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ABSTRACT

This revised and expanded edition of a handbook is designed for basic skills tutors. Part 1 looks at what literacy involves and why it is important. It examines previous experiences of learning that students may bring and describes a range of styles of provision. Part 2 contains four student profiles, to which the rest of the book makes reference. In each case, the tutors have given some background information about the students, each at a different level of literacy, and their reasons for entering a program. Part 3 examines the processes of assessing the student, both at the time of enrollment and in regularly reviewing progress. It describes the setting of a learning plan, stresses the importance of keeping individual records, emphasizes usefulness of written lesson plans, and discusses how tutors can evaluate their own teaching. Part 4 explores learning methods and techniques, describes approaches used with each student from part 2, and suggests further activities that could be developed for individual or group work. Part 5 examines ways in which students can gain recognition of their progress and discusses the competence-based approach. It looks at progression and what this may include. Part 6 considers types of materials and resources available and gives guidelines in deciding what to use and how to use it. It looks at considerations when creating one's own material. Part 7 lists some useful materials and further reading. An index is provided. (YLB)

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# AN INTRODUCTION TO

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*The Basic Skills Unit*

AN INTRODUCTION TO

# LITERACY TEACHING

Compiled by Rose Gittins

**ALBSU**  
*The Basic Skills Unit*

# The Working Group

## **Co-ordinator:**

*Rose Gittins:* Alpha Open Learning Unit Director, Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES).

## **Team:**

*Carole Whitehurst:* Workplace Basic Skills Tutor/Organiser MAES, formerly ABE organiser CABSU Manchester LEA.

*Sheila Simpson:* Workplace Basic Skills Tutor/Organiser MAES, formerly ABE organiser CABSU Manchester LEA.

*Moirra Welch:* Basic Skills Pre-recruitment Tutor/Organiser (MAES).

*Pauline Walker:* Basic Skills Tutor/Referral Worker (MAES).

*Joyce Bradley:* Basic Skills Tutor Cambrian Street Adult Education Centre Miles Platting, Manchester (MAES).

*Doreen Jones:* Basic Skills Tutor, Cambrian Street Adult Education Centre Miles Platting, Manchester (MAES).

*Nadine Newsome:* Basic Skills Tutor, Rackhouse Community Education Centre, Wythenshawe, Manchester (MAES).

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# 1

## Some Aspects of Adult Literacy

**The scale of the literacy problem – the definition of basic skills – the good reader – the good writer – how people learn – experiences of learning – some styles of provision (group, 1:1, open learning, learning support.)**

This chapter looks at what literacy involves and why it is important. It examines the previous experiences of learning that students may bring and describes a range of styles of provision.

### **The scale of the literacy problem**

Many chances and opportunities in life are denied to us if we are not literate enough to do the things we want to do. Both at work and as a member of society it is difficult to take advantage of opportunities if we doubt our ability to cope with the communication skills this may involve. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is to think of all the times in the day we read or write something and imagine what effect it would have on our life if we couldn't read or write very well.

The United Kingdom was one of the first industrialised countries to recognise that there were a large number of adults in need of improved literacy skills. Before 1975 literacy provision was on a small scale, often provided by small voluntary organisations offering individual tuition using volunteer tutors in students' homes.

Since then there has been a significant increase in the scale of adult literacy provision. In the 1970s fewer than 15 thousand people were receiving help with reading and writing, by November 1991 nearly 130 thousand adults were in basic skills tuition and approximately three times that number received help during the year.

We know that the need for help with basic skills continues to be considerable. It is currently estimated that almost six million adults in the UK have some difficulty with basic skills including numeracy.

The National Child Development Study of 1987 revealed that over 10% of 23 year olds felt that they had some problem with reading, writing and spelling. 29% of those with literacy problems said that they caused difficulties in everyday life, an amazing 72% reported difficulties with writing and spelling and 29% with reading.

Good reading, writing, speaking and listening skills are not only important in our everyday and social lives, but also in the workplace. In the survey practical difficulties with literacy were most frequently mentioned in relation to work. 44% could not read a simple fire notice and 26% had problems filling in work related forms.

Initial results from new research at City University (final results of which will appear in June 1993) suggests that an earlier estimate, of around 13% of adults in England and Wales needing help with literacy and numeracy, still stands. Furthermore there is a clear link between people who say that they have difficulties with basic skills and actual difficulty with basic skills.

The early findings also show that basic skills is not just a simple matter of whether someone can read, write or calculate. Rather it's about how people cope with everyday tasks in a complex, industrialised society. So, for example, while only 5% of the survey could not understand part of a very simple advertisement, 18% could not understand what to do if you wanted more information about a career advertisement through a more complex advert.

### **The definition of basic skills**

When we talk about basic skills we mean:

*'The ability to read, write and speak in English and use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general'.*

In Wales basic skills includes the ability to read and write Welsh for adults whose mother tongue is Welsh.

Our definition of basic skills does not include necessarily wider provision for adults with learning difficulties or other special needs, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or general access and return to study courses.

### **The good reader**

For a fluent reader many things become automatic and they may not appreciate the complicated range of skills they use. Logging the activities of a single day highlights the extent and variety of typical reading materials:

- letters and circulars
- newspapers
- street signs and billboards
- checking a diary for appointments
- following a recipe
- looking up a phone number
- reading a novel
- looking up the times of TV programmes.



Most adults who are new to reading expect it to be one activity – a careful and accurate translation of written remarks into sound and meaning.

A good reader moves easily in and out of reading styles – sometimes speedily looking through to pick out the main points, sometimes searching a text for a particular bit of information and ignoring the rest. Sometimes studying the whole piece in great detail. A good reader is able to break down the ‘code’ of print, by converting letter shapes into sounds and then words, we call this ‘**de-coding**’.

The good reader reads for a purpose:

- To perform the tasks demanded by a job i.e. follow instructions on using the photocopier.
- To help reach decisions in one’s personal life i.e. which holiday company offers the better deal.
- To catch up with news from a friend abroad when an airmail letter arrives.
- To grasp an outline of something before deciding whether to continue reading.

### **Points to notice**

1. Reading does not need to be performed aloud – in very few situations do adults read out loud.
2. Different reading approaches need to be taught and practised – they don’t just happen.
3. Focusing on the purpose of the reading will help students see the sense of this.

### **The good writer**

Good writers are able to adapt their writing skills for a number of everyday purposes:

- a letter to a friend
- birthday and Christmas cards
- a sick note to your child’s teacher
- a letter of complaint
- filling in a detailed form for insurance
- a tax return
- accident reports at work
- essays for college courses
- making a note of what has been recorded on a video.

Good writers are able to try different ways of putting words together until they feel happy with what they have written. They are willing to have a go, realising that most people need to do things in “rough”, make changes and then polish it up. The tutor may describe such stages as “**first draft**”, “**editing**”, and “**final copy**”.

Many students find writing a demanding and complex activity - so much to remember and do at the same time. Teaching approaches which break this down into separate stages take some of the pressure off the students.

As experience grows the good writer learns to distinguish between two families of skills:

### **1. Composition – considering the content**

- what thoughts they wish to get across
- judging what order to put them in
- deciding on how to start and finish well and linking the main points together
- choosing words that accurately express meaning.

### **2. Transcription – the secretarial side of writing**

- Making decisions about the layout and presentation  
(e.g. writing the final copy of a letter on a writing pad rather than lined exercise paper; deciding whether to word process a piece or present it in handwriting)
- Making sure that the words used are spelt correctly  
(NB: this is not the same as using only the words you can spell – a ploy of many anxious student writers)
- Checking that the grammar and punctuation are as suited to the purpose of the writing  
(e.g. It is appropriate to be formal in a letter to the Housing Department at the Town Hall, but more informal and relaxed when writing an article for a student magazine)
- Re-reading the piece carefully to make sure that it really says what the writer thinks it does  
(small words have a habit of getting missed out when the writer's ideas flow faster than his pen).  
The tutor may use the term “**proof reading**” for these various checks.

## **How people learn**

A major problem for many tutors is distinguishing between teaching and learning. Unfortunately just because the tutor is teaching it does not mean that the student is learning. Learning can only be accomplished by the student, the tutor's task is to facilitate the process.

*“I hear and I forget,  
I see and I remember,  
I do and I understand.”*

This is a well known old Chinese proverb which all tutors should heed. All learning is best done through active involvement. Imagine you are learning to use a new computer, you could listen to a tutor telling you how to use it, you could watch somebody using a computer or you could practise on a computer with the assistance of the tutor when you required it. It is likely that the latter method, whereby you get "hands on" experience would be the best.

The most effective way of learning is by doing. For successful learning to take place it is essential that:

- The skills to be learned are relevant to the student and student's needs.
- The student is actively involved in the process.
- The student is allowed to work at their own pace.

It is important to remember that students start at different points, have different goals/needs and work at different speeds. The best learning programmes are designed to build on strengths and minimise the areas of weakness that the student brings.

Common problems in all teaching are:

- how to motivate
- how to sustain interest.

It is of utmost importance to put the student first. Remember that adult students are not a homogeneous group and they respond differently to different learning situations. Beginner readers usually need plenty of reassurance and support whereas the student who is a confident reader will require some independence and autonomy in the learning process.

It is equally important to keep sight of your role as tutor. The end result of basic skills tuition should be that a student has improved literacy skills and can use them independently. Your job is to make yourself redundant to the student as quickly as possible. Therefore the emphasis of your work should be to allow the student to demonstrate newly learnt literacy skills. An effective student-tutor relationship is one where the student shines, rather than the tutor.

## **Experiences of learning**

When students have very little confidence in their ability to learn, it can be useful to spend some time talking about successful learning they have experienced. A list of these experiences, both in and out of school, might cover a wide range and include such things as:

- learning job routines and processes at work
- learning about bringing up children and dealing with their problems
- learning to drive
- remembering addresses and telephone numbers

- learning other school subjects, perhaps practical ones like woodwork or needlework
- learning to do household jobs.

It may also be useful to look at other experiences which have not been successful, particularly as we often learn from failing at a task and students need to be aware that this is a part of all learning. Unwillingness to try, and risk failure, is often negative and means we only attempt learning things we feel sure of succeeding in.

You may find it useful to think of one or two of your own learning experiences which did not prove successful. The idea is to try and pinpoint what were the main reasons for failure. The list you come up with is likely to include:

- low opinion of your own ability
- lack of confidence
- lack of stimulation, leading to boredom
- stress
- poor relationship with teacher
- change of teacher
- lack of appropriate teaching
- no support from others
- distraction in the teaching environment
- too much use of jargon
- competitive atmosphere
- too much information at once
- poor memory.

By talking about these factors you can begin to see how learning is affected by many things other than intelligence. It is also a relief for the student to find that other people have failed for similar reasons.

As one tutor said:

*"I've just realised why I never play darts. It's the scoring that I'm scared of. My friends have been playing for years and have no trouble adding up the scores really quickly. I guess I just don't want to show myself up."*

There will be times when no new learning seems to be taking place – when a student appears to have reached a plateau and cannot move forward. This is quite usual, and probably means that the student needs to review and practise what has gone before, to consolidate learning. It may mean a re-assessment of the materials and teaching methods used or a complete revision of the learning plan.

If a student has specific learning difficulties (often termed 'dyslexia'), they will need specialist help and support. They may have particular problems with memory, auditory or perceptual difficulties, which may require more specialised approaches. Such help is often available through specially trained staff. There are references to sources of help at the end of this book.

### **Some styles of provision**

Whereas a decade ago much adult literacy provision was based on individual teaching, alternative styles of tuition have since developed:

- **Group work**
- **Drop-in**
- **Open Learning**
- **Basic Skills support and vocationally and occupationally linked teaching**

have become available in many areas.

### **Group work**

In recent years there have been moves to place students in group situations rather than with an individual tutor. Whilst some may find this idea threatening as it conjures up memories of the large school classroom, it is worth noting that few basic education groups will have more than ten students attending. It is possible within such small groups to ensure that each person receives an appropriate amount of individual attention.

There are positive advantages in being part of a group. Low self esteem is often a barrier to learning. In a group, students can feel that they are part of a "student body". This enables them to see themselves not as isolated individuals, embarrassed by their lack of basic skills, but as adults entitled to the full range of educational opportunities.

Members of a group can work together and help each other by pooling ideas, skills and knowledge. Material based on one theme can be produced at different levels so that students working at, say, Wordpower Foundation Level and those at Stages 2 or 3 can contribute and learn equally. Any individual difficulties can be covered in follow up work.

### **1:1 Tuition**

Working as a tutor with a student on a one to one basis may happen in basic skills classes or through Open Learning in a college. There may also be an occasional need for this type of tuition when trying to accommodate people confined to their homes or those who have irregular working patterns.

One to one tuition is not normally a permanent arrangement and happens usually

when a student is new to provision and needs considerable support until some degree of independence is achieved, or for a student who needs some intensive work on a specific personal need e.g. an imminent driving test. This support is often provided by a trained volunteer. The volunteer will be guided and supported by the tutor.

As in other types of provision students would determine their own style of working, setting their own pace and establishing their own goals.

## **Open Learning**

Open learning centres use a variety of learning methods which differ according to the individual student needs. The range of learning opportunities include:

- timetabled individual tutorials
- self access to resource based learning
- independent study with tutorial support
- distance learning
- short courses
- supplementary access to resources for existing basic skills students
- discussion groups.

The concept of using computers in the delivery of basic skills to help students move towards their learning goals is fundamental to open learning. The use of technology, particularly the integration of information technology (IT) into basic skills work has been for many students their first opportunity to develop IT skills.

The availability of good quality resources and equipment is a strong attraction in open learning and attracts many adults who would not attend traditional classes.

Overall open learning centres have made a significant impact on provision and in many areas has helped to promote a high profile basic skills service. Well resourced basic skills centres, open for a large number of hours per week and in many cases throughout the year, have changed attitudes to post school education. The effectiveness and success of open learning provision depends upon:

- the flexibility of opening times
- the availability of material that students can use independently
- good record keeping and administration procedures.

## **Learning support**

However it is organised, basic skills provision always seeks to put the students' needs first. For someone on a vocational course who is experiencing basic skills difficulties, the priority may simply be to keep up with the course content.

Many colleges and training organisations provide basic skills learning support to students on mainstream courses. Through a Learning Support unit – basic skills specialists organise sessions outside the course timetable for those who are struggling with the essential reading, writing or basic maths demanded by their vocational course. Organisation of work, and study skills are also offered.

As in other basic skills provision, the student has a confidential interview with the learning support tutor, individual strengths and weaknesses are looked at in the context of the mainstream course. The outcome is an individual learning plan discussed and agreed by student and tutor which sets realistic goals for the short and longer term.

Basic skills support is normally offered in an informal workshop setting. Students may book a regular time or just drop in, and they are encouraged to work as independently as possible. The workshops provide wide ranging materials, computer facilities and other technological aids.

In some cases learning support is offered in other ways. Sometimes a basic skills tutor is timetabled into a course to work alongside a vocational lecturer – double staffing certain sessions.

On some vocational courses basic English and Maths are integrated into the course content so that all students are targeted for help. In addition most supervisors in Youth and Adult Training Schemes also integrate basic English and Maths work into their workshop practices.

Increasingly, vocational lecturers are taking up training opportunities to develop their awareness of basic skills approaches. This helps them increase their strategies for presenting information clearly and simply, and probably benefits all their students.

# 2

## Student Profiles

In this section we will look at four people, each at a different level of literacy. In each case the tutors have given some background information about the students and their reasons for entering provision. Throughout the rest of the book reference is made to the case studies, highlighting points we think are important including a summary of the techniques the tutor was using and why. Finally we include some ideas on how the work could be developed. Some of the ideas are for individual work, others could be used with either groups or individuals. All of them could and should be adapted to meet the problems faced by the student.

### Case Study 1: NORMA

*"I always know what I want to say to people but I can't write it down."*

**Norma** is 60 years old, and recently widowed. Her three children have married and do not live close by. She has had a job as a lunchtime organiser at the local Primary school for many years, and for the past five years has been a voluntary helper at a local old folks' home.

**Norma** grew up as the eldest of a large family. Her mother suffered from recurrent ill health and consequently **Norma** had to shoulder much of the responsibility of looking after her younger brothers and sisters. This meant that she frequently missed school and never managed to catch up with her education.

Because of her lack of confidence in reading and writing, after they married, **Norma's** husband took over responsibility for anything involving these skills. When her husband became terminally ill, he made enquiries about local literacy help – he was determined that she would not be left to struggle without him. Following his death, **Norma** rang the local referral number for literacy help.

**Norma** is now settled in a class at her local library which she attends once a week. It is six months since she joined the group and **Norma** already feels more confident.

*"It's been hard since my husband died, but I get so much support from my tutor. It's been such a help to have somewhere I could bring any letters or forms I've needed to deal with. I couldn't have managed without the group."*



## Case Study 2: JOE

Joe is 51 and in full time work which means that he is able to attend a class for only a couple of hours a week. At school his one interest was football and as he himself says,

*"When it came to reading and writing, I think at first it wouldn't sink in so after a while, the teachers gave up trying to teach me."*

Although he had always been an under confident reader, he hadn't felt motivated to improve his reading until the threat of redundancy forced him to consider the skills he would need in the present job market. He had also, after some hesitation, agreed to become the local shop steward and was experiencing difficulty in understanding some of the correspondence and minutes of meetings involved in this work.

Although he was prepared to 'have a go' at most of these things he was never very confident that he had fully understood what he had read. His style when reading was to concentrate on one word at a time with frequent long hesitations before unfamiliar words. He always tried to sound out these unknown words which proved to be a very unsuccessful strategy for him, as this would often result in him coming up with guesses which made no sense in the passage. Not surprisingly this meant that he ended up understanding very little of what he read.

## Case Study 3: PATRICIA

Patricia is in her early thirties with a two year old child. She is unemployed, has slight mobility problems and is registered as disabled. Her disability meant that her full time education took place in a Special School, although nowadays she would have attended a mainstream school.

Unfortunately her school experience did not help to develop her self confidence, and when she first attended classes she was painfully shy. From school she moved into an Industrial Training Unit sponsored by a charity. The Unit had some Basic Education facilities which Patricia attended. After assessment by the tutor there she was referred to a local Adult Education Centre because it was felt that both her social and educational horizons could better be developed outside the Unit.

Gaining qualifications was an important goal for her -- she particularly wanted to achieve a GCSE in English.

*"No-one ever took any exams at my school, and nobody expected very much of any of us. I always felt I could achieve something if only I was given the chance."*

#### Case Study 4: ANSELL

**Ansell** is an 18 year old British born black student on a Catering course at a North West Further Education College. He explains,

*"The practical work is the best part – that's really what it's all about – but the reading and writing did my head in at first. I was so busy trying to take everything down that I often missed half the main points."*

**Ansell** was the last of four children. His mother came to Britain from Jamaica in the early 1960s and **Ansell** was born and brought up in the North West of England. He didn't enjoy school but his mother put great store by qualifications. She wouldn't let him go out until he'd done his homework. He was quite pleased when he got GCSE passes in Art and Maths, though his grades were low.

After leaving school at 16 he drifted from one training scheme to another. His most successful placement was working in the kitchens of a large hotel which he enjoyed. The Careers Adviser suggested he might follow this up and **Ansell** was accepted on a scheme at the local Further Education college.

The course focused on the practical skills needed for different cooking processes and **Ansell** was keen to learn. However, in class he found taking notes difficult and tended to miss things out. Remembering the new catering words was a bit of a problem, especially as some of them were in French. Even when copying from the board it was hard for him to keep up. **Ansell** knew that later in the course he would have to take down orders over the phone and fill out order forms and he felt worried about managing this.

During the first term he found it hard going and even considered giving up. **Ansell's** catering lecturer noticed his problems and suggested he might benefit from attending the college's Basic Skills Unit for Learning Support. She explained to **Ansell** that he could have extra study time to work on his reading, writing, spelling and study skills. He was a bit put out and said he could read already but was persuaded when she said she could see he had the ability but just needed the skills to organise himself.

# 3

## Assessment and Evaluation

**Assessment – initial assessment – devising a student learning plan – assessing progress – record keeping – lesson plans – evaluating your teaching – the tutor/student relationship.**

This chapter examines the processes of assessing the student, both when joining provision and in regularly reviewing progress. It describes the setting of a learning plan and stresses the importance of keeping individual records.

It emphasises the usefulness of written lesson plans and discusses how tutors can evaluate their own teaching.

### Assessment

Assessment is a vital process in the learning programme and it should not be confused with the initial interview, which is often conducted by someone other than the tutor. The initial interview sets out to give individuals the chance to:

- find out about the different kinds of tuition available
- identify wider needs and goals
- get advice and guidance.

For basic skills students assessment should be:

- collaborative
- non-threatening
- purposeful
- of benefit to both tutor and student.

Assessment should take place at frequent stages in the learning process and time must be set aside for regular review sessions. These reviews enable the tutor and the student, to collect and assess evidence that the agreed goals have been attained.

## Initial assessment

The aim of initial assessment is to provide a clear picture of the student's aptitudes, attitudes and motivation, so that a meaningful learning plan can be negotiated. It gives both tutor and student a chance to identify what the student:

- wants to achieve as a result of basic skills tuition
- can already do
- needs specific help with.

It may also provide valuable information on the student's strengths and weaknesses. For example, a student with a stronger visual memory may remember words by seeing them, using flashcards or other techniques that make use of this strength. By the same token approaches that require good auditory skills, for example sounding words out, may not be as successful with this student.

From the initial assessment the tutor is able to build up a list of **competences** that the student already has, and others that go to make up the goals that he or she has. A good approach to this is to use the list of competences developed by ALBSU, that are published as *The ALBSU Standards for Basic Skills Students and Trainees*. These competences apply to all basic skills work. So, for example, a student might work towards the following goals:

- **Read signs and labels**
- **Write about ideas and experiences.**
- **Filling in forms**

These appear in the competence list as:

- Unit 2, Element 2.1
- Unit 3, Element 3.2
- Unit 4, Element 4.2

For many students the achievement of success in literacy, when it is recorded in these terms, can open up the chance to gain some kind of qualification (see Part 5).

Initial assessment should take place when a student first enters provision and can take a variety of forms.

### Ansell:

**Ansell's** learning support tutor used a "Cloze Test" to decide what level of reading matter he could easily understand. Cloze testing is an adult alternative to hearing somebody read aloud. Passages are chosen at various levels of difficulty and words are deleted on a systematic basis every fifth word. The "test" is presented as a puzzle. Its completion depends on a number of skills involved in reading:

- recognising words
- prediction

- skimming to recap what has been said
- scanning to search for information to help predict
- looking for meaning outside the context of the sentence.

'Cloze' is a rough way of deciding a person's overall reading ability. **Ansell** could manage level 'b' very well, (See below). This is the level at which popular newspapers are usually pitched. Level 'c', (See page 20) was more difficult and close to the level of a course text book. It was evident that **Ansell** would need more practice at this level to cope with his course.

### Cooking for a living

**b**

Cooking as a job is not the same as cooking at home. You cook for far larger numbers and use different equipment. *Sometimes* you use different methods of cooking.

In a fast food cafe or snack bar the call-order cook makes meals as people order them. S/he uses ready prepared foods such as frozen pizzas, pies, samosas, etc.

In a hotel or restaurant it is very different. One person will be responsible for only part of a meal. For example, one may prepare the vegetables one just the sauces.

In the kitchen you are always on your feet and on the move. It is hot and tiring and often has unsocial hours. However, in a school or works canteen the hours may be more regular.

Training is usually on the job, but there is also a variety of City and Guilds Specific Skills courses. You can do this on a day release or full-time college course.

*(Adapted from CLIPS Laffet Ltd)*

All these answers fit well. I think you can read and understand this passage satisfactorily. Now try 'catering' level C

from 'Assessing Reading', ALBSU

## Catering

C

### POTATOES

The ways of serving potatoes are numerous, but the real test of skill in potato cookery is the ability to cook them to perfection using simple methods.

For boiling, steaming, roasting or deep frying, large potatoes are the most satisfactory; but when shallow frying potatoes, and making potato salad, new potatoes will give a better size. Younger potatoes are richer with protein than the older ones and are solid, waxy and juicy in texture when cooked. As some starch cells are immature in all potatoes, they are not as easily digested as old potatoes. The main nutrients found in potatoes are: starch, water, calcium, C and cellulose.

#### Convenience potato products

As potatoes are so versatile and easily eaten, there are many convenience junk products available:

#### Canned

- New potatoes in salted water, ready for instant use.
- Potato salad in mayonnaise, ready for instant use.

#### Frozen

- Blanched: roast frozen chipped potatoes that may cooked deep fried or oven-baked and frozen.
- Prepared: croquettes potatoes balls in batter, may be fat fried or oven-baked from frozen.

#### Dehydrated

- Instant potato flakes or mash may be reconstituted with hot water, butter and seasonings.

#### Packets crisps/sticks

- Various crisps and shapes are available. The packets are in 28g bags for individual portions or big packets for bulk uses. The products have a short shelf life of three months maximum. Many are different varieties of potatoes and they tend to be suitable for different methods of cooking.

For example, Majestic are suitable for frying, Epicure for boiling and baking. Some varieties, like King Edward, are suitable for any method.

(Taken from 'Food Preparation')

You will need to practice reading at this level of difficulty. We will try some more passages later.

from 'Assessing Reading', ALBSU

There are other methods of assessing students. For example, some FE Colleges have developed screening and assessment tests for new students like **Ansell**. There are assessment models that relate specifically to competences. See the list of resources at the back of this book for further details.

### **Norma:**

For **Norma** it all began when she went along to her first session at the local Library. She knew from her initial interview with the Referral Worker that the tutor would be expecting her. It had been agreed that she would arrive twenty minutes before the start of the session. She had already got a lot off her chest whilst chatting to the Referral Worker, so although nervous she wasn't too worried about the next step. They talked informally about **Norma's** past experiences – about herself, her family, her interests, job and school life and why she had decided to join a class.

To get some idea of how **Norma** perceived her problem they went through a checklist together. This covered reading skills and writing skills and helped the tutor to identify some starting points.

Next the tutor and **Norma** listed all the reading and writing tasks that she would find most difficult to manage on her own and which she needed to cope with fairly urgently.

The tutor suggested **Norma** try some writing to begin with. This gave the tutor a more accurate picture of **Norma's** difficulties and provided them with something to start work on. This was a difficult task for **Norma** although she gave it a try.

### **Devising a student "Learning Plan"**

The learning plan is the 'map' which will guide the student (and the tutor) as they work towards their goals. If it is done well, it can be the key to greater independence for the student – a means of taking greater control and responsibility for their own learning. For a learning plan to be effective it is essential that it is negotiated between the student and the tutor. It should:

- identify long and short term goals
- contain an outline of the steps needed to achieve these goals
- be written in clear, plain language
- be reviewed regularly
- be accessible to both the student and the tutor
- lead to greater student autonomy
- form a record of the work undertaken at each session.

Some examples of learning plans are shown overleaf.

### Discussion/Reading/Writing

Name: Norma.....

Things I would like to work on during the next six weeks		Six weeks review: What can I do now? What needs practice?	
like to read a book To write and send Christmas Cards. Sort out bills			
Week Ending	Main activities done this week	Comments, reminders for next week	
1st Nov	started language experience following discussion with Norma about her taking wedding cakes. Began listing some family names	Tape Queen street for Norma to take home and listen to -  Norma to bring in Rev correspondence which needs dealing with.	
8th Nov	Revised language experience. Norma can sequence the lines and began individual word recognition  Introduced the idea of putting together a file  Began sections on family names, messages for cards and numbers for cheques. * I wrote two letters for Norma to copy at home and send off to Building Society and Mail Order Catalogue.	Taking words home to practise   Taking home game of matching words and numbers	



Students name Ansell Lawrence

Date 16.10.92 Subject Basic Skills

Tutor A. Trainer Accreditation General Catering  
Word Power?

Student needs/aims: (What she/he wants to learn)

Referred by Catering lecturer. Needs general basic skills support including:

Note taking from lecturers  
remembering new catering vocabulary  
increased speed at copying  
organising study methods  
taking down phone messages  
spelling  
order forms

Student's long term aims:

Catering qualification - to work in a hotel

Targets in six sessions

Catering terms - develop a checklist of words and meanings

Common abbreviations (to speed up note taking)

Work on organising his notes

Use word checklist for work on spelling methods.

## Assessing progress

Ongoing assessment is a regular review of the learning plan. It helps the student and the tutor to identify what progress has been achieved and which goals have been met. It provides an opportunity to evaluate the work done and set new targets where appropriate.

Many schemes have learning plans that have space where student and tutor assessment of progress can be recorded:

Date	Topic	Where to find	Done
6.10.92	Cloze passages	Assessing Reading Pack	level (b) okay (c) - too hard
27.10.92	Catering Checklist- match meanings to words	Catering folder A	

Student Comments	Tutor Comments
(b) was easier because it was more like a story	A good attempt. We will do more practice later.
A good way to learn the words.	Mixing up Patisserie with Poissonier in list of chefs.

Review \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Were your targets achieved?

How did you know?

I can now:

I had most success with:

I need to improve on:

Next I would like to:

Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Tutor's signature \_\_\_\_\_

The main purpose of the review is a 'step back', a chance to look at:

- the areas where progress has been made, things that the student can now do
- the work that has not gone well, things that the student has not learnt
- new areas of work that need to be tackled.

From this the next learning plan can be constructed. Ongoing assessment and evaluation gave **Patricia** an opportunity to think about her longer term goals as well as her immediate needs. Without this she may have continued in classes where she worked on functional writing tasks. On the surface such work would have helped with her spelling, but would not have addressed her eventual aim to move on to a GCSE course.

### **Record keeping**

It is important that the record keeping section of the learning plan is completed at each session, particularly where the learning programme involves the student seeing a number of different tutors.

If comments are to be of any value they must be constructive. Statements like '*I did some writing*', or '*It was OK*' don't adequately describe what went on in the session. It's also unlikely that they will help you remember the successes of the session one month on. Tutors may find that they need to take responsibility for assisting the student, with completing these records, in the early stages. Later with increased confidence the student will take over this responsibility.

### **Lesson plans**

For any learning session to be effective the tutor must plan in advance, taking account of:

- available resources
- the number of students
- type of setting (1:1, group, open learning).

These factors will determine the type of lesson planning required.

Lesson plans should:

- give details of the activities and tasks the student/s are expected to cover
- specify time allotted for each activity
- describe methods and resources to be used
- reflect the wider aims and specific goals of the student/s.

It is important to allow space to record items which need more practice and new areas of work which become apparent during the session.

## **Evaluating your teaching**

New tutors often wonder, "How will I know if I'm getting it right?"

After a session a tutor may be surprised to find that things did not run according to plan. A piece of work may turn out to be harder and take a student longer than the time allotted on the Session Plan or a subject that the tutor thought would be relevant and interesting may evoke little response.

With increasing experience most tutors find ways of working flexibly to cope with the unexpected, but a good tutor will always ask, "Why did that happen?"

Whether new or established, all tutors should have a systematic way of examining their own performance. Five key questions can help you through this process:

### **1. Content: Am I focusing on the right things?**

Remember, your teaching should link to the aims of the students' Learning Plans. When you make decisions on the learning outcomes for a particular session these plans should guide your choices.

### **2. Explanation: Do the students understand what to do and why they are doing it?**

To get the most out of any activity the student needs to understand how it is going to help his learning. For instance, it may seem simple but pointless to underline all the words in a text that start with "ch" (chairman, character, charisma) unless the tutor explains that the ultimate purpose is to find words where the letters "c" "h" produce a different sound from "ch" as in "church".

### **3. Presentation: Were the methods and materials appropriate?**

Was it at the right level of difficulty? Did the session go at a suitable pace? Was a variety of methods used? Were the materials interesting and relevant to the student?

### **4. Progress: How well did the session work?**

What did people get out of it? What progress was made? Which of the learning outcomes were achieved?

How do you know this happened? How does the student know?

### **5. Future plans: Did you notice things that will need further work?**

Did you make a note of these? As part of ongoing planning and review it is useful to record areas where more work is needed.

After looking at these five points the tutor should be in a good position to answer the question:

“How could I have improved that session: if I was running it again what changes would I make?”

### **The tutor/student relationship**

All tutors should periodically ask themselves the following questions:

- Have I made plans to defuse any anxieties that students might have?
- Do my teaching methods allow each student's previous experiences to be acknowledged and used?
- Is there a friendly working atmosphere?
- Do I make positive and constructive comments about each student's work/progress?
- Does the work allow students to see for themselves that they are making progress?
- Do I know what each student's long term goals are?
- Have I negotiated individual learning plans?
- Do I allow time for feedback and review within my sessions?
- Do I have a system for counselling/advising students whose individual goals or motivation are not being met or who are ready to move on?

# 4

## Practical Approaches

This section explores a wide range of learning methods and techniques. It describes the approaches used with each of the four students from Part 2 – **Norma, Joe, Pat** and **Ansell**. It also suggests further activities which could be developed for individual or group work.

### Case study 1: Norma

**Language experience (matching and sequencing, whole word recognition, cloze procedure, context cues, language experience and FSOL students) – the survival kit – the personal dictionary – phonics – key words – alphabetical order – social sight words – handwriting – beginning writing.**

**Norma** and her tutor began with the Language Experience Approach for teaching reading. This is the best method for beginners because it uses the student's own words and experiences. Texts are composed and then become a source for teaching reading, writing and spelling. The student feels more confident with such texts because the language and content is familiar.

### Language experience

**Norma** is an excellent cook and makes wedding cakes for her friends and family. **Norma** and her tutor used this skill and experience as the basis for the Language Experience text. They talked about the cakes and the tutor wrote down some sentences. Once the sentences had been agreed upon, the tutor wrote a clear copy.

Some students may find it difficult to decide what to talk about but it's usually possible to write something even if it is just – "I don't know what to talk about." This will still give you some words to begin the method.

### *Don't change the language*

It is important to keep to the student's own words and style. Don't insert, change or omit anything. If the student uses "was" instead of "were", or if singulars and plurals are mixed up, leave it as it is. That's not what you're dealing with at the moment and it would only cause a confusion to introduce these extra points.

### Language Experience Approach

This approach is very successful with beginning readers. It works because it uses the student's language and a familiar topic.



- It encourages people to read for meaning right from the start.
- It builds a sight vocabulary of common words (see Dolch List Page, 39).
- It gives quick success and confidence. Students read whole sentences and build up a collection of readable texts.
- It can lead to activities which teach new sight words and build up a knowledge of sounds.



- It's not enough on its own. Students will need to read other texts.
- Careful records must be kept to ensure regular revision and practice.
- The approach should be used carefully so that the student understands the process and is happy with the text.
- Don't take on too much at once. Start with just one or two sentences.

from 'The Starter Pack', ALBSU

### Use short lines

Most sentences break naturally into phrases.

**Norma's** sentences were:

I really like making wedding cakes  
I have an old recipe  
with butter, dried fruit  
and brandy.  
The best part  
is icing the layers  
and putting on the bride and groom.

Arranging the lines like this – called “**line-breaking**” – makes it easier for beginner readers because it gives them a chance to pause without losing the sense and allows them to tackle small bits at a time.

**Norma's** tutor read these sentences to her several times. Then she asked **Norma** to join in and read them together. This is sometimes referred to as “shared reading”. Gradually the tutor faded her voice out as **Norma** grew more confident. The words and content were familiar so if **Norma** had difficulty with a word, her tutor



encouraged reading on or recapping the sentence in order to foster prediction skills. If **Norma** was still unsure, her tutor gave the word immediately – support is very important at this stage. When **Norma** could read the piece confidently it was time to develop other activities from the text.

## Language experience activities

A second copy of the reading text is needed for the further activities so that the student has a copy to refer to for help and checking.

### 1. Matching and sequencing

One text copy is cut into lines to match against the second copy. Then the student can practise putting the lines in the right sequence with and without the reference copy.

This is part of **Norma's** piece.

The best part  
is icing the layers  
and putting on the bride and groom

is icing the layers

The best part

and putting on the bride and groom

### 2. Whole word recognition

Each sentence or line is taken separately and cut into individual words. The student matches the words to the reference copy, then sequences them in sentence order first with the copy then without it.

One of **Norma's** sentences was:

cakes

I

really

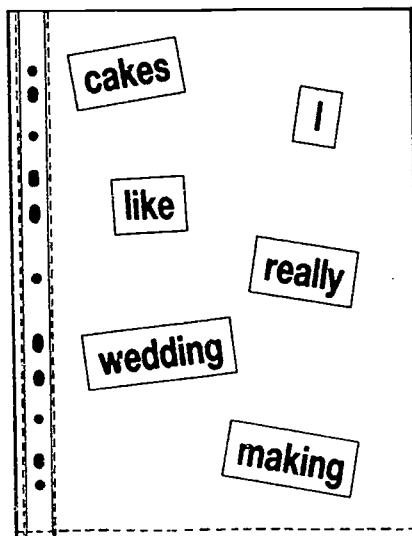
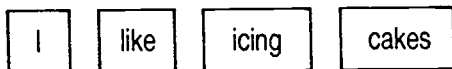
like

wedding

making

I really like making wedding cakes.

All the sentences/lines can be worked through in this way. The individual words become part of a "word bank" and can be used to make new sentences. The words should be kept in a useful way so that they can be added to and also used for revision. Plastic envelopes or box files can be used.



Whole word recognition is an important part of reading. A good sight vocabulary helps with the flow and meaning of a piece of reading.

There are several ways to practise whole word recognition.

• wordsearches

a	b	c	d	e	f	g
i	b	r	i	d	e	n
j	r	e	a	l	l	y
w	e	d	d	i	n	g
k	l	m	n	k	p	a
x	c	a	k	e	a	n
w	v	u	t	s	r	d

• jigsaws

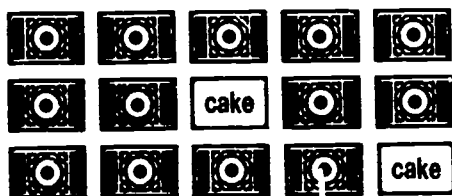


• Bingo

like	part	I
best	cake	and

cake	the	is
I	and	part

• Pelmanism



Identical pairs of words turned face down and each player takes a turn trying to turn up a pair.

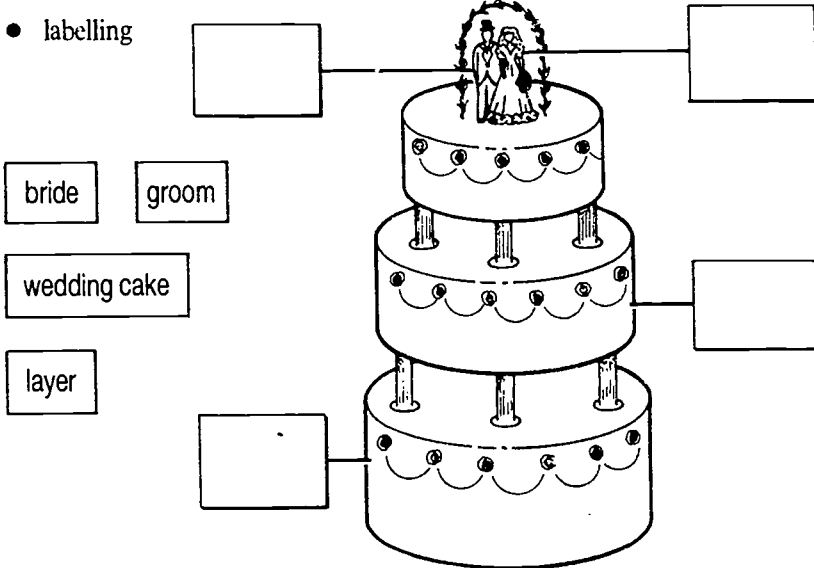
• Dominoes

I	cake
---	------

cake	like
------	------

like	and
------	-----

• labelling



bride
-------

groom
-------

wedding cake
--------------

layer
-------

**3. Cloze procedure**

Remove words from the text and ask the student to insert, predict or write in the missing words. This type of exercise is called a Cloze exercise.

**Norma's** tutor made the following:

I really like making ..... cakes.  
 I have an ..... recipe  
 with butter, dried .....  
 and brandy.  
 The best .....  
 icing the layers  
 ....., putting on the bride and groom.

- Inserting words provides whole word practice too.

old
fruit
part
wedding
and
groom

- Writing the missing words in the Cloze exercise introduces the student to spelling. Reading, writing and spelling should be taught together and should support each other. The beginner reader should be introduced to a spelling programme right from the start. Each week the student should work on 3 to 5 useful words following the **Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check** method which is discussed in detail on page 58.

When we read, we are getting the meaning from the words on the page. It doesn't matter if we can't read every word as we can omit the odd word and still get the gist of it. This is an activity that some people see as 'cheating' but, in fact, it is a strategy for coping with unknown words. The fluent reader probably uses this method more than any other.

You can take a passage and leave out some words and then work together to discuss the sort of words the writer might have used, bearing in mind that there are usually a number of possible answers.

Remember when preparing this activity do not delete too many words and leave the first sentence complete. The more words deleted, the more difficult it is to understand what's written.

Cloze is particularly useful for readers who are reluctant to read past an unknown word as it encourages them to read on and then guess the missing word.

You could also try the following with students:

- Delete key words. After he has identified the missing words, the student can practice writing and spelling them.
- Omit words that contain the same sound. You can set clues from discussing the writing and words first – or by providing certain letters in the word as well as the correct number of spaces. For example, day:

We m\_\_ have to p\_\_ to see the May d\_\_ display.

#### 4. Context cues – predicting

- In a group, students can write their own material, leaving out words for other students to guess. Predicting the missing words provides the student with practice in reading for meaning. It is a way to encourage the learner to guess unfamiliar or 'forgotten' words by using the context. The student should read forward or re-read part of the text to aid prediction. The student should also be encouraged to look for 'clues' from any pictures, headings and other features in the text layout. Predicting is a natural approach used by good readers.

## Using language experience approach with the student whose first language is not English

When learning a language, listening and speaking come before reading and writing. Reading materials must therefore be within a student's own understanding of the language. This is particularly true in the early stages. Only when a student is a reasonably confident reader should new words be introduced through written text. It is important that reading is not an isolated activity but is closely related to and integrated with listening and speaking practice.

Language experience texts are particularly useful for this purpose it ensures that the language is within a student's oral competence and that the subject matter is of relevance and interest. As described with the basic skills student, the tutor should agree the sentences to be written down, bearing in mind the level of competence in reading. It is also important with a language student that any errors in the spoken language are discussed and corrected before the sentences are written down. There is no point in the second language learner reinforcing language errors by reading them.

### Points to remember

1. You should explain to students what you are doing and why. Unless the students know the reason for doing a task they are unlikely to be very interested in or to learn effectively from it. You will probably already know this from your own learning experiences.
2. From the beginning the student should be encouraged to use several techniques to work out unknown words:
  - leaving the word out and coming back to it
  - guessing from the words around it and from his previous knowledge
  - using the sounds as a clue.

### Other practical approaches used with Norma

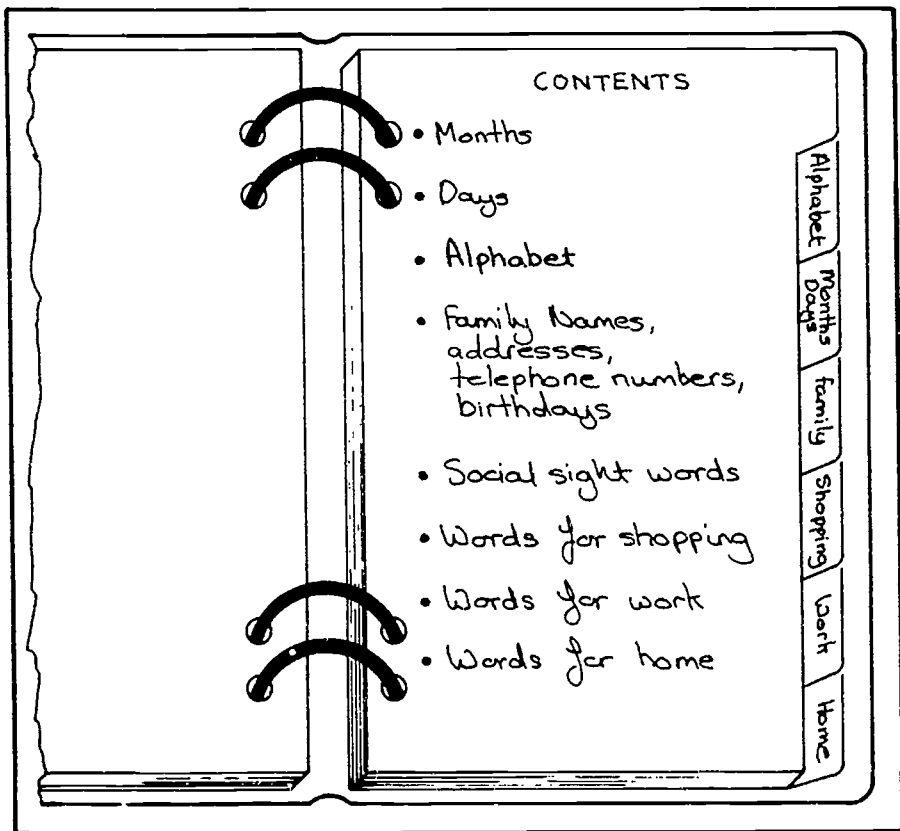
#### The Survival Kit

The tutor was very aware that **Norma** still had an extreme lack of confidence when it came to basic literacy skills. Whilst negotiating her learning plan, **Norma** and her tutor talked together about what would be a useful way to record what she was learning so that she could use new skills in practice outside the class. They came up with the idea of a "survival kit".

For this purpose, **Norma** would use an A5 size ring binder with subject dividers.

Different sections would allow her to look up:

- months of the year
- days of the week
- alphabet (upper and lower case)
- family names and addresses, telephone numbers and birthdays
- social sight words
- words needed for shopping/getting about
- words for work
- words for home.



Planning out the survival kit and recording all the details provided a lot of work in itself and helped **Norma** to exercise her memory skills.

She needed a lot of help with organising and compiling the file initially, and found it was useful to use a highlighter pen to emphasise some words she found difficult. She also made use of pictures and colours to jog her memory. Looking things up in the survival kit proved to be an excellent form of revision.

There is a limit to what you can learn at once, especially when you lack confidence, so it is necessary to go over the same ground again and again with beginners. This type of file also helps the tutor – as it is a reminder of words and letter patterns the student is currently working on. It is essential when working with beginners, to be sensitive to what they are likely to know and what might cause difficulty.

After some time **Norma** and her tutor devised a follow-up to the survival kit. This dealt with **Norma's** immediate need to take over writing tasks which her husband had done previously.

This was organised into several sections:

**Form filling:**

- running a catalogue
- Post Office
- coupons
- paying and understanding bills

**Greetings:**

- Birthdays
- Christmas
- get well, etc.

**Messages and Memos:**

- milkman
- work
- friends/neighbours
- abbreviations

**Writing Cheques/Banking:**

- current account
- Building Society account

**Writing Letters:**

- formal/informal

There were some things which she needed to tackle straight away, such as replying to formal letters from the Building Society and Bank. The tutor helped **Norma** to get together the information she needed and write out a formal reply for **Norma** to check through and sign. This meant the letter was dealt with, putting her mind at rest and giving her some sense of achievement which was very important at this stage.

Other tasks such as messages, memos and greetings, they could take more time over together until **Norma** felt confident to use those sections of this survival package on her own.

Suggestions on how to develop each of these areas of work can be found in other sections of the book.

## Work which could be developed for an individual or a group

### A Personal Dictionary

From the very beginning most tutors encourage students to keep a personal dictionary where new words they are learning can be added week by week. The personal dictionary may be simply a small note book with pages marked A-Z. Finding the appropriate pages gives practice in alphabetical order and also directs the student's attention to the word's initial sound.

#### *Initial Sounds*

best	B
brandy	b
butter	

Students may think that recording the word in the book is the end of the process – you then have a growing body of words that you can refer to when needed. But it is important to realise that, at this stage, the word has not been *learned*. To be able to read or spell the new word confidently more work is required.

The personal dictionary notebook is meant to be used regularly in other ways. The student may use it for reading practice between sessions. The tutor may suggest particular spelling activities to be practised at home, with the dictionary as a reference list of words to work on. The student and tutor may decide on a particular page or pages as the focus work to be done, or the student may search the pages for words with identical letter patterns, e.g. making, putting, wedding.

Word cards from earlier language experience work can be used along with the dictionary activities in matching and arranging words in alphabetical order. Some students get encouragement from a "two envelopes system": the word cards are divided into "words I am learning" and "words I know", and with regular practice, the student sees cards move gradually from the first envelope to the second.

### Phonics

It is useful for students to know initial sounds and common beginnings and endings of words. Sounds (phonics) help the student to guess some unknown words, and also



help with some spellings. However, the relationship of sounds to letters is quite complicated, and not regular, so students should not be encouraged to concentrate on this method alone.

**Reading should involve a combination of skills – whole word recognition, prediction and phonics.**

Reading work involving sounds may be helped by matching and grouping activities. By concentrating on one sound, at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of words, a list of words can be produced. Make up some nonsense sentence with the student, for example:

"Ned is not my nephew's name, my nephew's name is Norman."

"The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain."

You can then cut up the sentences into individual words for various games – memory games, dominoes, bingo, snap – or simply sort them into groups and add more words. Try making up other nonsense sentences.

To be meaningful, the sounds need to be used as part of words and phrases.

### Keywords

These are small, common words that recur in all reading and writing. Although they are a relatively small group of words, they are particularly important and are difficult to learn by sounding out (try sounding out 'said' and 'they').

The following 32 words make up average 1/3 of all the words we read or write:

**a all and are as at be but for had have he him his I in is it not on of one said so that the they to was we with you**

Along with these additional words, the total 100 words make up on average 1/2 of all words we read or write:

**about an back been before big by call came can come could did do down first from get go has her here if into just like little look made make me more much must my new no now off old only or other our out over right see she some their them then there this two up want well went were what when where which who will you.**

*From: J. McNally & W. Murray: 'Key Words and Literacy and the Teaching of Reading', Schoolmaster Publishing.*

## Alphabetical order

The ability to recite the alphabet from A-Z is only of limited value when trying to use a telephone directory or a dictionary. However in order to locate information which is stored alphabetically, it is essential to know where letters stand in relation to one another.

As soon as a working knowledge of order has been established, use it in realistic situations. Work with telephone directories, street guides, indices and dictionaries – after all, they are the reason for learning alphabetical order in the first place.

Some useful activities for teaching alphabetical order are:

- Give a few letter cards to be sorted into order, for example, d c e b a, and random letters, not in immediate sequence, for example, v, r, p, n (do not use the whole alphabet to begin with).
- Give a word in code, where the student has to find the word by using the next letter of the alphabet, for example, sghr (= this).
- Practise finding a particular letter in a dictionary, using the top corner as a guide. If you open the dictionary at m and you are looking for s, do you move forward or back, and how far.
- Play “sevens” with letter cards. One set of alphabet playing cards are all dealt out. The person with m starts, and each player in turn can lay one card down if they have the next one in sequence either forwards or backwards.
- Use filing cards, as in a filing system, to reinforce and extend early work. It is a simple matter to build up a filing system which can be extended as confidence grows, to include words filed by 2nd and 3rd letters, etc.

All these activities should be made self checking by providing a copy of the alphabet.

## Social sight words

**REMEMBER** – beginning readers are not beginning thinkers.

Adults who say they can't read, can often recognise many of the words they see everyday in shops, on the street, on television and in the papers. Each person has a



slightly different group of words, though some are common to us all – EXIT, ENTRANCE, NO SMOKING, etc. They are words which are more often read than written. Tutors can write the sight words the student wants to remember onto flash cards.

Recognising many sight words depends on the style they are written in.

Some signs are written in capital letters or use a particular typographical style. However it is interesting to note that signs and notices are increasingly being written in lower case rather than block capitals.

It is often helpful if students can see signs in their appropriate context, e.g.

<b>Dairy Products</b>	↑
<b>Confectionery</b>	↑
<b>Biscuits</b>	→
<b>Frozen Foods</b>	→

**Accidents and  
Emergencies**  
Ambulances Only

### **Handwriting**

The amount of work that needs to be done on handwriting will depend on the writer's ability. Some students' writing is fine and they are quite happy with the presentation. Others worry that their handwriting shows their lack of ability in reading and writing. To cope with each situation, you need to know the students feelings about his own writing in order to offer the most appropriate support. You also need to ensure the students can read what you write.

Some habits will be hard to break and you need to consider whether it is necessary to do so. Will forming a certain letter the "wrong" way make it more tiring for the student, if he is writing for any length of time? Might his way make the learning of joined writing more complicated?

As much as possible, work from the students' knowledge and build on it. Encourage proof reading in order to pick out features which need to be improved.

Only in circumstances where the formation of the letters is getting in the way of the real reasons for writing, i.e. to communicate, should you consider altering radically the way the student writes.

For a student who writes well but is not happy with the style, it might be useful to collect together a wide variety of examples of handwriting from tutors. The student may then begin to see that his own style is no less legible than most people's.

By not starting to alter someone's handwriting immediately, you may find that he alters it himself just by doing more writing.

A student who is a beginning reader and writer may use large and small letters indiscriminately. Is this due to nerves? Is the student unaware of the use of capital

(upper case) and small (lower case) letters? Does the student have difficulty in discriminating between the lower case **b** and **d** or **p** and **q** so uses the upper case equivalents? What about the spacing between words? Having sorted out the answers to these questions and others that you have in mind, a few activities need to be planned. They might include some of the following:

- Write out a reference alphabet in large (upper case) and small (lower case) letters, for example,

Aa, Bb

- Work on one group of letters that derive from one basic shape, for example,

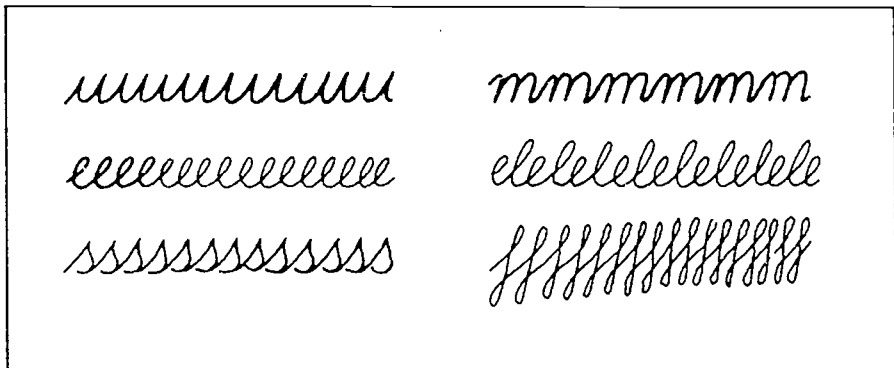
c c a d e g o q

These letters can then be used to form words that the student can trace and write below. Make sure the size of the writing lines is not too close. Encourage the students to over emphasise the size to begin with in order to feel the shape of the letter.

- Do matching activities for upper and lower case letters – individual letters on cards, handwritten, typed, Letraset, etc. Ask the student to write down letters in small or capital letters which can then be checked from cards.

It is important to encourage joined writing from the early stages because it helps the student to remember the flow of letters and the pattern of the word, and so is a useful skill for learning spellings.

- For joined writing, some basic patterns could be introduced to help the student feel the flow of the shapes. Use a variety of writing materials – pencils, felt tip, plain paper, wide lined paper, etc.



# Beginning writing

## First thing for beginner writers

Start with the thing which is not important for the student. If there is something you have an urgent reason to write you are more likely to practise to get it right.

**Name and address**

This is the most frequent bit of writing we have to do.

Y \_ \_ F \_ \_  
D \_ \_ R \_ \_  
\_ \_ \_

H \_ \_ W \_ \_ B \_ \_  
S \_ \_ F \_ \_ D \_ \_  
\_ \_ \_ B  
\_ \_ \_ H

Make several copies with words missing. Check with the master card and fill in.

**JOHN VINCENT FARMER  
21 DALESWOOD ROAD  
ROTHERHAM RH8 6TN**

Make a master card for your wallet. Copy from something official to make sure it's correct.

John Vincent Farmer  
21 Daleswood Road  
Rotherham  
RH8 6TN.

John Vincent Farmer  
21 Daleswood Road  
Rotherham RH8 6TN

Practise copying the master card by hand or typewriter.

**John Vincent Farmer  
21 Daleswood Road  
Rotherham RH8 6TN**

Have some cards printed.

Practise by filling in forms from the post office and coupons from catalogues and magazines.

Name . . . . .

Address . . . . .

Postcode . . . . .

Tel. (home) (Work) . . . . .

Mr  
Mrs  
Miss

First name(s) . . . . .

Surname . . . . .

Address . . . . . Town . . . . . County . . . . . Postcode . . . . .

Telephone  
Day(STD) Number Evening(STD) Number  
For an even faster response tick box and we will ring you

**John Vincent Farmer**

21 Daleswood Road, Rotherham RH8 6TN

Practise each word separately by Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check. (see Spell Well, page 5)

Daleswood  
Daleswood  
Daleswood.

Practise writing in capital and small letters, and in joined up writing.

**ROTHERHAM**  
Rotherham  
Rotherham

**Signature**

Find a style which suits you and practise it. *John Farmer J. Farmer J.V. Farmer*

Sometimes you may need to print your name clearly below your signature. **JOHN V FARMER.**

from 'The Starter Pack', ALBSU

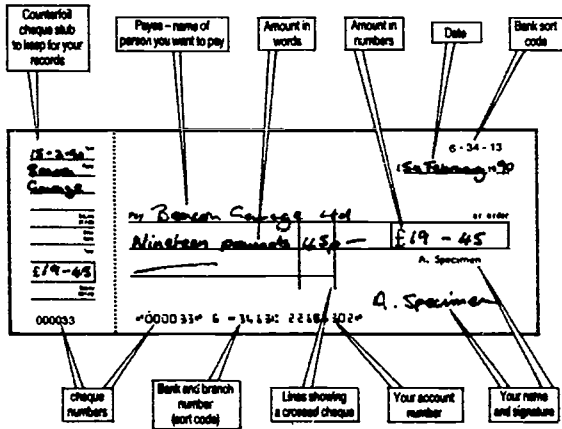
# Writing cheques

Nowadays wages are often paid by cheque or straight into a bank account. Therefore it is important to feel confident about using a cheque book to pay for things.

A cheque is just a signed instruction from you to the bank. But the layout of a cheque can be confusing.

The things you need to write correctly are:

- the date – in figures or words
- the name of the person you want to pay – the payee
- the amount you want to pay – in words and figures
- the word 'only' after the pounds if no pence are added
- your signature – which may be matched with your cheque card.



To make sure that your cheque is accepted you will need to sign it. In a shop you will usually be asked to show a cheque card, or banker's card. Your signature will be matched against this card. You can apply for a cheque card if you have a bank account – cards are issued to 'reliable' customers!

Does your signature look the same every time?

Other things you will need to learn are the various ways in which dates can be written, e.g. 24th April 1991; 24/4/91; April 24, '91  
 Try writing these dates various ways:

- 24th December 1990 .....
- 1st April 1988 .....
- 1st January 1991 .....
- 8/6/89 .....
- 20/11/90 .....
- 15/8/90 .....

from 'The Starter Pack', ALBSU

## Messages and memos

When writing notes we are concerned to communicate main ideas and to record the maximum amount of information in the minimum number of words.

- Frequently notes are to members of our family, the milkman, or for ourselves. These can be very cryptic – “Back at 6” – “2 pints please” – and tend to pose few problems with practice.
- Other more formal notes are simply brief letters and can be usefully introduced as passages to be completed. For example, a letter of absence from school:

Dear .....

..... will not be at school

as she .....

Yours sincerely,

.....

- Taking telephone messages is frequently unnerving for many people. This may not simply be a matter of jotting down the main points but can involve difficulty with spelling names, addresses, etc. Students may need to be reassured that it is perfectly alright to ask spellings – “Sorry, I didn’t catch that name. Could you spell it please?”
- Making notes at meetings is a more complex activity. However, practice can be gained by starting with simple exercises and gradually increasing the difficulty. It may be helpful to tape record role-play sessions of meetings because in this way the main points contained in the notes can be checked with the original discussions. Students should be encouraged to omit inessential words as well as points which are peripheral to the main argument. As soon as possible the notes should be written up in order that the gist of what has been said is still fresh in the mind. Reporting back from notes gives an idea of whether they are full enough or not.

# Messages and Memos

A message or a memo can be short and sharp as long as it includes the essential information. Someone else will read it so it must be clear.

If you are taking a telephone message

- don't write everything the caller says
- pick out the important points
- remember to make a note of names, date and times.

MESSAGES	
To	.....
Date	..... Time .....
Signed .....	
AAA BUILDERS LIMITED 4 Peach Road, Romerham, Yorkshire	

THINGS TO DO TODAY
ANCHOR OIL COMPANY 142 High Street, 13 West Park, Reading, North

To ~~Lena~~  
11.15 am Mon.  
Jeff (from Personnel) rang.  
manager bringing visitors  
to see production line.  
4.30 today.  
V-important Be prepared!  
Sue.

Some offices have their own special memo pads which you should learn to use.

Post-it Telephone Message Pad 1660

To \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

**WHILE YOU WERE OUT**

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONED \_\_\_\_\_  
WAS IN TOWN \_\_\_\_\_  
WANTS TO SEE YOU \_\_\_\_\_ PLEASE CALL  
RETURNED YOUR CALL \_\_\_\_\_ WILL CALL BACK  
Message \_\_\_\_\_ **URGENT**

Compter \_\_\_\_\_

Learn some useful abbreviations.

Mon Aug am eg  
Tues Sep pm etc  
Wed Oct N.B. p.s.

Make a Select-a-Message and practise writing the various combinations.

To the .....

Please leave .....

On .....

Thank you

Milkman, Paperboy,  
baker, etc.

3 pints, The Times,  
½ doz eggs, 2 large brown

Monday afternoon,  
the back doorstep  
Tuesday evening the  
Kitchen window sill

For further practice, tape record a variety of personal and business messages which the student can listen to and write.



## Case Study 2: Joe

### Extending reading techniques – dictionary usage – letter writing

**Joe** was able to identify several areas of reading which he wanted to concentrate on. He urgently needed some help with the union correspondence. At the same time he wanted to review his personal financial position in case he lost his job. With a mortgage, personal pension and various insurance policies he received frequent statements and mailings about “special” or “free” offers. Many of these were written in language which seemed designed to confuse and this had led in the past to him unwittingly signing agreements for unwanted items or increased contributions. He needed to learn some ways to identify the main points in these types of letters and how to summarize their contents.

### Extending reading techniques

**Joe** is not a bad reader. He can de-code words but doesn't feel he gets much out of his reading. He needs to move from being a mechanical reader to being an effective reader where he is constantly reading for meaning.

In his new role of shop steward he constantly receives minutes of union meetings which he needs to read accurately so that he can report back to his work mates. Although he has usually been in attendance at these meetings and is therefore aware of what has happened he is not using this prior knowledge to help him understand the minutes to be read. **Joe** and his tutor talked about his particular reading difficulties and decided that reading these minutes would be a good way to improve his comprehension skills.

1. It was agreed that before reading the minutes with his tutor, **Joe** would relate what he already knew about the meeting – topics discussed, people present, decisions taken, and list these.
2. The tutor then divided the minutes into more manageable chunks so that it didn't look like a solid block of text (see example overleaf).
3. **Joe** would then:
  - a. Start reading a sentence at a time.
  - b. Try to guess unknown words using his prior knowledge and context clues. If needed look at initial letter for additional help.
  - c. Try to spot inconsistencies in meaning if he gives a nonsense substitution.
  - d. Be given the correct word if still struggling.

	MAIN POINTS
J.V. who led the union delegation reported on the latest talks with management held last week. This had proved to be a lengthy and at times acrimonious meeting with little consensus emerging.	Long meeting No agreement
J.V. had yet again presented our case for an across the board 12% increase, backdated to April, based on cost of living increases and rises in productivity by our members already conceded by management.	Our claim 12% from April
They as usual repeated their last offer of 6% for the lowest paid only and 5.3% for supervisory grades. Even this was made conditional on a review of staffing levels throughout the factory.	Their offer 6% low paid 5.3% supervisors with strings
After several hours of talks during which we continued to present our case forcibly there was some movement on their side with an increase in their offer of 1% for the low paid subject to a reduction in holiday entitlement.	Upped to 7% for low paid
This was clearly unacceptable and the meeting broke up with no agreement in sight.	Not acceptable

- e. Repeat phrases where he has had problems to help him extract meaning from the text.
- f. Recap at the end of the sentence – ask himself what it was about and check that it agrees with what he already knows about the meeting.
- g. At the end of each chunk of text list the main points.

4. When he has finished, comparison of the two lists (before and after) should show him how successfully he has been able to apply his existing knowledge to making sense of the reading.

To enable **Joe** to handle his personal correspondence a monthly diary was created. Bills, pension, insurance and mortgage statements could be entered. When each was received significant words and phrases were highlighted using coloured pens and **Joe** was encouraged to try and draw out the main points in each letter as he did with the union minutes. His tutor used some of these letters to show **Joe** how important it was to “read between the lines” to try and discover why a letter had been sent.

Opposite is part of a letter received from an insurance company. Together **Joe** and the tutor looked at the purpose of this letter. Had it been sent merely to enclose a statement or did the writer have another purpose in mind? What effect does the letter have on the reader? Are particular words and phrases used deliberately to achieve this effect? Is it typical of other letters he has received from insurance companies?

Dear Mr

### YOU COULD BE MAKING MORE OF YOUR NEW TAX-FREE ALLOWANCE

I have great pleasure in enclosing your annual statement with details of your investment.

You already appreciate the importance of saving for the future and know that the tax-free savings in a Friendly Society have greater growth potential than savings in a comparable plan which is subject to tax.

Good news is that you can now benefit from even higher tax free savings than those you currently enjoy.

In the last budget, the chancellor increased your tax-free savings limits to £18 a month, £200 a year or £1,600 for lump sum investors. It makes sound financial sense to take advantage of this new.....

### Points to notice

1. The tutor and **Joe** talked a lot about his particular reading difficulties. They had discussed his reading style and analysed the strategies he used when reading. It was as a result of this discussion that they agreed to look at "reading for meaning".
2. Everything was based on what the student wanted to read. To develop reading with understanding **Joe** needed to be using texts which were of some purpose to him and took into account his interests and the knowledge he already possessed.
3. Pre-reading activities such as talking about the meeting before reading the minutes can be as important as the actual reading of the text and encourage the reader to question what he is reading.
4. All of the techniques used aim to create an active involvement in the reading process so that **Joe** can make reading meaningful for himself and develop his reading strategies independently of his tutor.

### Work which could be developed for an individual or a group

#### Hearing reading

If you are to discover the reading style of your student you need to listen to the student reading aloud. This may be an awkward experience for your student and you need to discuss together the purpose of this activity – to provide information about the strategies used when reading and so enable tutor and student to plan useful reading activities.

To make the situation less stressful the student could, in private, read a text on to tape and then with the tutor play the tape back and discuss the strategies used. This enables the student to gain insight into the techniques he uses in de-coding text.

After you have analysed a student's reading style it is not necessary to always hear them reading. The tutor can check if they've understood a passage through asking questions, discussion or written tasks. However, many students feel they need the tutor to listen to them reading to check that they are getting it right. This need should not be ignored. It can also be useful for the tutor to read to the student, although this is more common at Foundation level. This can help the student to follow and enjoy a story.

### **Skimming**

A lot of adult reading is done in this way. It consists of glancing through a piece of reading to get a general idea of what it is about. You could practise this with the student by some of the following:

- Read a short paragraph and suggest a title.
- Read a newspaper article and note down the main points.
- Discuss features in the text which help you to skim - e.g. headings, paragraphs, words in bold type or italics.

### **Scanning**

Here the reader is looking for specific information in the text. Irrelevant details are disregarded and attention is focused on particular key words. This is a very important skill to acquire since it is related to a lot of adult reading tasks. You can often practise by:

- Asking students to find particular entries in a telephone directory or timetable.
- Posing questions asking for particular detail from a short text.

### **Using a dictionary**

Students are often wary of using a dictionary, being unsure of how to find their way round or becoming confused with phonetic spellings, notes about derivation and small print. You could try some of the following with students:

- Look at a number of different dictionaries to compare size of print, layout etc. People tend to have their personal preferences, so let the students select the one they find easier to use.

- Spend time getting to know a particular dictionary. Find the page which explains the meaning of any abbreviations used. Look up some words that the students already know to make sure they understand the system.
- Practise alphabetical order by finding a particular letter in the dictionary, using the top corner as a guide. If you open the dictionary at **p** and you are looking for **w** do you move forward or back, and how far?
- Produce word cards to be put in alphabetical order

– with different 1st letters

tin

book

nation

group

– with the same first letter

book

big

bell

band

– with the same first two letters

brown

bread

brand

brick

– with the same first three letters

brown

brother

broad

broken

### Letter writing

A letter always has a purpose, which is closely reflected in the style. These two aspects, purpose and style, should be considered together. It is usually helpful to discuss these aspects and perhaps to work out and compose a letter orally before writing it. This can also form a useful group activity, a student or tutor acting as note-taker for the group's ideas.

Correspondence to friends or relatives, postcards, greetings on special occasions, many invitations, etc. are expressions of personal messages and are therefore written in a spontaneous informal style. The message itself is more important than the way in which it is conveyed. This kind of letter writing is an ideal way of encouraging students to record events of individual significance, convey feelings or state opinions. Development of technical skills like spelling can then be based on this writing.

Letters ordering goods, asking for or giving information, querying or complaining, are in most cases written to people we only know in an official or professional capacity, if at all. It may be important to make a good impression both by what we say and the way we present ourselves. One of the ways of doing this is to observe the set conventions of formal letter writing:

- lay-out

address of sender
date
address of person sent to
beginning
ending

correctly placed  
on the page.

- correct spelling and punctuation
- conventions of expression which include:

**Beginnings** *Dear Sir,* (to a company or organisation)

*Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms,* (to someone we do not know well but whose name we know)

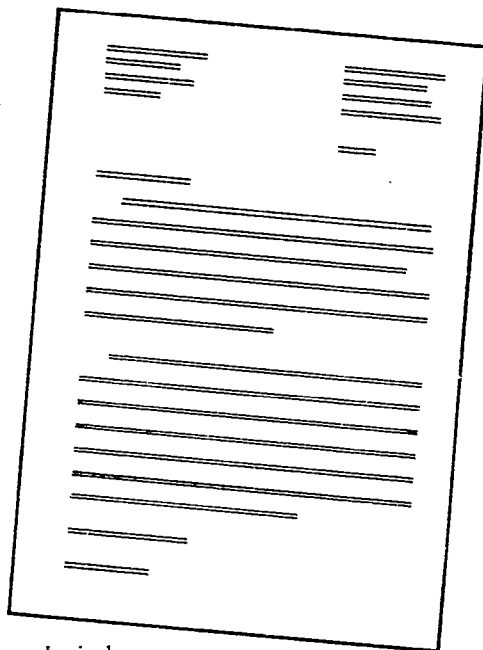
and **Endings** *Dear Sir,* ends *Yours faithfully*

*Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms.* ends *Yours sincerely.*

The content of a formal letter should be stated clearly, simply and concisely, in language as natural as possible. To do this, the writer needs to be quite clear about what he wishes to say. This may involve quite a lot of discussion beforehand and is likely to involve drafting, redrafting and making a fair copy. You may like to try some of the following activities with students:

- Practise different ways of writing the date.
- Practise writing out addresses, paying particular attention to punctuation and the way it is set out.

- Practise laying out a letter on letter blanks (with layout lines already ruled in to create a strong visual impression of the shape of a letter).



- Re-order jumbled paragraphs into a logical sequence.
- Fill in 'guided' letters in which certain parts have been omitted for the student to fill in. (This is a useful exercise in a mixed level group, as more or less may be omitted from individual letters.)
- Group a jumbled list of sentences from two different letters (possibly in two different styles) into sentences appropriate to individual letters.
- Match letters with their answers.
- Practise writing birthday cards and postcards.
- Keep an individual file of "model letters" which may come in useful.
- Compose a letter together, tutor and student, or the whole group.

### Case study 3 – Patricia

#### **Extending writing (drafting and editing) – improving spelling – punctuation.**

**Patricia** was keen to gain qualifications and her long term goal was to take a GCSE English course aiming for a C grade or above. Whilst her work in classes had enabled her to gain the confidence needed to deal effectively with everyday writing tasks, for example letter writing, she struggled with longer writing assignments of the type required for GCSE work.

An extract from Patricia's new learning plan:

<b>LEARNING PLAN</b>		<b>Student Copy</b>
<b>CAMBRIAN ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE</b>		
<b>PATRICIA</b>		
Your plan for the next 6 weeks <b>SUMMER TERM - 2nd half</b>	Half-time review ✓ → X	Further plan <b>AUTUMN TERM</b>
Topics to be covered Letter-writing 1) recap on layout of formal letter 2) shorter letters - to nursery - buying by post 3) longer letters - complaining - job applications 4) Spelling strategies	 ✓  ✓ ✓  →  →	Look at longer pieces of writing where ideas need to be developed  Develop editing and drafting skills  extended letter-writing skills  keep up regular practice
Anything else? Individual needs Qualifications important Aim for MOCR level 2	 ✓ →	More intro sort of writing tasks needed for coursework GCSE
How's it going? More confident about my spelling though not perfect. Punctuation a problem. Writing a long piece is still hard		



In her new learning plan it was decided that **Patricia** needed to develop her confidence with these longer pieces and that work on drafting and editing skills could assist her in this. Whilst she was more confident about her spelling, it was by no means perfect and still caused her some anxiety. She had also become aware that her punctuation could be improved.

The primary goal of this work was to enable **Patricia** to get her ideas down on paper with confidence, rather than aiming at perfection in spelling and punctuation first before attempting to tackle this form of writing. These aspects could be dealt with separately.

### **Extending writing**

The approach used was to encourage her to express herself in writing using drafting and editing techniques as the tool.

Choosing a subject to write about like "childhood memories", meant that **Patricia** could concentrate on expressing herself effectively in writing and in beginning to develop her own writing style. The actual content, ie. her memory, was familiar and therefore had only to be "recalled" rather than "invented" as would be the case with other assignments.

The following are the stages **Patricia** used in the production of this writing:

1. Discussion within her group.
2. Getting her ideas down on paper, not worrying about spelling or punctuation.

#### **Extract A.**

*During the summer months we would make our own girders as we used to call them they were made out of old prams that people had thrown away we did not use all the pram just the wheels then we attached a plank of wood and a piece of string to the front of it this was so we could steer it then we would take them and have races down the brook this was steep and the only way to stop was to put your feet on the ground but if you were going to fast this meant you went over the top and landed in a pile of bricks and broken glass they were because of the demolition.*

#### **Extract B.**

*In those days you had to go round in a gang as this was safer than being on your own the gang consisted of brothers and sisters except one this was Pip his sister was too young to come with us. The others in the gang were Jacky and Steven they lived on the same side as Pip were as Malcom and Debby and Noel and I lived on the opposite side to them. Jacky had long blond hair and wore it in a pony tail her brother Steven had short trousers. Malcom had red hair and freckles and so did his sister Debby Noel had short brown hair and I had shoulder length hair.*

3. Reading back what she had written, checking to see if she had missed anything out, checking if it made sense.
4. Reading together with tutor or to group members. Punctuation errors may well be corrected at this point as reading aloud often highlights where such errors interfere with the sense of the passage. Correct spellings can be given as necessary.
5. Getting suggestions for working on any problem areas e.g. clarification of confusing bits, deletion of repetitions.

### **Re-drafted Extract B.**

*In those days you had to go round in a gang as this was safer than being on your own. The members of our gang were myself, my younger brother Noel, Malcolm and his sister Debby, Jacky and her elder brother Steven and Pip who was the odd one out because his sister was too young to join the gang. We lived on either side of the street. I was the quiet one, my brother Noel was mischievous and played tricks on us all. Malcolm and his sister Debby had red hair and freckles we some times could not tell them apart. Jacky had long blong hair and wore it in a pony tale. Steven had short hair. Pip had dirty blond hair and always wore short trousers being the youngest of all could get away with doing something wrong whereas we could not.*

6. Redrafting.
7. Re-reading and if happy with the sense and the content then look in more detail at punctuation and spelling.

### **Final Extract B.**

*In those days you had to go round in a gang as this was safer than being on your own. The members of our gang were myself, my younger brother Noel, Malcolm and his sister Debby, Jacky and her elder brother Steven and Pip who was the odd one out because his sister was too young to join the gang. We lived on either side of the street. I was the quiet one, my brother Noel was mischievous and played tricks on us all. Malcolm and his sister Debby had red hair and freckles: we sometimes could not tell them apart. Jacky had long blond hair and wore it in a pony tail. Her brother Steven had short blond hair. Pip had dirty blond hair and always wore short trousers. Being the youngest of the gang he could get away with doing something wrong, whereas we could not.*

## **Points to notice**

Discussion can be an important part of the writing process. Listening to and sharing memories with one other person, say the tutor, or the group serves not only to aid recall but allows the subject matter to be tried before an audience prior to committing anything to paper. Positive responses from group members are of immeasurable value in boosting confidence and in helping students to move from having the ideas in the head to actual writing. Never underestimate how difficult and frightening a task this is for the new writer.

Spelling work is best dealt with after the final draft stage. For an example of such work see below in the spelling section.

Punctuation is often viewed as a goal in itself. Reading aloud is a good way of helping the student to realise that punctuation is a mechanism to make sense of the passage and used and controlled by the writer. It is not a set of rules to be learnt and rigidly applied. It is possible to complete punctuation exercises correctly and still not be able to transfer this skill to your own writing.

The importance of, and necessity to make drafts cannot be stressed enough. Students often assume that good writers get it right first time, that they produce pieces of writing without error automatically.

Students view drafting and crossing out as evidence of failure rather than as an accepted part of the writing process which good writers utilise. For this reason many students use the computer or wordprocessor to help them draft and proof read. This allows them to make corrections before the final paper copy emerges.

It is sometimes better to read the material with the student to discuss together problem areas rather than taking away material and returning it marked and altered for the student. Often students will know that something is not quite right with the writing but will find it difficult to identify exactly what is wrong and how to remedy it themselves. Suggestions from the tutor are therefore very useful at this stage.

## **Work which could be developed for an individual or a group**

### **Improving Spelling**

Before working on spelling students need to understand:

- that reading and spelling are different skills. Doing more reading will not necessarily improve your ability to remember spellings
- that spelling is a skill you learn by writing – if you don't write regularly your spelling won't improve
- that good spellers use a variety of strategies to learn words – any strategy that works is acceptable
- that spelling is largely a visual skill. This means that students need to know when a word looks right.

As with reading, tutors need to start by talking with their students about the words they want to use and the type of mistakes they make. Only after such discussion can you identify suitable strategies to fit the learning style of the student.

Spellings to be learnt need to be taken from a student's writing, or from words identified as important by a student (e.g. words to do with a car from a student's motor vehicle course). You also need to be realistic about how many words can be learnt at any one time. After this you need to choose a suitable method.

1. For remembering whole words, you should use the **Look/Say/Cover/Write/Check** method. Write the word down, then

- **look** at the word try and picture it in your mind
- **say** the word out loud
- **cover** the word up
- **write** the word
- **check** that the word is correct.

Repeat the process 24 hours and 2 or 3 days after that.

2. Build up your knowledge of prefixes and suffixes:

appear    **dis**appear    **dis**appearance.

3. Look at letter patterns – present the words in groups containing the same pattern:

**sight**    **eight**    **height**.

Sometimes groups of words can be presented that have spellings that reflect their meaning:

**optician**    **musician**    **technician**.

Here identical visual patterns are the important feature – not similar sound patterns.

4. Develop and use memory techniques to fix difficult spellings:

I.C.I. make **medicine**,    **Necessary**, has one **collar** and two **sleeves**.

For this to be successful the student has to understand the technique used or develop their own.

5. Break words into syllables. This enables you to break long words up and concentrate on one bit at a time:

**in / de / pend / ence**.

Words that are being learnt can be recorded in a personal dictionary for reference and revision.

Word	1st try	24 hours later	3 days later
point	point	point point	point
a p } point	ap point	appoint	appoint
here	her here	here	here
t } here	there	there	there

### Spelling Rules

Most students will want to learn rules that they believe will help them with their spelling. There are a number of rules: not all of them are useful. For example, the rule **“when two vowels walk together, the first one does the talking”** is designed to help with words like *goat*, *beam*, *rain*, etc. However, some of the most common words flout this rule, e.g. *said*, *could* and in the rule itself, *does*. Even so, some rules can help a lot, for example, on doubling letters, or changing the *y* at the end of a word to *-ies* in the plural. Students need to try them out to see if they make sense to them. Remember when teaching students spelling rules e.g. **“I before E except after C”**, that it is important to point out that all rules have exceptions – *seize*, *protein*, etc!

### Punctuation

As with other stages in the writing process the tutor needs to talk with the student and use their writing to discover what problems they might be having with punctuation. Make sure you discuss the purpose of punctuation, which is to help the writer to get their message across.

For the Foundation Level student the use of full stops and capital letters can be introduced straight away. These simply set markers for the start and end of statements. You can move on to look at sentences which are questions and show the mark used at the end of these sentences.

Later commas and quotation marks can be taught followed by other forms of punctuation such as colons and semi colons.

Try some of the following with the students:

- Passages can be read for meaning and then afterwards be read looking at the punctuation used. You can discuss the effect particular marks have on the meaning of the passage.
- Sentences can be read out loud to illustrate the effect of punctuation on the intonation as well as the meaning, for example:

go home (by taxi)

Go home!

Go home?

For further practice sample passages can be re-written leaving out most of the punctuation. The student can then add the punctuation he thinks appropriate and check his version with the original. The differences – not always errors – can form the basis for discussion.

**Case study 4: Ansell**  
**Learning support – vocationally based work – forms.**

### Learning support

**Ansell's** tutor said:

“**Ansell** was very nervous about coming for learning support. He didn't want the other catering students to find out that he was having extra help and he was quite defensive.

We talked through the things that were causing him difficulties and made a list:

- note taking in class
  - new unfamiliar words
  - a bit slow at copying
  - organising his studying
  - spelling
- } now
- taking down phone messages
  - filling in order forms
- } future

**Ansell** thought his reading was all right as long as he wasn't rushed. To get a more objective view I asked him to try two cloze exercises from Judy Vaughan's pack, *Assessing Reading*.

As **Ansell** says:

"I had to look through two pages on catering and fill in some of the blank spaces. It wasn't really a test, more like a puzzle to guess the missing words."

From the answers he gave the tutor showed **Ansell** how they could work out his present reading level so they would know where to start.

### **Vocationally based**

They decided to concentrate first on the catering vocabulary that **Ansell** found unfamiliar.

### **Glossary of terms**

With the help of the catering tutor, we compiled a list of words and meanings which **Ansell** kept handy for quick reference in his catering works folder. He could use this to speed up his note taking in class as the list provided a reminder of the words and how to spell them.

### **Abbreviations**

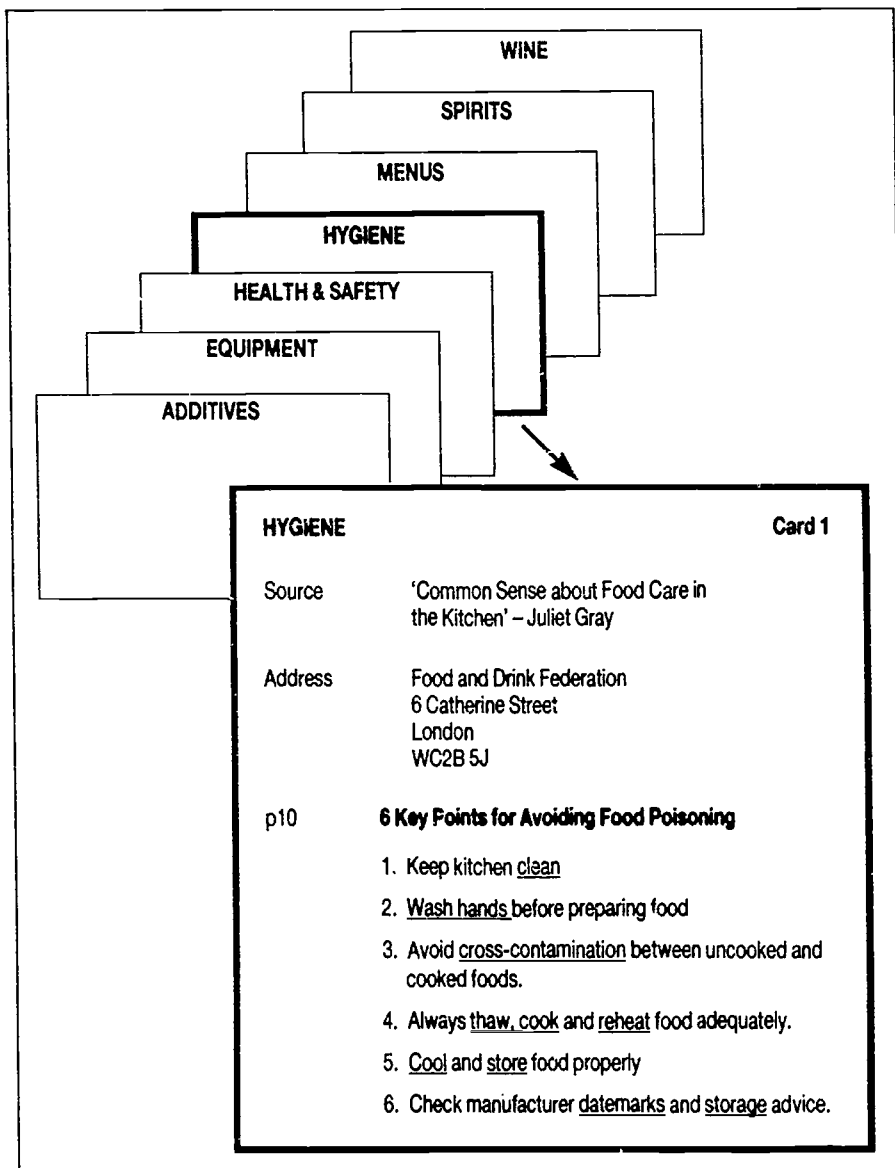
**Ansell** knew that there were short ways of writing some words (like "bec." for "because") and had tried to use this for himself but could not always read back his notes as his system was haphazard. We started by learning a few common abbreviations and **Ansell** agreed to stick to these until others were gradually introduced.

### **Study skills**

Once **Ansell's** course notes went into his catering folder he seemed to think the work was done. I explained a bit about how memory works and we talked about ways of organising and revising his notes. Through re-reading and discussion he began to see how to pick out the main points and we then marked those in some way.

### **Highlighting**

"Sometimes I use a highlighter pen on important words or I underline the main headings. Sometimes I draw a circle or a square around a particular section or I number the different parts like a list. Then when I look back at my notes I can see which bits to go over".



An example from **Ansell's** Card index (see below).

### Card index

Building up a card index is a useful way of sorting and storing information. **Ansell's** learning support tutor suggested he kept a card index to help him with future

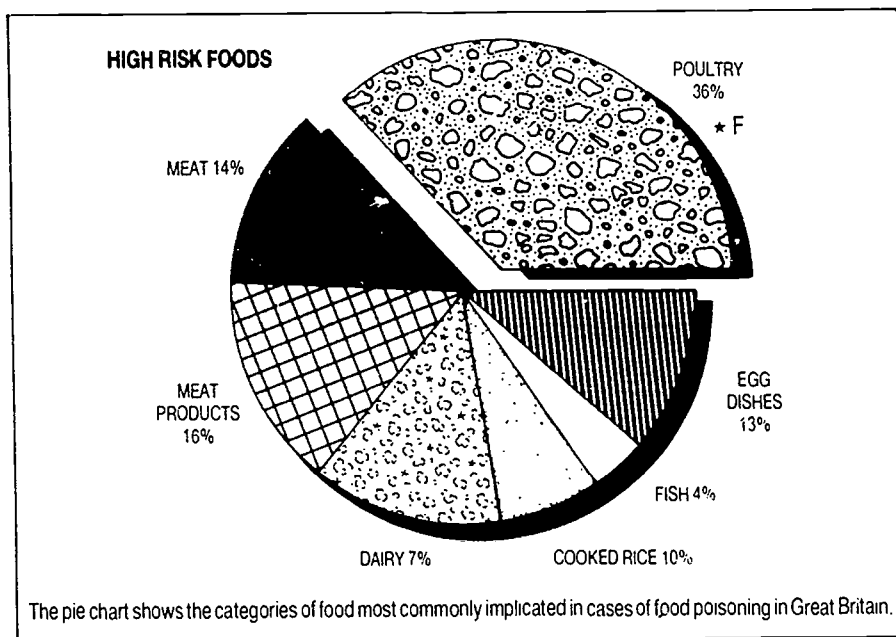


assignments and revision. Together they went through his catering course notes and decided on topic headings. These were written on the top line of each card and arranged alphabetically in an index card box. So that **Ansell** could easily refer back to his course notes or the material he had read they decided to carefully note the source and page number of the information he summarised on the cards useful addresses were also noted. In order to help him remember the different points key words were underlined. They also discussed using colour.

**Ansell** developed his card index system and eventually used it to help him gain Wordpower Stage 2 Unit 014 Element 2 "Create a reference system for a particular purpose".

### Assignments – Reading textual and graphical material

On many courses students have to cope with tables and diagrams as well as text. When **Ansell** was asked to do an assignment on "Christmas Catering: the dangers" he came to his basic skills support tutor for help. He had been able to collect a lot of useful information. This included pamphlets and graphs but he did not know how to relate one to the other, or how to divide his assignment into different sections. First they decided to mark all the possible useful information with a star \*, then they decided to divide it into one of three categories: The Facts "F", The Dangers "D", and The Signs "S".



from 'Materials Pack & User Guide for Modular Delivery of Wordpower/Numberpower', Alpha Flexible Learning.

## What Causes Food Poisoning

Food poisoning usually results from eating food contaminated with large numbers of micro-organisms, or 'germs' as they may be known, or the toxins (poisons) produced by them.

Some foods may be contaminated with 'germs' when they enter the home; others may become contaminated in the home. So how does contamination and/or the undesirable growth of 'germs' occur in the home.

There are few people who wouldn't raise their hands in horror at the thought of their kitchen's hands in horror at the thought of their kitchen's simple fact is that the world around us is full of germs, or one set or another of them.

As far as food poisoning, 'germs' are concerned, the main culprits are bacteria and/or the toxins they produce, with salmonella bacteria being one of the most common.

### SOURCES OF SALMONELLA

Meat, mainly poultry, is the most common source of salmonella. Many a Christmas has been ruined because the turkey has not been properly thawed and cooked or not properly stored after cooking.

Other sources are the faeces of an infected bird or even household pets. All can transfer bacteria to the food we eat.

### SOURCES OF OTHER BACTERIA

Other food poisoning bacteria, e.g. staphylococci can be found on the skin especially in cuts and boils or in the nose. It is an easy matter for food to become contaminated when it is touched by dirty hands or when sneezed or coughed upon.

### MOULDS

Visible mould growth on food is a sign that the food has been stored for a long time. If the food has been stored in a dry place, it has had chance to grow. Therefore, foods should always be stored under the right conditions to prevent them going mouldy (check the label for storage instructions). Food which has gone mouldy should be thrown away.

### MOULDS LOVE...

- Bread and Cakes
- Cheese
- Jams and Marmalades

### THE GOOD NEWS...

IN ORDER TO GROW, ALL BACTERIA AND MOULDS NEED THE RIGHT DEGREE OF TEMPERATURE AND TIME AND MOST OF THEM ARE KILLED BY HIGH TEMPERATURES.

Thus, taking the following precautions will go a long way towards preventing food poisoning.

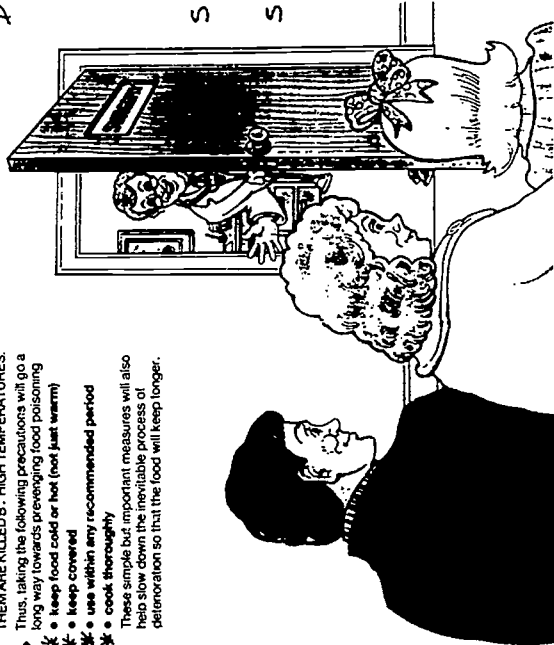
- \* keep food cold or hot (not just warm)
- \* keep covered
- \* use within any recommended period
- \* cook thoroughly

These simple but important measures will also help slow down the inevitable process of deterioration so that the food will keep longer.

### MAIN RISK

The greatest risk of food poisoning occurs when cooked food is cross-contaminated with the bacteria naturally occurring on raw meat and poultry.

For this reason, utensils that have come into contact with raw meat and poultry should always be washed thoroughly. Utensils used for raw and cooked foods.



### AREAS OF RISK INCLUDE

- \* Cross-contamination between raw and cooked food
- \* Insufficient thawing of frozen poultry
- \* Undercooking food (especially meat and poultry)
- \* Cooling cooked food too slowly before refrigeration
- \* Preparing food too far in advance
- \* Storing food in a warm place
- \* Not reheating food to a high enough temperature to kill food poisoning bacteria and destroy toxins.

### FOOD POISONING - THE SYMPTOMS

Food poisoning symptoms can include vomiting, stomach cramps, diarrhoea, headache, fever and aching limbs.

The ill-effects of some forms of food poisoning can be felt within a few hours of eating. This is when the bacteria have formed toxins in the food.

With salmonella poisoning, the bacteria continue to multiply within the body and the effects may not be felt for 12-36 hours.

Whatever the cause, however, the greater the number of bacteria that are present in the food, the more rapid will be the onset and the more severe may be the symptoms.

### WHAT TO DO IF IN DOUBT

Should you or someone in your family have these symptoms severely or persistently, it is always advisable to contact your doctor. Where babies and elderly people are concerned ALWAYS consult a doctor.

Once the information was in a usable form they began to think about introductory sentences for each section.

*"In Great Britain 36% of food poisoning is caused by poultry."*

*"One way food poisoning bacteria are spread is . . ."*

*"Food poisoning symptoms are . . ."*

When his assignment was complete, it was clear and to the point. His tutor pointed out that he could use these for future assignments and these could be used for his **Wordpower** portfolio.

In future assignments, **Ansell's** work covered:

Stage 2 Unit 013 Element 1

Selecting material from a variety of given textual sources for a specific purpose.

Stage 2 Unit 013 Element 2

Extract information from materials in textual and graphical forms for a specific purpose.

Stage 2 Unit 013 Element 2

Extract information from material in textual and graphical forms for a specific purpose.

Stage 2 Unit 014 Element 1

Consult a reference system to find materials for a particular purpose.

Stage 2 Unit 015 Element 3

Convey information and opinions in written form.

### **Points to notice**

1. An important element in the arrangements for **Ansell's** learning support was the liaison between the Catering Department and the basic skills tutor. The catering lecturer was able to supply background information and course handouts so that the tutor could focus the learning support sessions on relevant material and tackle topics in the right order.
2. **Ansell** was pleased that he did not have to join a class but could work on an individual learning programme. While the tutor started him off with one-to-one help, the resources in the Learning Support workshop were organised for ease of access, and

quite soon **Ansell** was able to do some of his work independently, following instructions from his Learning Plan and finding the required materials for himself. This released the tutor to work with other students and cut out the frustrations of waiting for one overworked tutor!

## Work which could be developed for an individual or a group

### Gapped handouts

A cloze passage, like the reading assessment mentioned earlier, tends to have a regular pattern of omissions (e.g. every fifth word). The idea of "filling the gaps" can be used in another way if the words missed out are the tutor and represent key terms.

The student may be asked to supply the answers from memory or the answer words may be presented and the student required to make the right selection.

### Form filling

**Ansell** asked for help in filling in an accident form (see opposite) when he had cut his finger while on placement. His tutor explained that BLOCK CAPITALS and printing were probably the clearest handwriting on this sort of form, except for the signature which would need to be in **Ansell's** usual joined up script. Because there were only a few lines of space available to explain how the accident had happened she discussed with him which facts were important and which could be left out.

She then collected other forms which he might have to fill in in the course of his work, sickness forms, insurance claims, applications for leave and travel claim forms.

After working with his tutor on filling in the accident form and doing some further practice, **Ansell** achieved Wordpower Stage 2 Unit 015 Element 1 by showing his competence in completing forms.

Form filling can be broken down into stages, and discussion should determine what is needed. Practice forms are easily made, or you can usually get some free. A number of practice books for form filling have also been published.

There are some common features which are worth pointing out:

- Forms use various phrases like **capital letters**, **block letters**, or **print**, which means the same.
- The section for Name is often broken down for example: **Surname**, **First names**, **Forenames**, **Christian names**, **written in full**.
- Your title can be presented in different forms, for example:

**Mr**

**Mr**

**Mrs**

**Mrs**

**Miss**

**Miss**

**Ms**

**Ms**

CROSS OUT

TICK BOX

## ACCIDENT FORM

1. About the person who had the accident.

- ▼ Give full name
- ▼ Give the home address
- ▼ Give the occupation

Name ANSELL LAWRENCE

Address 15 BLUESSELL WALK

RAY TOWN

Postcode R24 7B

Occupation CATERING TRAINEE

2. About you, the person filling in this book.

- ▼ Please sign the book and date it.
- ▼ If you did not have the accident write your address and occupation.

Your signature

*A Lawrence* 6/10/92

Address As No 1.

Postcode

Occupation

Date

5/10/92 4.15 pm.

Time

In what room or place did the accident happen

KITCHEN

3. About the accident.

- ▼ When it happened
- ▼ Where it happened

4. About the accident - what happened?

- ▼ Say how the accident happened. Give the cause if you can.
- If any person was injured say what it is.

How did the accident happen? I WAS CUTTING UP ONIONS IN THE KITCHEN OF THE STAR HOTEL WHERE I AM ON PLACEMENT. THE FIRE ALARM WENT OFF, CAUSING ME TO JUMP AND CUT THE INDEX FINGER OF MY LEFT HAND. AT THE ASSEMBLY POINT I REPORTED THE ACCIDENT TO THE COOK. SHE SENT ME TO THE FIRST AID ROOM FOR A DRESSING. THIS WAS AT 4.30 PM.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences, RIDDOR 1985

For the employer only

Please initial the box provided if the accident is reportable under RIDDOR

Employer's initials

T.W.

- Your address may need to be set out in a certain way, for example,

Road _____
Town/City _____
County _____
Postcode _____

Your signature is different from writing out your name or printing, and you need to decide on, and stick to, a signature.

- The date can be written, for example, 17th February 1992, or in numbers 17.2.92. Sometimes it is presented in boxes:

17	02	92
----	----	----

This also applies to date of birth – which often appears on forms as **d.o.b.**

Often students will want to work on specific forms and it's useful to break each form into a number of manageable steps, and work on each in turn. Practice will probably be needed in fitting the information into the limited space available on most forms.

# 5

## Accreditation and Progression

**Accreditation – relating activities to competencies – progression – seeking support.**

This chapter examines the range of ways in which students can gain recognition of their progress and discusses the competence-based approach. It looks at progression and what this may include.

### Accreditation

Accreditation means gaining some sort of official recognition in the form of a record or certificate for the work one has done.

Not all basic skills students want this sort of recognition. For many, their newly acquired skills and growing confidence are reward enough. For others, basic skills tuition represents a chance for them to gain a qualification for the first time in their lives. Whether a student goes for a qualification will depend on many things such as their ambition, confidence, the time available for study and, in some cases, available finance.

For many years basic skills students had no access to any form of national accreditation. At that time success in the school system was based on passing examinations. Because many basic level students had failed in this system, tutors understandably were not anxious to subject them to a situation that had already undermined their confidence.

In fact, in many cases the system had failed the students. Some people like **Patricia**, who went to a special school because of her disability, had never had the chance to sit examinations.

Gradually fairer methods of judging progress have been introduced. Continuous assessment, profiling and skills' tests are but a few. In some areas a federation of local Open Colleges, the Open College Network, credits specific courses which are written to local needs. **Norma** could get Open College credits for the "process work" or skills development work which she did such as punctuation, spelling and re-drafting.

However, most nationally recognised examinations boards now have certificates which accredit what is now called "basic" or "communication skills" rather than

“literacy”. These are sometimes full qualifications in themselves or modules within wider forms of accreditation.

## Relating activities to competencies

In the past a criticism often made was that many basic skills certificates were little more than an attendance record. It is now accepted that most people like to know how effective their skills are, set against external criteria. It is also recognised that working on a skill does not always mean a student can use that skill in a real life situation.

There are two nationally recognised certificates called the **Certificate in Communication Skills (Wordpower)**, City and Guilds 3793 and the **Certificate in Numeracy Skills (Numberpower)**, City and Guilds 3794, which accredit a person’s competency or effectiveness measured against these standards. In the Certificate in Communication Skills there are four levels of attainment:

- Foundation
- Stage 1
- Stage 2
- Stage 3.

Detailed guidelines called performance criteria outline exactly what a candidate must do to achieve “competence”, that is the ability to consistently achieve success in a given task. The assessment is independent of any set course or learning programme.

Students can demonstrate their effectiveness in any context they choose and if necessary can repeat the assessment a number of times until the required standard has been achieved. Evidence of successful assessment is collected into a folder which is called a “portfolio”. This contains samples, observations and records of a candidate’s assessment activities.

Tutors and students have found that the reading and writing work they have done can also be used as evidence of competence for the **Wordpower** certificate. For example, a letter to the Electricity Board, to complain about the size of a bill can be added to the portfolio for Wordpower. The advantage of the competence-based approach is that it allows any literacy work to be accredited, to go towards a qualification. In this way, a student who has been working for three months on reading and writing skills can decide to go for a qualification – and will already have some work that can go into the portfolio.

**Ansell** was able to get units towards a Communication Skills Certificate using the notes and charts he needed for his catering course. Forms he filled in and assignments he wrote could be used. All this evidence, however, has to be judged against the set standards. For instance, in using the text with a pie chart about food poisoning, he had to extract information for a specific purpose and say what action he would take as a result. This in turn would link with the standards required in his vocational qualification in catering.

Many people have an uneven spread of basic skills. As a local shop steward **Joe** had



An example of a record sheet for **Ansell's** Wordpower portfolio.

**3793 COMMUNICATION SKILLS (WORDPOWER) STAGE 1**

**Unit 006**

**Element 2** Refer to written instructions to carry out an activity.

**Range** Instructions which are mainly textual and divided into clearly defined steps which are clearly and spaciouly laid out. Each step contains a maximum of three short sentences.

**Example contexts** DIY self-assembly instructions, operating instructions on a photocopier or domestic electrical appliance, recipes.

In at least two real or simulated situations including

**Title/reference**

a) one of the type illustrated in the range

b) one of the type illustrated in the range

I demonstrated that I:

	a	b
2.1 referred to instructions at the start, and as required for monitoring progress.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.2 used the information for the task in hand or reported accurately how it would have been used.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Date: 3.3.92

Tutor/Trainer's initials: AT

**Help provided**

a *No help provided*

b

Candidate's signature: A Lawrence

Tutor/Trainer's signature: A. Trainor

good oral communication skills even though he had difficulties expressing himself in writing. Using what is called accreditation of prior learning or achievement (APL or APA) he could now have these skills recognised towards a certificate in Communication Skills. In his union negotiations **Joe** would often have to talk to groups of people or put a case to his management about working conditions, etc. Provided he fulfilled the required performance criteria outlining how this should be done effectively, he could achieve the unit "Exchanging information and opinions".

These standards have been mapped against the National Curriculum used in schools and the core skills of the accreditation system used in the workplace, the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). They will also link with General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) for 16 to 18 year olds. Thus students will know exactly where they are and how to plan for progress.

For information on how to find out more about different qualifications see the addresses in the Resources List in Part 7.

## **Progress and progression**

Progress means moving forward, improving skills and increasing knowledge.

Most students attend a basic skills class or group with a personal goal in mind. **Norma** went to the class at her local library for practical help after her husband died. She also received a lot of support in her bereavement. **Ansell** felt, to some extent, that he had been directed towards the Learning Support Unit but found the individual tuition helped him towards his long term career aim.

**Patricial** learned to use a word processor and **Joe** could discuss newspaper football reports which had previously been just too difficult.

For most students progression means moving on to a new challenge. Because of the welcoming environment of most basic skills groups for a few students they become a safe haven. They stay far too long. This has been called the "warm bath syndrome". Tutors need to accept that long term students may be a sign of the group's failure rather than its success. It is the tutor's responsibility together with the student to negotiate a realistic time schedule for achieving identified aims and objectives. The aim of all basic skills provision should be to give its members the skills and confidence to move on.

Tutors should provide the means to effect this progression. These include:

- helping the student to get an idea of how long they are going to attend the group
- knowledge about other courses
- local job availability
- help with information gathering strategies
- help with study skills
- confidence to make decisions.

It took a great deal of encouragement for **Norma** to join the Oral History Group but she was so proud when she finally took the plunge.

It is not always easy to monitor this progression but methods of recording both formal and informal progress need to be built into class and group structures.

### **Seeking support**

Basic skills tutors need not work in isolation but should develop a network of individual agencies as a source of ideas and information about possible progression routes. These should include:

- careers advisors
- mainstream College lecturers
- counsellors
- training organisation managers
- local Training Enterprise Councils (TECs).

# 6

## Materials and Resources

**Range of material – use of material – making your own material – the use of computer assisted learning packages – using videos – using a cassette recorder.**

This chapter looks at the types of material and resources available and gives guidelines in deciding what to use and how to use it. It also looks at points to consider when creating your own material.

### Range of materials

There is a considerable range of material that can be used by tutors and students. These can be grouped as follows:

1. **Commercially produced basic skills material** – which is available for developing reading, writing, speaking and listening skills from the beginner to the pre GCSE level student.

This material falls into several broad categories:

- **Everyday coping skills** – These are usually topic based and concentrate on the specific skills need to get by in everyday life.
- **Beginner readers** – some of which have accompanying audio-tapes.
- **Intermediate readers** – aimed at those who wish to extend their reading skills.
- **Student support materials** – which provide basic skills support for students in work, college and training situations.
- **General English usage materials** – to develop punctuation, grammar and spelling etc.

2. **Real life materials** – these are not specifically designed for teaching purposes and are readily available locally and in most instances are free, e.g. newspapers, local bus and train timetables, and community information packs. This type of material can be adapted or supported to enhance the learning situation. Many commercial organisations issue information and learning packs free or for a very small charge.

An example of commercially produced material.

**TO and AT**

**Date:**

Have you read worksheet 125?

In Box 1 is a list of incomplete sentences. Can you think which preposition comes after each underlined word?

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. He was <u>astonished</u> .....     | 9. Maybe you're not <u>accustomed</u> ...   |
| 2. You'll never get <u>used</u> ..... | 10. I was <u>puzzled</u> .....              |
| 3. He got <u>married</u> .....        | 11. She strongly <u>objected</u> .....      |
| 4. There is no <u>solution</u> .....  | 12. She showed little <u>reaction</u> ..... |
| 5. She <u>smiled</u> .....            | 13. He was very <u>sympathetic</u> .....    |
| 6. Let's <u>drink</u> .....           | 14. What is your <u>attitude</u> .....      |
| 7. This book <u>belongs</u> .....     | 15. You're not very <u>friendly</u> .....   |
| 8. Try not to <u>laugh</u> .....      |   |

Now rewrite the underlined words in the correct boxes below. Use a dictionary to help you if you really don't know, but try to trust what you think sounds right.

TO

AT

_____ to _____ to _____ to	_____ at
_____ to _____ to _____ to	_____ at
_____ to _____ to _____ to	_____ at
_____ to _____ to	_____ at

Which ones do you need to learn? Test yourself before you continue with the worksheet?

Now write complete sentences of your own, using all the words and prepositions.

c.g. He was astonished at her anger

**Note:** If you use a verb after a preposition, it must be a gerund (that means ending in 'ing')

**Example:** astonished at her shouting

There are no answer sheets for your sentences since you have made them up yourself, so ask your teacher to check that you have used the prepositions correctly.

For more practice try worksheet 129.

from Erica Buckmaster's 'Self Access Worksheets'. National Extension College.

3. **Homemade material** – specially designed for teaching purposes by tutors to be used with particular individuals or groups, e.g.

## Days of the Week

wss

- Mon.** is short for Monday.  
**Tues.** is short for Tuesday.  
**Wed.** is short for Wednesday.  
**Thurs.** is short for Thursday.  
**Fri.** is short for Friday.  
**Sat.** is short for Saturday.  
**Sun.** is short for Sunday.

The short way of writing the days of the week is often used on calendars, diaries and time tables.

This is a page from a calendar.

<b>January</b>					
<b>Mon</b>	2	9	16	23	30
<b>Tues</b>	3	10	17	24	31
<b>Wed</b>	4	11	18	25	
<b>Thurs</b>	5	12	19	26	
<b>Fri</b>	6	13	20	27	
<b>Sat</b>	7	14	21	28	
<b>Sun</b>	1	8	15	22	29

Which days of the week do these dates fall on?

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. 3rd January .....  | 6. 16th January .....  |
| 2. 20th January ..... | 7. 7th January .....   |
| 3. 29th January ..... | 8. 9th January .....   |
| 4. 27th January ..... | 9. 12th January .....  |
| 5. 11th January ..... | 10. 31st January ..... |

*from The Manchester Adult Education Service*

Your library service may stock books on basic skills and readers for the student to borrow. It is worthwhile visiting your local "attraction" for information which could be used as a focus for a group visit, e.g. a theatre visit.

## Use of materials

Choosing materials well, and using them flexibly and with skill, is an important part of basic skills teaching.

The importance of real life material cannot be overstressed. The challenge is to find commercially produced material, or devise your own worksheets which build on and enhance the learning process.

However, you need to adapt and structure real life material to make it into learning material as opposed to merely reference or example material. This will include:

- making 'cloze' exercises
- asking a series of questions to check meaning
- setting one or a number of tasks as follow-up activity
- asking the student to find similar material from other newspapers, magazines, letters that they have received, etc.

Keep the following points in mind:

a) *Learning Structure* – the objectives which the material should enable the student to achieve, the exact purpose of the learning material needs to be clear.

b) *Content Structure* – the experience/situations to be dealt with, and the relevant information to be presented.

c) *Design Structure* – how to put the material into a format which is attractive to the student, remembering that the layout of the material needs to be planned.

- Are the context and examples relevant to the needs of the student?
- Does it have self-checking material with it?
- Is the level of language and style suitable for the student?
- Is there a focus on the practical use of language?
- Is there any bias or stereotyping, cultural, sexist, or racist?
- Is the presentation and layout clear and attractive? – size of print, legibility, amount on a page, illustrations.
- Do illustrations show people from different ethnic backgrounds?
- Are there any cultural references which might cause difficulty to the student?
- Is it interesting?
- Is it only for use with a class or can it be used with individuals?

An example of homemade material using real life sources.

## YELLOW PAGES

Firms in the Yellow Pages are listed under what they do. A firm called ALPHA SIGNS makes all types of signs so it comes under 'S' for Sign Makers.

Each new section has a red heading like this:

### ◆ Sign makers

### ◆ Sign makers

**alpha signs**  
Specialists in  
**PERSPEX SIGNS**  
Make, Erect & Maintain  
All Types of Signs  
**051-709 3466**  
Erectors - Signs - Perspex - Signs -  
Accessories - The Yellow Pages  
Business Directory - 1994

### Write:

Fit the right headings over the adverts.

### ◆ Vacuum cleaner repairs & servicing

### ◆ Burglar alarms & security systems

### ◆ Painters & decorators

### ◆ Funeral directors

#### A & A ELECTRICAL

FAIR TRADES APPROVED  
NO CALL OUT CHARGE/24 HR SVCS  
Free Estimates & Advice - Work Fully Guaranteed

3 Partridge Avenue,  
Wythenshawe,  
Manchester,  
M23 8PJ.

061-998 2349

 **Chubb Alarms Limited**  
Park 17, Moss Lane,  
Whitefield, Manchester M25 7ET

**SUPPLIERS & INSTALLERS OF**  
INTRUDER ALARMS · FIRE ALARMS  
C.C.T.V. SYSTEMS · ACCESS CONTROL  
MANNED GUARDING SERVICES

 BSMA AND NSCA  
APPROVED  
065750 REGISTERED  
FIRM

TEL: 061-768 8511  
MANCHESTER

## T.G. SHAW & SON EST. 1958

HIGH CLASS INTERIOR/EXTERIOR

### PAINTING & DECORATING

HOUSES - FLATS - COMMERCIAL  
ANY WORK - ANY AREA  
GUARANTEED WORK

8 MAULDETH RD, MANCHESTER M20 9ND

**061-445 9493**

### PEACOCKS FUNERAL SERVICE

PERSONAL ATTENTION  
PRIVATE CHAPEL OF REST

Day & Night Service

736/740 Wilmslow Road,  
Disbury.

061-445 3397



- Can it be used by a student working independently?
- Can it be adapted to suit a particular student?

### **Making your own worksheets**

There are a considerable range of resources which may be used to produce your own materials for the student. There follow some points that will help you in making worksheets. Often tutors decide to share their own materials and set up "banks of worksheets". Sharing resources can save time in lesson planning.

### **Points to consider**

- When you make worksheets for a student make sure that you are clear about the purpose of the worksheet. Is it to introduce a new skill or topic? Is it for revision or practice? Is it for information?
- What exactly is the language skill, or function or grammatical structure that you want the student to practise?
- What skills or knowledge does the student need in order to do the worksheet?
- Check that the instructions are clear, – sometimes the instructions can be more difficult than the content of the worksheet.
- Use illustrations, maps or diagrams which will give clues to the meaning of the text.
- Write clearly and space the text well. Line break if this will be helpful.
- Can you find what you are looking for in existing material – (You might save valuable time).

The ALBSU publication *An Introduction to ESOL Teaching* will help in making worksheets for an ESOL student.

### **When using material it is important to:**

- be deliberate – choose the material and use that which will be most effective
- take charge – you control the material rather than the other way round
- evaluate how effective it actually was.

### **The use of computer assisted learning packages**

The use of computers in the delivery of basic skills has been accepted for some time. The advent of Open Learning has highlighted the value of IT to assist students in the acquisition of their learning objectives and has done much to enhance the development of basic skills software.

## A guide to making worksheets

Decide on the **purpose**

Look for the **content**

Plan the **lay-out** → use pencil for lines

↓  
**REMEMBER**

↓  
Vary the **size** of the print    **IMPORTANT**

things in **bold** letters

↓  
usually use **lower-case** letters → but

Use different colour

**S**  
**i**  
**Z**  
**e**  
*styles*

↓  
remember  
sight vocabulary

**POLICE**

**EXIT**

**GENTLEMEN**

Underline some words

→ to draw attention to them →

**PUT SOME  
IN BOXES**

from 'Initial Certificate in Teaching Basic Skills: Materials Pack', ALBSU 1969

Computers can be used to run word processing packages which are particularly effective writing tools. Students whose written output would normally be considered poor can produce good quality copy via the word processor. Software is also available to create CV's, learn how to use the keyboard and gain other basic IT skills. These are generally described as content free software and are designed to allow the user to work on a topic at a level of their own choosing.

Some additional advantages of using content free software to develop basic skills are:

- the program can be used by students of different levels of ability
- the user is in control of the program
- the program is never exhausted – the options are unlimited
- the student can acquire real computing skills whilst developing other skills.

The disadvantage for the tutor of using content free software is the need to provide support materials, however once the materials have been developed they can be used again and again, and adapted easily to meet individual needs.

In addition to content free software, programs are available to help students develop reading skills and practise spelling and punctuation. These types of program are often referred to as "Drill and Practice" software. Drill and practice materials are usually easy to use but can often become boring and repetitious. They rarely teach the "how" and "why" of learning and their design is limited to the reinforcement of knowledge, concepts and skills already learned.

Computer base learning (CBL) and computer based training (CBT) programs are intended to instruct the learner, provide practice on what has been learned, and to assess performance and progress through tests. They are designed in such a way that learners can follow a course of instruction at their own pace. There are plenty of practice exercises which are marked immediately and are therefore useful as a means of independent learning. Many CBL programs however are almost identical to a text book on screen and much more expensive, it is therefore wise to seek a demonstration before you decide to buy.

For further information on the use of CAL packages and resources available see the next section.

*NB.* Much of the specific Literacy material available has been designed for children and when choosing software it is important to make sure that the content and presentation are appropriate for adult students.

### **Using audio cassette recorders**

Taping Books enables the student to follow a text and gain pleasure from the story. **Norma's** tutor tapes "Queen's Street" (Gatehouse Publications), and **Norma**

eventually joined her local library and borrowed from the "Taped Books" section. She found this to be a new recreational activity and a welcome change from watching television for stories and drama.

Sometimes, a student is hesitant when it comes to writing but still wants to "have a go" and not to have to rely on someone else to act as a "scribe". Tape recorders can be very useful here. It gives the student a chance to record ideas and thoughts without having to pause and concentrate on the writing and spelling. This can be done at leisure whilst playing back the tape.

It is common for people to be a little nervous about speaking into a tape but a bit of practice, some privacy and the use of headphones when playing back will all help to ease the problems.

### Using videos

There are relatively few commercially produced videos which are available for literacy work with adults. Probably the largest resource available to basic skills staff are the programmes produced by the BBC over many years. The popular series *Spelling It Out* continues to be used by many centres. Some of the material from the *Step Up to Wordpower* is useful.

Recently two videos have been produced that have been distributed widely, *Spell Well at Any Age* and *Punctuate Well at Any Age and Write a Perfect Letter* (available from ALBSU). They are designed to be followed by adults independently. It is quite possible, however, to use parts of them to illustrate particular points that you are covering in a session, e.g. the silent "e" rule, how to begin or end a letter, etc.

It is important to use videos in teaching as a tool for a specific purpose rather than as a blunt instrument. It is often very boring for a student or group of students to have to sit and watch a half-hour programme, just to pick up one particular teaching point. It is far better for the tutor to preview the programme and choose a short extract. Most videos will be of greatest value if accompanied by follow-up material which takes account of the needs of the group or individual student.

A bank of blank videos is useful for recording television programmes.

# 7 | Some Useful Materials and Further Reading

ALBSU has published *Resources: a guide to material in Adult Literacy and Basic Skills (1992)*, which lists the range of literacy and numeracy available for work with adults. Each title has been reviewed by tutors working in basic skills.

## Beginner Readers

- A Day in the Life series*, Printed Resource Unit (PRU)
- Gatehouse*, (various easy readers).
- Brighton Books*, (various easy readers), Macmillan Ed.
- '*Openers*' *Series*, (leisure interests), Cambridge Educational.
- '*Read Your Way to*', (DIY/cookery, illustrated), Cassell.
- Basic Skills Work Cards*, (gardening, DIY), PRU.
- Quiz & Tips Series*, (DIY/sports/household), Brown and Brown.
- Rock Biographies*, (pop singers, groups), ALBSU.
- Chillers Series*, (stories of suspense), Hodder and Stoughton/ALBSU.
- Hats*, ALBSU.
- A Kind of Leaving*, ALBSU.
- I Got It Right*, Centerprise.
- Doing My Flat Up*, Centerprise.
- About that Saturday Night*, Hodder and Stoughton/ALBSU.
- The Collection*, Hodder and Stoughton/ALBSU.
- Skeleton in the Cupboard*, ALBSU.
- Something Ecil*, ALBSU.

## Intermediate readers

Suggestions for people wanting to widen and develop their reading.

- Dogs and Roses*, ALBSU
- Stab in the Heart*, ALBSU
- '*Spinals*' *Series*, stories of mystery and suspense, Hutchinson.
- '*Bullseye*' *Series*, abridged popular novels, e.g. James Bond titles, James Herriott Vet stories, Hutchinson.

*Frankie Mae and Other Stories*, Nelson Community Writing, Nelson.

*Axed Behind the Ears*, (poetry), Heinemann.

*13 Sci-Fi, 13 Weird Tales, 13 Tales of Crime, 13 Animal Stories* (short stories), Edward Arnold.

*Newspaper Books 1-4*, Edward Arnold.

*Real Life Reading Skills*, (using forms, timetables, newspapers), Assessing Reading, ALBSU.

Magazine, newspapers and journals are excellent sources of interesting articles, e.g. *Stag*, (a newspaper for adults working on their reading), Nottinghamshire County Council.

Many local basic education schemes produce their own books which are very useful and relevant to this section.

## **Improve Your Writing**

These books encourage and develop writing by offering ideas, tips for functional writing, exercises and stimulus for further written work.

*Story Plus (Books 1-5)*, Heinemann.

*A Question of Choice*, Bell Hyman.

*Learning from Experience*, Broadcasting Support Services.

*Letter Writing*, National Extension College.

*Send a Friend a Letter*, Scottish Community Education Council.

*Send a Friend a Card*, Scottish Community Education Council.

*Write on*, ALBSU.

*Survival Packs (Correspondence Rules OK and Others)*, Jonquil.

*Opening Times*, Gatehouse Project.

*Check Books (Writing, Punctuation and Spelling)*, Hutchinson.

*Guides to Good English (Writing, Spelling, Punctuation, and Study Skills)*, Longman.

*Here's Handwriting*, Scottish Community Education Council.

*Writing Letters*, Wendy Moss, National Extension College (NEC).

*Writing a C.V.*, R. Leach, NEC.

## **Spelling**

Spelling books offer ways of learning to spell, suggestions for practising spelling and some spelling patterns and rules.

*The Spelling Pack*, ALBSU.

*Helping Adults to Spell*, Catherine Moorhouse, ALBSU.

*Spelling It Out*, Rhiannedd Pratley, BBC.

*Everyday Spelling*, Brown and Brown.

*Spelling Matters*, Edward Arnold.

*Longman English Guide to Spelling*, Longman.

*Unscrambling Spelling*, C. Klein & R. Millar, Hodder and Stoughton.

*Spelling Made Easy*, J.R. Evans, Macmillan.

*Unscrambling Spelling*, Cynthia Klein, Hodder and Stoughton.

*Self Access Spelling*, Jan Hulley, *Self Access Grammar*, Erica Buckmaster, *Self Access Worksheets*, Erica Buckmaster. All available from National Extension College, 18 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 2HN. Tel: 0223 316644.

## **Dictionaries**

*Blacks Writing Dictionary*, (a Foundation Level dictionary), A & C Black.

*A First Dictionary* (with questions and answers), Nisbet.

*Collins Paperback Thesaurus*, Collins Educational.

*Heinemann English Dictionary*, Heinemann Educational.

*Penguin Wordmaster Dictionary*, Penguin.

## **Listening & Speaking**

*Web of Language*, Oxford.

*Talking Matters*, Hodder and Stoughton.

*Task Listening*, Cambridge University Press.

*Developing Personal Effectiveness*, MSC. Listening Plus, Edward Arnold.

*Chivers Audio Books Series*, Chivers, Windsor Bridge Road, Bath BA2 3AX.

## **Materials for Wordpower**

*The Modular Delivery of Wordpower and Numberpower*, A Materials Pack and User Guide, MAES/Manchester TEC.

*Improve your English with Wordpower*, NEC.

*Using your Wordpower – Audio Material for Tutor/Trainers*, ALBSU/BBC.

*The Assignment Pack*, ALBSU.

*The Environment – A Basic Skills pack*, ALBSU.

*Basic Skills in the Workplace*, NEC.

*Crediting Communication Skills Foundation & Level 1*, ALBSU.

*Crediting Communication Skills Stages 2 & 3*, ALBSU.

*Wordpower – Surrey County Council*, ALBSU.

*Wordpower*, ALBSU.

*Using Your Wordpower*, ALBSU/BBC.

## Computers

*Computers in Language and Literacy Work*, J. Leonard, ALBSU/ILEA.

*Word Processing and Language Skills*, J. Leonard, ALBSU.

A comprehensive list and detailed description about software available for Adult Basic Skills can be found in: *Basic Skills Software Guide*, ALBSU.

## Videos

For students:

*Spell Well at Any Age*, ALBSU/Rockhopper.

*Punctuate Well at Any Age*, ALBSU/Rockhopper.

## Background Information and Ideas and Further Reading

*Extending Reading Skills*, ALBSU.

*Basic Skills Assessment Pack*, ALBSU.

*The Concept of Success in Adult Literacy*, ALBSU.

*The ALBSU Standards for Basic Skills Teachers*, ALBSU.

*The Starter Pack*, ALBSU.

*An Introduction to ESOL Teaching*, Jane Jordan.

*Developing Reading Skills*, F. Grellet, Cambridge University Press.

*Literacy, Numeracy and Adults (Evidence from the National Child Development Survey)*, ALBSU.

*Adults Learning*, Jennifer Rogers, Open University Press.

*Literacy: Teaching and Learning Language Skills*, Cashdan, A. (ed.) Blackwell.

## Information about qualifications

### Qualifications for Staff

#### 1. Initial Certificate in Teaching Basic Communication Skills.

City and Guilds 9282/3/4.

This is a pre-service programme of approximately 30 hours for people who wish to teach or assist in the teaching of literacy or numeracy on a 1:1 basis or in support of a more experienced member of staff. Suitable for staff in adult and further education, in training and in workplaces where basic skills is part of vocational training.



## 2. Certificate in Teaching Basic Communication Skills.

City and Guilds 9285.

This award is based on the demonstration of competence in the workplace. Three Certificates are offered, "Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL".

The ALBSU book, *Standards for Basic Skills Teachers* identifies the set of Standards which describe and define the characteristics of basic skills work.

Candidates are assessed through a combination of observed teaching and a *Portfolio of Evidence*.

Details of 9282/3/4/5 from City and Guilds, 46 Britannia Street, London WC1X 9RG.  
Tel: 071 278 2468.

## Qualifications for Students

City & Guilds 3793 – **Communication Skills (Wordpower)** Foundation Level & Stages 1, 2, & 3.

This is a new qualification for adults working to improve their communication skills. There are no formal exams. To be assessed for a certificate, students present a portfolio of evidence to show that they can use their basic skills in everyday life, work or training. Details from City and Guilds or ALBSU.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO LITERACY TEACHING



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