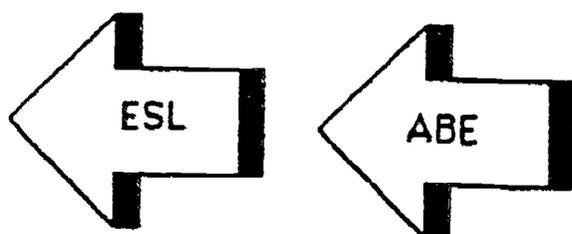
2 approaches and activities

Table of Contents

Audio Tapes -- dictation. listening practice. drills. tapes of guest speakers. e.g). Teacher. student-made or commercially prepared. tapes lend themselves to extended multi-level activity. Learners can listen for content. particular words or phrases. Popular songs work well as cloze (fill in the blanks) exercises. Learners can generate and tape dialogs and then transcribe them: language experience stories can be read on tape and listened to by learners who then read the accompanying texts during independent/individual working times.

for example:
leaving a message -- record 5 - 10 different phone messages [e.g., This is Juan Alvarez, please ask Peter to call me. My number is 345-6789.]. You can use 'while you were out' preprinted forms, develop your own forms, or ask learners to use a blank sheet of paper to record the messages in writing. As they advance, they may want to record their own messages.

reading a text -- you and/or your learner might read a simple text (one they've already written and/or read, or a new reading). The learner then transcribes the audio text into written form. Stories from *Expressions* or Personal Stories provide useful texts for reading and taping.

Bingo -- sets of bingo cards can be designed for specific topics, such as months/days/digital or analog clock times, occupations, colors, numbers [numerals/words], foods, items of clothing, etc. Words and/or pictures can be used to create each card. Use bottle caps, beans, coins, buttons, etc. for markers. Aside from providing a change of pace, bingo cards and the process of playing bingo involve reading horizontally and vertically, scanning, matching sounds, symbols and images, and can reinforce certain forms of 'document' literacy (reading forms, grids, applications).

B	I	N	G	O

for example:
Using cardboard or heavy paper, make 12 squares, 4 down and 3 across*. On each of the squares write or draw the words/items that are being studied (such as socks, shoes, belt, shirt, skirt, pants, dress, etc.). Make as many cards as you have learners, plus one for yourself. Part of the project might include showing learners how to make the cards, and having them each make one or two different cards. All of the cards should be different -- each card should have one 'free' square, and all of them should have at least one item not found on the others. Use index cards, or small pieces of paper to write all the words that might be found on the bingo cards. You or a learner can read the cards, (or show the pictures, if you use drawings). As each word/picture is read/ shown, the corresponding square is covered on the bingo board. The first person to complete the board wins, and becomes the next person to call/show the cards. Two or three rounds of this is usually enough, but sometimes people like to play more. This can also be played with learners on their own, and can free your time to work with one learner or group of learners while others are engaged in playing bingo or making their own new boards and cards.

* You can make 9, 15, or 16 squares, depending on the abilities of the group and the numbers of items you want to include in a given bingo board.

Cloze -- a fill in the blanks exercise. You can omit every ___th word, or pronouns, verbs, or other particular words/parts of speech upon which you want to focus. For very beginning level students, cloze is a good exercise for copying -- visual discrimination (learning the difference between "p" and "b", for example), letter formation, etc. It's also good practice for working on high frequency (commonly used) words.

---

for example:
Copy a language experience story that learners have written, but omit certain words along the way. (e.g. His ____ is Juan. ___ comes from the Dominican _____. He is 34 ____ old. He ___ married.).

Learners who are just beginning to be able to read can copy, following word by word in order to complete the exercise. For other more advanced learners, you can focus on verbs, omitted every verb in a text, or all the words that begin with a certain letter, etc.

Dialogue journals -- tutors and learners communicate regularly on a one to one basis through writing in a small journal on whatever topics interest the learner. The process works from learners' existing strengths and knowledge. Weekly writing in the dialog journal encourages both individual and collaborative inter-action with reading and writing.

Rationale: Dialog journal writing provides a means for student-tutor written interaction and communication in a non-threatening, individualized manner. Learners are invited to write to their teacher or tutor, working from their own level of ability.

Getting started: Beginning learners might be asked to write one or two sentences about how they're feeling on a particular day. More advanced students might be invited to write 3-5 sentences about their weekend, their job, their family, etc. The tutor then responds to the writing by either posing additional questions, reflecting upon content, contributing his/her own information or offering sympathy, congratulations, etc.

Errors and corrections: Explicit corrections are *not* made within or on the learners' actual writing, but may be modeled in the tutors' responses. (For example, if a learner reports: *"Yester-day I have some time, go went downtown to shopping"*, a tutor may respond with, *"I'm glad you had time to go shopping. When you went shopping, did your children go with you?"*).

Seeing progress: Some errors will not change quickly with or without explicit correction; the point of this exercise is to encourage learners to try to write and read for meaning and for communication. The journal is not a place to focus on formally correct writing. As time passes, learners see their entries grow in length and often see improvements in their writing as well.

Building up to the journal:

The writing process can be intimidating. In order to demystify writing to some extent, it may help to consider the following:
-- learners' uses of reading and writing on a daily basis;
-- kinds of reading and writing tasks in which learners engage [time cards, shopping lists, letters to family or school, bills, etc.];

-- <u>ways in which to work from the whole (a written communication) to its parts</u> (ideas, words, sentences, etc.).

To begin to engage learners in the reading/writing interaction, consider:

-- using the blackboard or other regularly designated area to post a question, statement, or simple written communication every day, to which learners can respond orally, initially, and possibly later in writing. Examples include: space (on the blackboard) for the date, a weather report or other daily information to be written, current events posted, etc.
-- having learners exchange simple written questions with each other at regular intervals (weekly, every two days).

<u>Approaches to consider in beginning the journal process:</u>

-- focus on a specific topic, such as family, work, housing situations;
-- free writing;
-- question/answer format.
Some people use the journal to increase communication between themselves and their learners, and focus on the meaning communicated in the writings. Others respond to learners' requests for correction. Some possible ways of correcting journal entries without inhibiting free communication include:
-- modeling correct usage in tutor's response;
-- <u>underlining</u> problem areas and asking learners to consider what the problems might be [verb tense, agreement, or spelling, etc.].
-- using one side of the page or notebook only for writing and using the facing side/page for corrections;
-- taking note of learners' problem areas and addressing those separately. In working out ways to individualize students' work, reading/writing problems that surface in the journal may facilitate organization of appropriate activities for individual, pair or small group work.

FEO.4 H. R

How are you today? I hope you
... have a headache from work.
... about you working around
... times.

Did you work yesterday or did you
have the day off? I didn't come to
school, but I went to a meeting
yesterday. My week-end was quiet.
I hope you had a good week-end.
P.

How are you today?

I'm good today
somtday I feel headache
somtday I work o k
I went to work on Friday
I had a good week-end
thank you   Jar et
                    F.

Dear Janet
How are you today

This
wers
vaca
wha
not
famil

I'm
my k
this
have
I wil

Dear
How
and

April 1 P

I'm sorry you can't have a
garden. Can you plant anything
inside, in a pot maybe?

pot. How are you
feeling today?
How was your weekend?

April 22, 1991
this year no plant anything
today I feel little brter
today I come to school
tomorrow I can came school
after my daughter wedding
I after my daughter wedding
I came back to school Rahh
miss teach

April Phi...
I was very happy to see you

Dyads -- various interactive pair activities: information gaps, charts, grids, giving/receiving directions. The goal of dyads is to create a situation of interdependence. Learners need each other (and each other's information) to accomplish a task, fill in a form, solve a problem or otherwise complete a given activity. (See also pair work, grids).

for example:

Two learners (or groups of learners) have the same map, but one person/group has locations of 4 places marked on the map, and the other has locations of 4 different places marked on their map; together they complete marking all 8 locations on a map. They can ask, "What's in the building on Brown street, next to the bank?" and other questions in order to elicit the needed information from the other person or group.

Say these addresses.

1) 30 King St., Apt. 4
2) 400 Lincoln Ave.
3) 230 E. Kennedy Ave.
4) 3 W. Johnson Road
5) 3450 Greenwood St.
6) 22 W. 41st Ave.
7) 20 Hill Ave.,Apt. 3
8) 403 S. Lake St.
9) 2030 E. Oak Ave.
10) 241 1st Ave.

NOTES:

Prior to the activity, review common street names in your community. Usually a community has "Main Street", First, Second, Third, etc. Review the use of abbreviations - # for Apartment number, 7th for seventh, St. for Street, etc.

A sample interchange to practice when dictating the addresses is:

Student B: *For number 1. What address is it?*

Student A: *Ten Oak Street.* (Reads from the information Card)

Student B: *Ten Oak Street.* (Writes the address.)

Special note: You may wish to review the letters of the alphabet before the activity if students will become involved in spelling the names of the streets.

Flashcards -- key phrases, vocabulary words, or sentences can be written on cards or strips of paper and then are physically manipulated, arranged, seen, used, read, etc. Sentence strips can be cut up and put back together again. Learners can also use sentence strips and/or flashcards to create new phrases. Learners sometimes keep a file of flashcards for reference; they can see the number of words they've learned increase. Other learners prefer to keep lists of words, or to organize their writing in notebooks.

for example:
After reading a new story, learners might write words they want to learn, or that are new to them on flashcards. They can then 'quiz' each other -- having each other read and/or spell the new words. As learners become more advanced they might use the cards to learn alphabetization skills, or group the cards into different categories -- foods, articles of clothing, verbs, names of classmates, etc.
If there is a storage area for small group tutorials, students may want to create a group set of flashcards to be used at the learning center, in addition to flashcards they make and keep for their own use.

Grids -- a useful format for beginning readers. Essential information appears horizontally and/or vertically. Encourages various left/right, up/down scanning skills. Grids can be built around learners' dates of birth, number of children, addresses, zip codes, phone numbers, jobs, etc. Useful in providing information for comparison in a visual format that can be read easily -- without 'connecting' words, or long sentences (which can be built from information taken from a grid).(See also interview/ information grids, alphanumeric grids and pair work).

Interview / information grids -- students interview each other and insert given responses into appropriate places on the grid. Working from basic information questions they normally ask each other (e.g., where do you come from? are you married?, etc.), learners place the information under appropriate headings, as illustrated below. Building the grid and filling in the needed information allows learners at all levels to participate -- through writing, reading, and/or responding to requested information.

Name	How many children?	working?	Who is working?	
Juanita	4	yes		
Carlos	0	yes		
Pedro	3	yes	Who isn't working?	
Maria	2	no		
Juanita has four children. She is working.			Who has 4 children?	
Carlos has no children. He is working			Who has no children?	
Pedro has three children. He is working.			Who has 3 children?	
Maria has two children. She's not working.				

Alphanumeric grids -- learners use information generated previously through conversation, to complete alphanumeric grids. This is important beginning work for map reading (particularly local street guides) and for other kinds of document literacy, as it requires reading both across and up and down the page. (Document literacy refers to forms or charts that use horizontal and vertical formats).

for example:
Using, the grid on the following page, learners can practice reading and/or hearing instructions (given by the facilitator or by other learners, such as: Put the [name of this month] in G-11; write your last name in F-3.) As in bingo, the information asked for can relate to whatever context or content that learners are studying at a given time.

Name,

A	JUAN	M			
B	$4.31	TINA			8/15/81
C	August	Thursday	single		
D		Wednes-day		10	10
E	O	881.1234			15 OAK ST PROV. RI
	1	2	3	4	

Hangman -- Hangman is good for the first or last five or ten minutes of a class or tutoring session to reinforce new words or even multi-word messages, or to use words learners know but perhaps haven't written that particular day. Predicting, counting letters, using vowels and consonants are all valuable subskills developed within the context of playing the game. These skills emerge after learners have played several times; there's no need to introduce vowels/ consonants in isolation. As learners get the feel of the game, and understand that 'r' might not be an appropriate choice to complete 'n_xt', they begin to get a sense of how vowels and consonants work (if they haven't already through their own ongoing interaction with writing and reading). They're using previous learning; they are to predict the word 'next' because it is a word they've seen frequently. Messages or words that might be used include reminders (e.g., holiday- no class tomorrow), jokes, phrases (have a good weekend), or other relevant information.

for example:

_ _ _ _ _

Blanks can be written on the blackboard or newsprint pad. A five letter word (such as 'beach') has five blank spaces. As learners guess the letters, their correct guesses go in the appropriate blank space; incorrectly guessed letters can be written below, so that learners won't guess them again.

_ **e** _ **c** _

f g r l s

Language Experience Approach -- The language experience approach (LEA) is a basic means for generating language in oral and written forms. People adapt and use the approach in many ways. *(A more detailed explanation of LEA for ESL learners appears in the ESL section of this handbook).*

what it is:
Essentially, LEA consists of listening to learners' spoken language and writing it down (transcribing it into written form). Stories emerge from class conversation or discussion resulting from a picture or activity. Tutors listen carefully and draw out information. The learner tells a story, and the tutor (or other scribe) writes that story exactly as s/he hears it. After the story has been written, it is used as the learner's reading material for that particular session.

The rationale is that learning to read has to do with connecting previous knowledge of the world (i.e. experience) with print. Readers also use strategies such as inferring and predicting meaning based on that experience. Meaningful content and context is not only more interesting to learners, it is easier to retain. To illustrate, read this fragment and try to recollect it without looking back: *Pat put paper, peppers, potatoes and pots in planters to protect them.* Now read this: *Yesterday I went downtown buy shoes.* The example is exaggerated intentionally -- an emphasis only on phonics has little to do with meaningful content; a sentence describing a real event using high frequency words common and known to learners contains meaning and authentic vocabulary. Such a sentence forms a basis for generating writing that learners can and will want to read. Work on phonics (sound/symbol correspondences) and grammar forms is embedded in the content of the language generated by learners. In its purest form, LEA is an <u>exact</u> encoding of learners' words.

My Name is Reina

I I am From Guatemala

No, I am Not married

I have Two Kids.

how to use it:

LEA can be used with an individual learner in one on one tutoring or at a blackboard in a group learning situation. The story can be constructed by more than one person. One learner might begin to talk about something s/he remembers about a class party, for example. Others might then contribute their recollections until a paragraph (or several paragraphs, with more advanced learners) has been written. The tutor then invites learners to read the paragraph (and might invite them to read every two or three sentences as the story is being written).

With very beginning learners the story might consist of three or four short sentences. An example: **Last week I went to the library. It was cold outside. I took home a book for my son.** Once this story has been encoded, learners read it through several times, together and individually.

Although it may seem that hearing ten other people read the same passage would be tedious, learners remain engaged in the process -- watching, learning from and listening to others; preparing themselves for the trip to the newsprint or blackboard to read. The tutor has a chance to observe who helps who, who 'memorizes' a passage by reading one word while pointing to another, who wants to read first, who needs encouragement from peers, etc.

building literacy activity from LEA:
Once the story has been read, beginning level learners might spend a good amount of time copying it into their notebooks. The tutor might invite learners whose abilities to write lag behind their abilities to read to go to the text and circle 'book' or all the words that begin with a particular letter. The tutor may then encourage more advanced learners might add to the story, or write about their own particular experiences (at the library, or about the topic of the story).

For the next session the story can be typed and distributed to learners for review. Comprehension questions (was it cold outside?) may be added. Other open ended questions (Do you go to the library? Do you like the library?) may generate yet another round of language experience writing. This pattern can be repeated and can develop a constant source of new literacy material, vocabulary and grammatical examples.

Beginning learners might start with photos or other visual images which they label and learn. As they gain more written language, they move gradually away from visual to more written forms. Photos can be used initially for labelling purposes; later sentences and stories may be built from those pictures.

LEA can also be used to encourage learners to write by inviting them to each contribute one sentence to a general topic, such as: **Last week-end I . . .** Learners will each write one sentence about their weekend. Once learners have seen the process modeled -- the tutor listens, asks clarification questions, suggests words when needed and then encodes them -- learners take over the work of scribing with and for each other.

Many literacy activities derive from the language experience approach. LEA all by itself is a starting point. It is important to move from initial fragments to complete sentences with correct grammar over time. It is unfair to send learners out into the world with only a private language, (full of misspellings, or irregular grammar usage) which LEA can become. LEA is a piece of the process of moving from learners' writing to standard English usage.

MY NAME IS EMERITA

I AM FROM NICARAGUA

I am NOT MARRIED

THREE BABIES.

Operations   -- similar to TPR (see below), operations are processes such as using a pay phone, making a sandwich, using a vending machine in which a procedure may be familiar to students, but the words used in English may be unfamiliar in their oral and/or written forms. Generating instructions (how to do one thing or another) and writing and then reading these steps may contribute to the kinds of literacy associated with following written instructions/directions, such as those found at laundromats, self-service businesses, airports, bus stations, etc.

for example:
Learners reconstruct the process of making coffee (or steaming rice, or preparing some other food or beverage that everyone usually consumes), listing the steps they use to make coffee until everyone agrees that all the steps have been completed. They write up the steps, and then, if facilities allow, complete the procedure they've just outlined. A good text for additional ideas and operations is Live Action English, from Prentice Hall/ Alemany.

124

> **Pair Work** -- students can be grouped randomly, advanced with beginner, beginner/beginner, advanced/advanced. The demands of a given task as well as learners' needs and abilities will indicate which grouping arrangement might work best. Learners might interview each other, read together, or work on writing exercises or information gaps. (In an <u>information gap</u> exercise, one learner has information that the other needs, and the other has information the first learner needs, such as locations of stores and places on a street map, etc.). Learners can also practice taking turns dictating and writing names, addresses, numbers, etc. with each other. (An excellent resource for this kind of pair work is <u>Practice with Your Partner</u>, by Linda Mrowicki.)
>
> It's important to vary the groupings so that learners have an opportunity to participate both as learners and as teachers. <u>Peer tutoring</u> can evolve from beginner/advanced combinations, and also tends to evolve naturally across and within any level as students come to know each other and a supportive environment develops.

PRACTICE
WITH YOUR PARTNER

Linda Mrowicki

— *Linmore* —

Photos -- of family members, events, from magazines and newspapers (advertisements, local/national news), class events, etc. Photos are very useful in helping students generate language, which can then be developed in various ways according to your particular learners' needs. As learners become more comfortable with each other and with the learning process, spontaneous questions, answers and conversation increase. This oral language may be channeled in language experience writing, or labeling and other forms of written materials. (See also **Visuals**).

Picture Stories -- focus upon a specific topic, or can be used to generate discussion around an issue or event. Language can be generated as with photos. Learners look at and discuss the story. New words cans be written on the blackboard or newsprint, before the actual story is written out in sentences of phrases. Brainstorming, problem-posing and a variety of other activities can help the tutor elicit language from learners:
brainstorming: Learners list ideas or events that are depicted in the picture story. They might look at the first four (out of eight) pictures and try to guess what might happen in the second half of the picture story. **problem-posing:** Learners might look at a picture depicting a potential hazard (such as Ligon's depiction of a kitchen littered with trash, and full of safety hazards) and discuss what might be done to help the the woman whose kitchen it is to clean up. How can someone tell someone else that their house may be unclean or unsafe? What is 'safe' or 'clean' in one culture and not in another? What would you do if you walked into a friend's kitchen and saw what is depicted in the story? Is this something that has happened to you? The pictures often spark discussion about related issues, (e.g. "no one could have a kitchen that dirty", but the overloaded electrical sockets, or the dangling cord from the hot coffee pot are more common problems).

Sequencing and scrambling exercises can be developed. Picture stories generally involve multiple images, which relate some event or problem. Fred Ligon's Picture Stories is one of the best published compilations currently available. Double Action Picture Cards, by Earl Stevick and Jane Yedlin, and Lexicarry, by Pat Moran are also useful drawings and visuals to which words can be added, and from which stories and other writings can be developed.
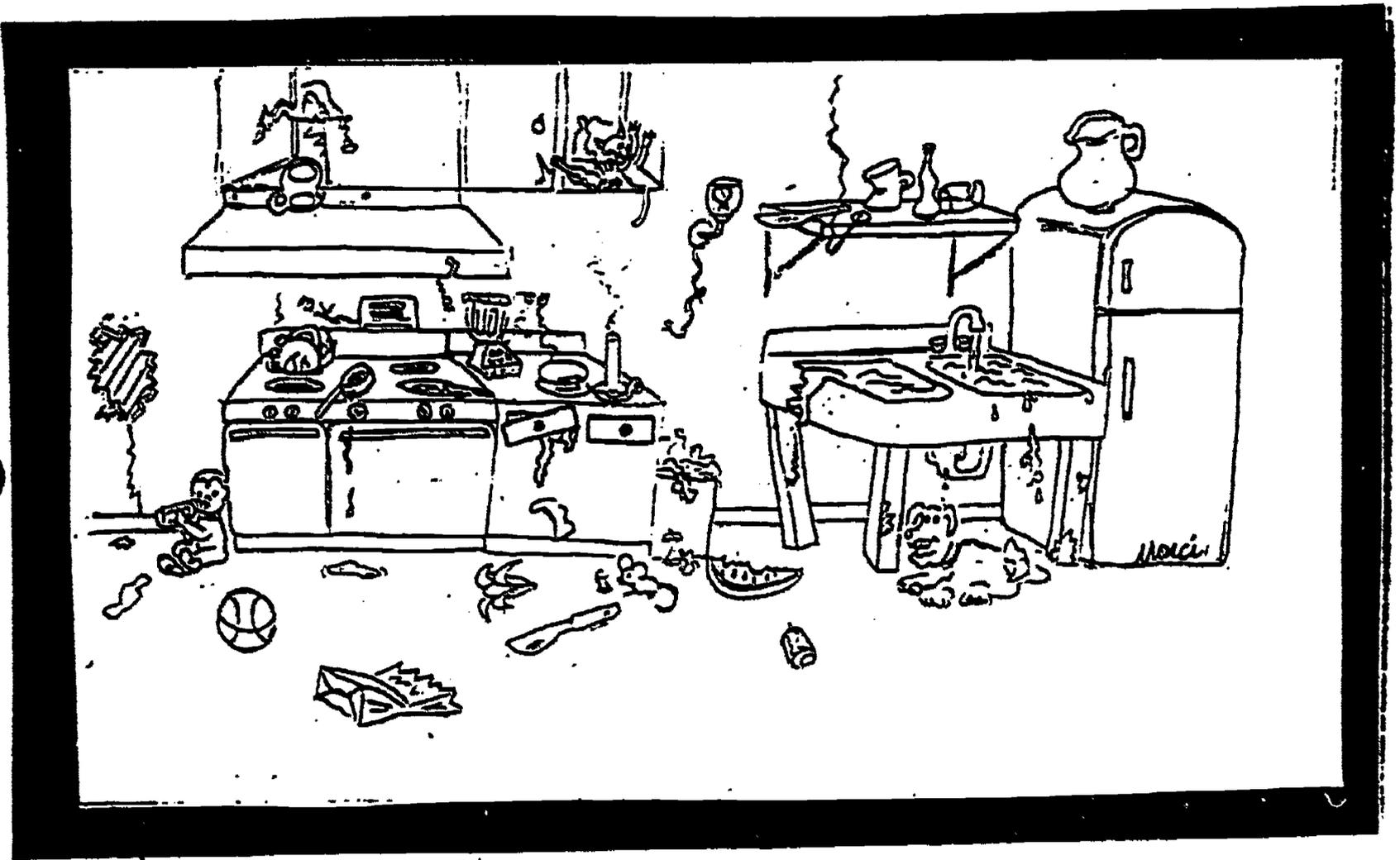
> **Realia** -- real objects -- junk mail, coupons, magazines, parking
> tickets, appointment cards, drivers' licenses, coins and paper money,
> food stamps, pay stubs, newspaper and other print advertisement,
> posters, flyers, report cards from children's schools -- any real
> (*'authentic'*) print encountered by adults in the course of day to day
> living. Learners might bring in bills or mail that they want to learn
> about or they might ask about billboards or other print they've seen.
> Realia can be tied into other ongoing themes and can also be
> connected to approaches listed here.

for example:

Learners can examine the parking ticket, and describe the
information they can decipher from the ticket. Once everyone has
discussed the ticket -- what it's for, how much the fine costs, etc.,
learners with cars might want to learn each others' license plate
numbers, and write their own 'tickets' for each other. An extension
activity might be describing and/or role play traffic court -- what
happens when you plead 'not guilty' on a traffic ticket? What's the
difference between a parking ticket and a speeding ticket?, etc.

Scrambling/sequencing -- sentences, pictures, paragraphs. As
with flashcards, language/images can be manipulated. Works well
within a given topics; levels of complexity can vary within the class.
(Beginners can unscramble/sequence short sentences, paragraphs,
etc., and more advanced students can do proportionately more).

for example:
Learners might generate a short story which they read, copy and
review. The next day the teacher might ask a learner to reread the
story and then using the sentences in the story, (and having copied
them onto larger strips of paper), distribute the strips and ask
learners to arrange them in the correct order.

I left this morning at 8:30. In went downtown. For lunch I ate
a sandwich. I came home. I had supper at 7.

| For lunch I ate a sandwich. |

| I went downtown. |

| I left this morning at 8:30. |

| I came home. |

| I had supper at 7. |

| for ate sandwich I a lunch. |

| I emac ohem. I dah pupsre ta 7. |

This exercise can be adapted for many different levels. Learners need to
handle many different levels of complexity in sequencing when they
write for themselves. The type of scrambles you create needs to follow
from the skill levels of the specific learners who you work with.

TPR: Total Physical Response -- uses specific, simple instructions, with limited vocabulary, which demand a physical response. TPR can be used to help learners **hear** and **respond** to commands, such as 'please pick up the red pencil'. The tutor focuses on objects in the classroom vocabulary, prepositions, and verbs of motion. (e.g., 'Please put the book on the table').

A common use of TPR is to work with **one key phrase** (e.g. 'pick up the...') and to repeat it until learners are familiar with it. (The tutor asks learners to pick up objects the tutor points to). Once familiar with the phrase, learners can take over, and create small changes in the phrase. ('Put the pencil on the book' becomes 'put the pencil next to the book', and then 'put the pencil under the book.'). The complexity of the phrases develops with learners' ability to speak and their increases in confidence.

Learners **respond** to various requests that demand a physical response, (such as, 'go to the door'), without having to **say** or repeat them. Research shows that learners are most able to remember and re-use language when they are exposed to it in a context where the meaning is clear.

In **multi-level** settings, learners whose spoken language is more advanced might instruct other learners, using simple commands/ requests, or guiding them through simple processes (such as how to write a date). These commands can be given orally, or in writing: literacy exercises on the blackboard, or on flashcards; one word commands such as 'erase', 'write', 'read', etc. Commands in both oral and written forms can grow in length and complexity as learners progress; within the multilevel class both simple and more complex commands can be combined.

At all levels, with TPR, 'please' is important.

TPR relies more or less upon the premise that learners aren't asked to produce language until they are familiar and comfortable with it.

for example:

Learners can develop a procedure (see **operations**, above) and then can instruct each other in completing the steps required within the operation. They can also practice smaller, more discrete skills, such as asking each other to give or take various objects, (e.g., give me the pen, take the pencil, pick up the quarter, give me two dimes and one nickel, etc.). This activity also helps learners with working out clarification questions and strategies, such as asking, "Penny or pencil?", pointing, gesturing, etc.

Visuals -- photos, picture stories, and realia ('real' materials, such as coupons, junk mail, bank forms, drivers' licenses, etc.) can be used in various ways. Students can work individually, in pairs, in small groups or as a whole group developing LEA writing, asking/answering questions, describing (adjectives, comparatives, superlatives) using pronouns, practicing verbs tenses -- the possibilities are limitless. Visuals serve as useful codes for problem-posing at all levels, too.

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for example:

If learners are willing to share their drivers licenses or other forms of photo ID, you can xerox them (enlarging them, if possible) and then generate questions with the learners, e.g., *How tall is [student a?].When is ____'s birthday? What's ____'s address?, etc.*
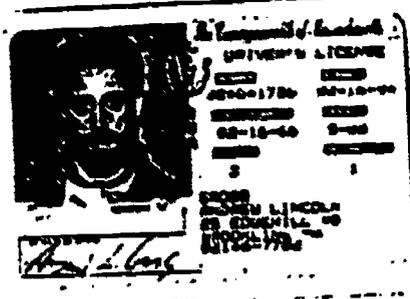
Using advertisements from newspapers, magazines, or direct mail, learners can discuss the relative merits of a given product, in terms of cost, usefulness, comparable products available at discount houses, etc. They can write their own advertising copy, or discuss and write about why the product is not a good one. By asking learners about products they see in advertisement (Do you have/use this? Do you think this would be a good thing to have/ use?, etc.), you gain a sense of what products would be interesting to them, which they'd like to learn about, discuss, criticize or try.

131

Writers' Groups

The writing group approach to working with learners may work well for you if you are working with a group who can comfortably write and discuss more than a few sentences.

The Adult Academy has organized and facilitated writing groups at Central Falls Community Center, North Providence Senior Citizens' Center, Providence Center and Veterans Community Care Center, and offers assistance to others wishing to start writing groups as well. Writing groups provide opportunities for community members to come together to write. Some of the writing produced appears in the Adult Academy's publication *Expressions*. More importantly, however, adult new readers and writers are engaged in a process of building community and using writing as a form of expression of their own thoughts and ideas.

Essentially, the work done in a writing group can be seen as an extension of the language experience approach process. A group leader brings in a code or topic for the day, presents it to the group which discusses it. Everybody then writes for ten or twenty minutes on that topic. Writers share their work with others in the group, who ask questions, make suggestions and generally help each other to clarify and strengthen the writing they do. This group process is very important -- everyone participates as readers, writers of their own and of each other's work. For people who are newly learning to read and write, the process supports their learning. For others, the building of community is critical. For everyone, the process of writing, revising and sharing feelings and written work is an exciting process.

Writing groups have facilitators who function somewhat like tutors in helping to guide the writers through the writing process, suggesting various activities aimed toward strengthening individuals' abilities to write clearly. Similarly, tutors may wish to engage in writing activities with their learners within the framework of the learning centers in which they study. For more information on writing groups and their work, contact the Adult Academy.

materials

Creating materials can be viewed as an ongoing process. In Adult Academy programs, writings by learners form the bulk of the reading material used by many learners. In addition to learner-generated writings, some commercial texts and materials can be used (adapted and/or expanded) by tutors in order to meet the specific needs of their learners. In this section, we discuss ways to choose materials and offer a listing of different materials that we order for our programs.

choosing materials: criteria

More important than the materials themselves is the criteria used for selecting them. The strongest materials offer flexibility in content, reading or interest level. They offer learners many ways to interact with text. Some texts use visuals so that learners may engage first through a visual image, develop their own pre-reading questions or even do some writing themselves prior to interacting with the text on the page. Other texts may provide less visual input but are of high interest or relevance to a given group of learners at a particular time. Other materials are not texts at all but rather print realia brought to class by learners: photos, post cards, flyers and other visual or print images of interest to the group. Regardless of the medium, it is the process through which these materials are used that will ultimately determine their usefulness. Naturally, some materials lend themselves better than others to literacy learning, but, by and large, almost any print bearing meaning of interest to learners can be useful.

the materials

When you examine materials, consider these questions:

reading/writing level

How does the material 'read' visually? What does a
page look like? What about print size, print density, the
amount of white space on a page? Does it appear 'hard'
to read? Does it look too easy or juvenile? Is the page
too busy? How does the layout of the page --
illustrations, visuals -- enhance the text and help the
reader into it?

generating interest

How do learners become engaged in interaction with
print? Will pre-reading strategies help them develop
schema through which to build understanding of the text
they'll read, thereby increasing their ability to predict,
infer and otherwise interact actively with the printed
words (and visual images?) How do you select a reading
for your learners? What opportunity or choice do they
have in initiating or selecting reading materials?

content

Are the themes and topics of interest to learners? Is the
material presented in a culturally appropriate manner?
Is it geared to adults? Is it interesting? Is it connected
to events or experiences of interest to learners ?

assumptions/hidden agendas (between the lines)

What messages are implicit from ways in which characters and events are depicted? Is a deficit view of the non native speaker/non-/low-literate adult being implied or stated in the situations or characters in the text? (Does the text portray adults in a negative light because of problems with language or literacy?). Does the text assume that learners have prior knowledge of the world, and help them learn and work from their strengths? Is there evidence of bias -- racial, economic, social? Is one ethnic group perhaps illustrated in one way while another might be portrayed in a less sympathetic or realistic light?[1]

adaptability: extending/expanding

How can you use the materials? Can the learners use them independently, or are they designed for reading and writing with other learners? Is the book designed for group or individual learning (are there 'ask your partner' or other dyad exercises)? Is a text reliant upon a cassette tape? Can the text be adapted up or down level to accommodate a multi-level class? Are you inspired by the text to develop new activities and exercises more suited to your specific learners?

use of photos/visuals

Photos and other visual images are very effective in generating discussion, from which writing and reading activity evolves. Although learners' family photos and pictures of events often generate the most sustained interest, there are other sources of visuals which are useful for a variety of contexts.

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[1] see "The Hidden Curriculum of Survival ESL", by Elsa Auerbach and Denise Burgess, reprinted in Freire for the Classroom, ©1987 by Ira Shor, Boynton/Cook Publishers, A division of Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.

commercially made visuals

The following is a sample listing of several commercially produced visual materials designed for literacy and language learning. Most are in the Adult Academy library.

Double Action Picture Cards . Using oversized (20 by 14") black and white drawings, the cards depict common and not so common events in two sections (each of which can be viewed separately).

One card shows a family, in which two older people (parents?) are shown in their home, dressed up to go out. Their children are lined up in front of them. In and of itself the card can be used to start discussion about families and social customs: baby sitters, large/ small families, going out, etc. However, in conjunction with its other picture (the *double action*), wherein the children are running wild all over the house and street, one can add in a discussion of attitudes towards obedience, child proofing and general household safety, appropriate behavior (whatever that may be). One can ask, "What do you think will happen?" after looking at the first card and thus lead into the second. Or, one can use either card by itself. An instructor's guide lists suggested language/grammar activities to complement the cards. For learners who are able to 'read' drawings, the cards lend themselves to any number of language experience and literacy centered activities. (Jane Yedlin and Earl Stevick).

Picture dictionaries and wall charts : Oxford has produced a Picture Dictionary in both English and bilingual versions covering predictable topics -- body parts, rooms of the house (generally well appointed houses -- not apartments), clothing, maps, animals, cars, etc. The dictionaries use full page pictures of settings and/or objects, and number each object within a picture. The written words appear on the page in numerical order beneath the picture.

Longman Photo Dictionary Covers comparable topics, with the obvious advantage of using photographs which might be easier to decipher than drawings. Again, the mainstream/middle class images may work both as catalysts of discussion or simply as descriptive renderings of objects and events. The photo dictionary wall charts are particularly useful for their images of supermarkets, common fast foods, body parts and colors.

Richard Toglia and others produced Picture It! This book has sequenced illustrations of daily activities ('Morning Routine', 'A Doctor's Office') Learners develop written and/or spoken language to describe the pictures. After each section there are sample phrases describing the pictures, and one or two developmental activities.

use of audio and videotape:
learner/teacher ongoing assessment

When possible or available, taping classes allows the practitioner to observe learner interaction from a distance. When videotaping, focus on learners provides the best information. The facilitator is heard, and not seen. Viewing the tape provides insight to learners and facilitators about their own progress (show a tape you made three months ago). Learners also enjoy watching a tape immediately after it's been made. Audio tapes, though less satisfying in some ways also provide a very objective description of classroom interaction.

learner generated publications
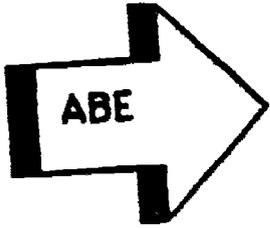
Voices : New Writers for New Readers, a magazine of learners' writings published by the Invergarry Reading Centre in Vancouver. Ranging from 'new voices' to 'transitions' to 'later writings', the magazine is published three times yearly and includes autobiographical statements, letters in response to previous writings and reviews of films and books. 14525 110A Ave. Surrey, British Columbia, V3R 2B4 Canada.

Expressions: A bi-weekly journal of learners' writing gathered from local (RI and nearby Massachusetts) literacy programs. Available in journal or book form through the Adult Academy.

Looking Forward, Looking Back, Writings from Many Worlds : ESL/literacy learners' writings from the Family Literacy Project at UMass/Boston, 1989.

Need I Say More : ESL/literacy learners' writings, through the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, 989 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, MA 02215.

Street Voices: Learners' writings, generated by learners in Travelers Aid literacy programs in Providence.

suggestions for using commercial materials

Using a workbook

This page, from Starting to Read, by Linda Mrowicki, lends itself well to small group and/or multi-level learning.

The teacher can read all the instructions to the learners, or the learners can take turns reading the sentences and then having each other complete the task required in each sentence.

A more advanced learner could instruct one or two other learners to complete the tasks, or two or three learners could work together to complete them.

To prepare the learners to read the instructions, the facilitator could make flashcards of the imperative (command) words:

write
say
count
read

Learners can write, count, say and read things around the classroom, already familiar to them.

After learners are familiar with both written and oral forms of the commands, they can work on the page in the workbook independently, or with assistance from each other or their tutor.

Beginning Of Unit

READ AND DO WITH YOUR CLASS.

1. Write your name on a piece of paper.
2. Write the name of your school on the blackboard.
3. Say the name of your school.
4. Say your teacher's name.
5. Write your teacher's name on a piece of paper.
6. Count the teachers.
   Say the number.
7. Count the students.
   Say the number.
8. Count the chairs.
   Write the number on a piece of paper.
9. Count the students.
   Do not write the number on a piece of paper.
10. Count the doors.
    Do not write the number on the blackboard.
11. Count the students.
    Write the number on the blackboard.
12. Write your teacher's name on a piece of paper.
13. Read your teacher's name.
14. Read your name.

To expand this activity, learners can compile their own lists of commands and instructions and take turns asking each other to complete various tasks, such as:

1. Write your last name.
2. Write the first name of the person sitting next to you.
3. Count the pencils on the table.
4. Say your teacher's name.
5. Write everyone's first name on the blackboard.
6. Read everyone's first name.

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more beginning level learners can compile more basic lists:

1. Write your first name.
2. Count the pens on the table.
3. Read your first name
4. Say your last name.
5. Count the students in the room.

books/materials from publishing houses

Auerbach, Elsa & Wallerstein, Nina. (1987) ESL for Action: Problem Posing at Work - series of codes and lesson plans for problem posing activities with work-related issues. Some supporting information on labor and civil rights laws. Good for intermediate, advanced ESL and literacy learners. Addison-Wesley

Cameron, Penny. (1990) Bridge Across the Americas - Favorite Hispanic Stories Illustrated myths, fables, and legends from various Latino cultures. Include pre-reading activities, exercises for 'using what you know', comprehension activities (sequencing, true/false, etc), vocabulary review (multiple choice, definition questions), questions for discussion, writing and drawing activities in response to readings. A good book for many ages; requires significant reading skills. Dormac
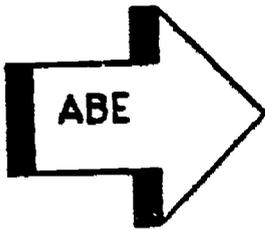
Holstein, Barbara (1990) The Childbearing Year A guide book of sorts intended for new or soon-to-be parents, particularly teen mothers. Covers pregnancy, birth, going home, and early post-natal care. Includes discussion of contraception. More informational than for reading development, this book is designed for new readers. Most appropriate for very advanced ESL or pre-GED and above level readers. New Readers Press.

ABE

Kuntz, Laurie. (1988) The New Arrival (Book I, In the Refugee Camp; Book II, In the United States) - stories and codes with language development activities focused on vocabulary, grammar, meaning, and responsive writing. Alemany Press

Ligon, Fred. (1990). Picture Stories - sequenced line drawings accompanied by numerous literacy and language activities, pertaining to survival/cultural orientation issues, occupations, daily situations in the US. Longman.

Long, Llynellyn D. and Janet Spiegel-Podmecky.
(1988). In Print: Beginning Literacy through Cultural
Awareness. - combines standard life skills topics with
both phonics, matching and other literacy exercises with
a problem-posing approach. Uses photos and line
drawings; separate Teachers' Guide available.
Addison-Wesley.

Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program. (1988).
Remembering. Books 1 and 2. - uses oral histories,
generated by learners to develop reading, comprehen-
sion, and critical thinking. New Reader's Press.

Mrowicki, Linda. (1990). First Words - uses photos,
one or two word captions, literacy exercises to cover the
following topics/contexts: school, rooms of the house,
personal information. Linmore.

_____.(1989). Starting to Read: - moves
from single words to sentences and paragraphs covering
school, home, personal and cultural information
embedded in writings about individual people.
Illustrated with photos. Linmore.
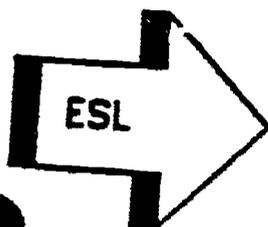
_____. (1985, 1987, 1989).Personal Stories
1, 2, and 3. The lives of six sets of characters/families
are detailed over three years. Beginning with simple
sentences (in Book 1) and developing through to
complex paragraphs, the series introduces readers to
fiction reading about various 'typical' Americans.
Comprehension, production and problem posing
exercises accompany each chapter. Illustrated with
photos. Linmore.

_____. (1986). Practice with Your Partner.
Dyad cards on the topics of numbers, addresses, time
and other daily language/literacy; provides useful
practice in dictation and other manipulations of language
and literacy in a controlled format. Linmore.
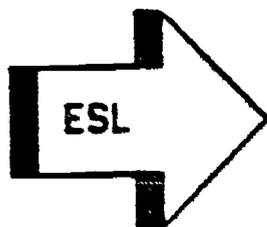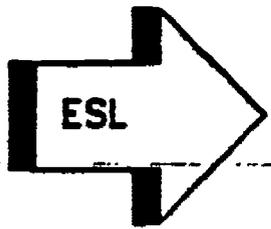
Mrowicki, Linda & Furnborough, Peter. (1982) A
New Start (Books 1, 2) An excellent book for ESL,
Deaf, and other learners who are not literate in their
own language, or whose language is not written. Both
books have structured pre-reading activities for alphabet
and numbers literacy. Almost all activities have strong
visuals which give meaning to the print and numbers
used. Many activities require learners to hunt for and
identify different letters and words. Dormac,
Heinemann

News for You Weekly newspaper for new readers.
Current national and international news, useful with all
adult learner. The Adult Academy sends subscriptions
to most learning centers or programs where we work.
Includes a sheet of questions, puzzles, and activities to
accompany that week's news stories. New Readers Press
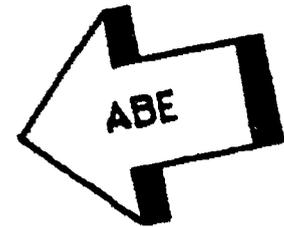
Olsen, Judy Winn-Bell. (1984). Look Again Pictures
for Language Development and Life Skills. Timothy
White created pairs of line drawings showing common
events/situations (a coffee shop, a kitchen, a driving
school, a clothing store, etc.). Each pair of drawings is
almost identical; there are 8 tiny differences that
learners find and circle. Visual activity leads to
sequenced exercises addressing language functions,
lifeskills, and other language based activities with
concrete contexts. Alemany.
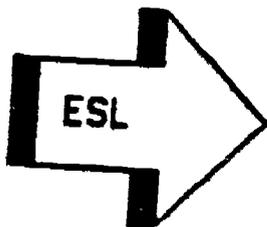
Palmer, Adrian & Rodgers, Theodore & Olsen, Judy
Winn-Bell (1985) Back & Forth: Pair Activities for
Language Development Activities which require
learners to work in pairs or small groups using many
skills together. Strips with several similar pictures - all
learners have strips, one learner must describe a specific
picture and others must find and circle that picture.
Exercises with groups of similar words where learners
must listen and mark or write down the words they
hear. More complex exercises start with one sentence
which a learner reads aloud; other learners must pick or
create a second and then a third sentence which make
sense as sequential responses. Alemany

Robinson, Catherine & Rowekamp, Jenise. (1985) Speaking Up at Work Situation-specific language skills and strategies. Chapters include: 'Understanding work schedules', 'Understanding safety rules', 'Getting incorrect work explained', 'Describing past work and education', 'W-2 forms/Paying taxes'. Includes role-plays, forms, illustrations, models of communication strategies. Oxford University Press

Schenk, Brian, Ed. (1984) Snapshots: A Collection of Readings for Adults (Books 1-8) Archetype of an adult basic reader. Each book is an collection of readings on wide range of topics, from personal experience to the social security system. Each piece has multiple choice questions at the end, and a variety of other reading-related activities such as word hunts, and puzzles. Key at the end of the book with "right" answers. Cambridge.

ABE

Smith, Jeanne & Ringel, Harry. (1991) The Working Experience 1,2,3 Photos of learners in work situations with stories they wrote. Follow-up activities include comprehension (true/false, complete the sentence), language skills (vocabulary, writing & grammar mechanics), follow-up (critical thinking, analysis, responses). New Readers Press.

Terdy, Dennis. (1986) Content Area ESL: Social Studies Literacy, reading in US social studies, from Native Americans to Civil Rights to the mid-1980's. Designed for ESL learners with little previous knowledge of US history and culture, but useful for native speakers, too. Illustrated, with pre-reading, language development, comprehension, and critical thinking activities. Linmore.

Wallerstein, Nina (1983) Language and Culture in Conflict - Problem-Posing in the ESL Classroom This book includes a chapter on teaching methods and explanation of problem-posing and codes. It then offers a series of lesson plans based on illustrations (codes) of typical daily conflicts, with role-plays and follow-up activities. A very strong resource book. Addison Wesley

Zuern, Guenther (1985) Images 1, 2 Books of
sequenced stories told with actual photographs. Photos
are numbered, and include cartoon style bubbles with
English dialogue, or captions underneath. (Tutors can
use white-out on a xerox if they want learners to fill in
the dialogues themselves.) Language development
activities accompany the pictures. Addison-Wesley

conclusion: stepping back, looking ahead

This manual was designed to supplement tutor training workshops, as well as to introduce new tutors to adult literacy education. We hope that as you continue to tutor, you might go back and read or re-read sections of the handbook that will make more sense to you and have more meaning as you continue to interact with your learners (in other words, as your schema expands). You may have suggestions about pieces of the handbook that could be improved or changed, and we hope you will pass these comments along to people at the Adult Academy, so that in future updates of the handbook, your suggestions and/or comments can be included.

What suggestions would you change, or add to these?

Suggestions for tutors

1. ESL Learners sometimes use their first languages for clarifying meaning among themselves, to get to know each other, to build friendships. This use of the native language shouldn't be criticized. However, if you feel that use of native languages is becoming a problem, you may want to ask learners how they feel about the amount of time they spend speaking English.

2. Allow for flexibility in lesson planning. Learners' attendance is sometimes fluid. Be prepared to change plans when particular learners may not be present, or when someone comes to you at the beginning of a session with a question or something to be read, etc. If you plan a lesson for a particular learner, have a backup plan in case that learner can't be at the session on that particular day.

3. Remember learners' goals, and check with learners from time to time about changes in their goals. Your role is to facilitate learning for students; sometimes this means guiding learners through a complicated worksheet, at other times it means helping people learn to ask better questions, at yet other times it may mean listening to people reading aloud and answering questions.

4. Do not overemphasize grammar or isolated skills. Grammatical explanations may help when asked for, but it is not helpful to explain something about a language when a person does not understand much of that language. Speak the language; don't speak about the language. Rather, give clear examples and explanations in real contexts.

5. Each site differs in its teacher/learner ratio; remember the importance of communicating with site teachers, as needed/ appropriate.

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6. Make each session as relaxed and comfortable as possible.

7. Consider your coordinators, other tutors and learners as your personal resources for teaching ideas, support, and constructive criticism. Talk to each other, exchange ideas, learn from each other. You don't have to work alone!

8. Take advantage of available materials and ideas; recognize their strengths and weaknesses for your particular learners; feel free to develop your own.

9. Feel free to arrange to spend time with your learners outside of the program, but be aware of what time you really have available to spend outside the regular class times. Don't over commit yourself.

10. Try new ideas and materials; compare notes with other tutors.

your suggestions, experiences, learned lessons:
[what I thought before I began, what I think now...]

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

At some sites, tutors work very closely with teachers. Other sites function as learning centers, and teachers' roles are slightly different. In each instance, the tutor's first responsibility is to the learners -- providing support, encouragement, and facilitating learning. Tutors also have a responsibility to keep teachers and any other tutor trainers updated, through tutor logs, discussions, or other means (letters, phone calls, etc.).

evaluation: how did we do?

During and at the close of each academic year, learners
and tutors are asked to respond to their experiences.
Tutors were asked to discuss the questions below with
their learners, who then responded in writing, at the end
of the 1990-91 sessions. Tutors also met together to
discuss and respond to questions about their experiences.
Their comments, both positive and critical, have helped
form the contents of this manual and will shape future
workshop sessions as well.

Learners received this letter:

Spring 1991

Dear Students,
We are beginning to plan for next year's classes, and your
opinions and ideas are very important to us. Please help us think
about this year's program, and make suggestions so that we can
improve classes for next year. Thank you very much.

1. When did you begin studying in the program? Why did you
come to study?

2. What do you like about the program? Did you like the class?
Did you like working with a tutor? Why?

3. What were some things you didn't like about the program, or
things you think should change for next year?

4. Is anything different for you now because you studied in the
program? For example, is it easier to understand people you
speak to or things you read?

5. What has been the best thing for you about studying this year?

6. What would you tell a friend who wanted to study in the
program?

7. Please write anything else you would like to add about your
experience in the program.

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learners' responses

Learners responses were overwhelmingly positive,
citing increased gains in self confidence, progress with
literacy and appreciation of the attention and assistance
provided by tutors.

- It made me learn a lot. I always got someone to help me.

- I liked to work with the tutor, the tutor helps learn and understand the word I don't even know.

- They care 'listen, It gives me more knowledge.

- I proved to myself I could make it.

- I can read better. Not a lot better, but better than before.

- I wasn't sure at first, but now I can see I can do the work.

- I write poems and music.

- It helped me overcome problems with reading and math.

- I'm much happier, I can read and understand. I surprise myself that I can read a little bit.

- It was useful for me to speak with people. I liked it because there were few people. The tutor is very special. I;d like to spend more hours at class.

- I have more confidence, I enjoyed the learning process.

tutors' responses

Tutors, too, responded positively to their experiences.
Along the way, tutors had expressed doubts, and voiced
concerns about the progress they felt they were making
with their learners. Some felt that they had spent too
much time on very elaborate lesson plans -- spending
hours in the library looking for materials that ended up
being not very useful. During a mid-year evaluation,
tutors wrote:

• I am working with Polish and Cape Verdean immigrants. Most, but not
all, are close to my age; most, but not all, are middle class. They differ
from me primarily in the kind of work they are able to do, and in their
ability to extract from and enjoy the more aesthetic or creative aspects of our
culture.

All the learners I have are intelligent and literate. They seem to possess a
large amount of good will and are fortunate in having some friends or
family members who have been in this country for a long time. While the
learners appear anxious to be able to participate in the culture around them
and , in some instances, to improve their economic standing, they are also
inclined to homesickness, fatigue and discouragement. Using humor and
food helps reduce resentment and these feelings of despair.

I enjoy tutoring and the challenge of finding ways to create a rapport despite
the language barriers. I particularly like devising materiais to use in the
class. So far I have found discussions centered around photographs and
pictures to be the most helpful in working with the people who speak very
little English. The pictures also provide the necessary focus and bridge
when there is a wide gap in the learners' language skills.

There are many questions I have asked myself: how best to deal with the
troublesome range of language skills, how not to bore some or lose others,
what to do when they speak Polish among themselves, what about a person
who is tired or one who feels uncomfortable with personal conversations,
what to do when the school shuts down, what advice to give or not to give
when practical problems are raised, and how to provide encouragement
when it is necessary but the usual words of reassurance cannot be
understood.   -- *Freda MacLeod, Pawtucket ESL/Literacy tutor*

• Training tutors to work in holistic learning and classroom situations is
different. The learners are structured to do certain things from past
learning experience.

The training itself is something I believe in. I think non traditional
education is good for some people.

I'd like better clarification of tutor's role relating to learners and teacher.
             -- *Howard Coleman, Cranston ABE Tutor*

• It would be helpful to be given some idea of how much preparation is reasonable for each training session. I felt compelled to spend a perhaps excessive amount of time drawing up plans and materials for each session. I would spend hours preparing something I would use for only a few minutes.

I found the confusion difficult -- it's hard to prepare when your group is mismatched or when you don't know from time to time what your group will be. Once they settled down to the same 5 people, I found preparing much easier.

There is some merit to using exercises in the workbooks. For the first 4 or 5 weeks I didn't use them at all, but I now think that using them for a few minutes each class is helpful. I'd use prepared materials easier as a way to get the shyer one to speak. I realized that some people needed specific things to read or do to speak out.

I'd have liked more direction/expertise. I would have like to know such things as what are the most vital words or principles of sentence formation to learn as a basis for learning English. I would like to know how to spot and explain certain central problems in pronunciation and grammar. I also wanted to know more strategies for working with people at the level my group was on, and also what expectations are realistic.
                    -- *Cranston ABE Tutor*

• It takes a month of experimenting before becoming comfortable. Use available materials until you're comfortable. Focus training on what volunteers can expect to encounter in class, such as meeting needs of students with varying skills.   -- *Tutor*

151

At the end of the year, tutors wrote:

• I have learned to care about people who have a different skin color. This has been a big step for me. There people are very grateful and express their gratitude. My students were very eager to learn.
-- *Pawtucket ESL/Literacy Tutor*

• I have learned that a genuine bond develops between an ESL tutor and the ESL learners. Particularly with a group of beginners, learning is a real dialogue. It is clearly counter-productive to lecture a group of people who cannot understand what you are saying and, therefore, I have found that any factual or emotional exchange requires a concerted effort on both the tutor's and the learner's part. Both have to seek to understand the other person sufficiently to piece together what the other one is hearing, feeling or saying.

I have also realized that I learn as much from them as they go from me. In order to share my culture effectively, I gain an awareness of theirs.

I think I have also learned the perhaps obvious fact that for an immigrant acquiring a new language is a major shock. It takes for the tutor certain compassion towards the painful questions of identity and homesickness that arise.

I have been surprised to see how "irregular" a mastery of a new language is. I have seen regularly that the interest in the subject matter greatly informs the rate at which someone learns. I have also seen how tenuous the grasp on a new language can be -- fatigue and stress seem to cause an almost complete state of forgetfulness.

The lows of the semester were the first few weeks when the group was forming. There was much coming and going at first and it was very difficult preparing for class without knowing who was going to be there. The other low was the end of the funding at the Pawtucket school. Wondering whether the group was going to continue - and where it would meet.

The highs derive from coming up with a creative idea that happens to work. Most particularly the high derive from the warmth and affection with which one's efforts are sometimes met; when through mutual struggling the tutor and learners manage to break through the culture and language barrier to achieve a moment of human understanding.

-- *Pawtucket ESL/Literacy Tutor*

last words

As is evident from tutors' mid-year and end of the year remarks, they learned a great deal about the learning process and about the students with whom they worked. Many of their suggestions about specific points will be addressed in future training workshops. Other concerns -- such as finding ways to know if learners are making progress, are enjoying the sessions -- are ongoing, and will continue to be topics in both formal workshops and informal discussion sessions. Learning is an ongoing process, and staffs of the Adult Academy and other adult education organizations that support tutors' work are available to tutors to talk about these and other related issues.

Should learners come to you with problems pertaining to issues beyond school -- such as a need for legal advice, welfare information, health or mental health issues -- your task is not to solve the problems for the learners. The Adult Academy and other sponsoring agencies can help you make referrals for the learners. You can find out which community agencies might be helpful for a particular problem. Please contact the Academy or the agency running the classes at which you tutor for more information on community resources.

Finally, although you might not hear it as often as you should, your work is greatly appreciated by learners, by the agencies sponsoring classes, and by the teachers you assist. Without your effort and dedication, adult literacy education in Rhode Island would be in an even greater state of crisis than it now is. Funds are low, teachers are overworked, learners have many obstacles to face. What bonds us together is our belief in the learners, and in their abilities to acquire and use literacy in the ways and for the purposes they have chosen. We thank you for your effort, and we depend on your continued commitment.