Practitioner Toolkit: Working with Adult English Language Learners

This document was designed and written by
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and
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The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

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The National Center for Family Literacy

The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) was established in 1989 with a grant from the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust. Founded by current president Sharon Darling, NCFL began with a simple but ambitious mission: to help parents and children achieve their greatest potential together through quality literacy programs. Today, NCFL is recognized worldwide as the leader in family literacy development. NCFL works with educators and community builders through an array of services to design and sustain programs that meet the most urgent educational needs of disadvantaged families. http://www.famlit.org/

Center for Applied Linguistics

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) is a private, non-profit organization involved in the study of language and the application of linguistics research to educational, cultural, and social concerns. A major focus of CAL's work is to encourage and improve language and literacy education in the United States. CAL carries out quantitative and qualitative research on language issues and evaluations of language programs; provides technical assistance to schools and school districts and professional development for teachers; and collects, analyzes, and disseminates information about language and culture.

CAL houses the **Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA)**, the only national center in the United States that focuses on adult ESL language and literacy issues. CAELA's mission is to help states that have recently begun serving adult English language learners build their capacity to improve the skills of teachers and administrators in adult English as a second language (ESL) programs. This, in turn, will help promote the success of the learners. CAELA will also make research findings and research-based resources available to practitioners working with adult English language learners across the nation (http://www.cal.org/caela/). CAELA replaces the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE), which was operated by CAL from 1989 to 2004 and provided technical assistance to professionals working with adult English language learners. This toolkit was developed by NCLE staff.

Introduction

America is a nation of immigrants. In the 1990s, the U.S. immigrant population grew rapidly, and in many states, the foreign-born population more than doubled between 1990 and 2000 (Capps, Fix, & Passel, 2002). Consequently, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of adult learners enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Data from the U.S. Department of Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) indicate that 1.1 million ESL students were enrolled in federally funded programs in 2002, and almost 1.2 million in 2003. Of these 1.2 million adult learners, almost 50 percent were of Hispanic or Asian origin. Other learners were Africans, Eastern Europeans, and Pacific Islanders (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

States with the largest ESL enrollments include Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Texas, and Washington (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). These states have developed infrastructures and systems to serve English language learners (ELL). However, programs in states with smaller English language learner populations such as Alabama, Delaware, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, and North Dakota may not be as well equipped to serve the population. This is particularly true for many faith- and community-based providers in rural areas, as well as for smaller publicly funded projects. Many of the local providers in these new growth states lack experienced staff trained to work with adult English language learners, and their resources and infrastructure are limited.

The *Practitioner Toolkit: Working with Adult English Language Learners* is designed to give support to adult education and family literacy instructors who are new to serving adult English language learners and their families in rural, urban, and faith- and community-based programs. The *Toolkit* is designed to have a positive impact on the teaching and learning in these programs.

The results of two surveys helped shape the content of the *Toolkit*. The first survey, conducted in January 2003, was designed to determine challenges faced by educators and community leaders serving a sudden influx of Hispanic families. In order to expand the information to include a spectrum of those who work with English language learners, an electronic survey was conducted in December 2003 (National Center for Family Literacy, 2004).

In addition to the two surveys, a focus group was convened in January 2004, in Washington, DC, to obtain perspectives from practitioners across the country regarding the challenges that they experience in serving adult English language learners and to garner recommendations for the *Toolkit*. Participants represented adult education and family literacy practitioners from various backgrounds: a) practitioners experienced in serving English language learners and their families and those new to the field; b) practitioners from rural programs and those from urban centers; and c) practitioners from faith-based programs

and those from state-funded programs (National Center for Family Literacy and Center for Applied Linguistics, 2004). Their recommendations are reflected in the *Toolkit*.

This user-friendly *Toolkit* provides a variety of materials to help practitioners meet the language and literacy development needs of the adult learners they serve. It begins with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that address general aspects of adult ESL and family literacy instruction. Each FAQ references the section of the *Toolkit* that provides more complete information.

The Toolkit is divided into the following sections:

Part I Background Information
Part II Activity Packets
Part III Parent Education in Family Literacy Programs
Part IV Issues in Adult ESL Education and Family Literacy
Part V Resources

Part I presents information for program staff about the population of adult English language learners in the United States. This section also describes types of programs that offer adult ESL instruction, the challenges that programs face, and some characteristics of effective programs.

Part II offers activity packets. These are descriptions of specific activities that can be carried out in programs and classes; and forms, surveys, and questionnaires that can be photocopied and used. They include a checklist for use with learners that are new to a program; samples of learner needs assessments; specific lessons and guidance for planning lessons for use with learners at different proficiency levels; and instructional strategies for promoting interaction, communication, and reading development in classes.

Part III presents information about parent education in family literacy programs. The goals and structure of parent education are explained, strategies for implementing parent education are given, and activities that parents can carry out with their children at home and in their communities are provided.

Part IV provides in-depth information about current issues in adult ESL education. The first article describes the research on second language acquisition and learning to read in a second language. Other articles address the assessment of adult English language learners and provide annotated charts of published assessments that are used in the field to assess the English language and Spanish language proficiency of adults learning English. Additional background articles describe research-based strategies for working with adult learners with learning disabilities and other special needs, helping learners make transitions beyond adult ESL classes, and helping learners prepare for permanent residency and citizenship.

Part V offers resources with additional information about working in adult ESL and family literacy programs.

It is our hope that this *Toolkit* will give adult education practitioners the information and tools they need to work effectively with this large and growing population.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Regarding Terminology

Q. What is ESL?

A. ESL is the popular term for English as a Second Language. It is used when referring to the teaching of English, in an English-speaking country, to people whose native language is not English.

Q. What is ESOL?

A. ESOL is the acronym for English for Speakers of Other Languages or for teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Some people prefer this term to ESL, as it takes into consideration that some learners may already speak a second language and are now learning a third, fourth, or fifth language.

Q. What is EFL?

A. EFL stands for English as a Foreign Language and refers to the teaching and learning of English in countries where English is not the official native language.

Q. What is ELL?

A. ELL stands for English language learner. This phrase is frequently used to describe non-native English speakers in K-12 education.

Q. What is SLA?

A. SLA stands for second language acquisition, and SLA research focuses on the processes and outcomes of learning a second language.

Q. At what levels do adult English language learners function?

A. The National Reporting System (NRS) establishes descriptors for functioning levels of adult ESL learners. The levels include, from lowest to highest levels, Beginning ESL Literacy, Beginning ESL, Low Intermediate ESL, High Intermediate ESL, Low Advanced ESL, and High Advanced ESL. (See *National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning level descriptors,* page IV–47.)

Regarding Adult English Language Learners

Q. How many adults in the United States do not speak English as a native language?

A. More than 35 million adults in the United States are native speakers of a language other than English. (See *Adult Non-Native English Speakers in the United States*, page I–1.)

Q. From which countries do adult immigrants come to the U.S.?

A. The foreign-born population in the United States comes from all over the world. The largest group of immigrants comes from Mexico and other Latin American countries. The next largest group comes from countries in Asia. (See *Adult English Speakers in the United States*, page I–2.)

Q. What languages do adult immigrants in the United States speak?

A. The majority of individuals who speak a language other than English at home speak Spanish (60%). The number of Spanish speakers is more than 10 times the number of individuals who speak the second most prevalent language, Chinese. The remaining eight of the top 10 languages spoken are (in this order) French, German, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Italian, Korean, and Polish. (See *Adult English Speakers in the United States*, page I–2.)

Q. Where do adult immigrants live?

A. Most foreign-born residents live in six states: California, New York, Florida, Texas, Illinois, and New Jersey. Other states also are experiencing rapid growth of their immigrant populations: North Carolina, Georgia, Nevada, Arkansas, Utah, Tennessee, Nebraska, Colorado, Arizona, and Kentucky. (See *Adult English Speakers in the United States*, page I–2.)

Q. How many adults are studying English as a second language?

A. In program year 2002-2003, close to 1.2 million individuals were enrolled in ESL classes in state-administered adult education programs, about 43 percent of total participants. This percentage does not include those served in other segments of the educational system – in adult basic education (ABE) and adult secondary education (ASE) classes, private language schools and academic institutions, and programs sponsored by community-based organizations and volunteer literacy organizations. (See *Adult English Speakers in the United States*, page I–1.)

Q. What are the characteristics of the adults learning English?

A. The population of adult English language learners is diverse. These adults may range in age from 16-year-olds who are not attending high school to adults in their 90s. They may be permanent residents, naturalized citizens, legal immigrants, refugees and asylees, and undocumented immigrants. They have a variety of educational backgrounds, ranging from no education at all to advanced degrees. (See *Adult English Speakers in the United States*, page I–1 and I–2.)

Q. How can I identify adult English learners who might have learning disabilities?

A. Identifying adult English language learners who might have learning disabilities is a complex task. Before labeling or testing an adult learner, teachers should look for other reasons for a lack of expected progress. Educators have noted numerous reasons for slow progress in learning English. These behaviors or problems most often affect all learning, whereas a learning disability usually affects only one area of learning. (*See Adult English Language Learners and Learning Disabilities*, page IV–59.)

Q. Some English language learners in my class have come from war-torn countries. What advice can you offer me in serving these students?

A. Virtually all immigrants and refugees are likely to be affected by stress that occurs when they move from one culture to another. It is difficult, especially for adults, to have to learn how to function in a new culture. Many of these learners are also coping with so-called traumatic stress from extreme events (such as assaults, war-related injuries, and torture) that occurred prior to or during their migration to the United States. It is

generally believed that traumatic stress caused by the deliberate actions of other humans is the worst kind of stress to live with. (See *Addressing the Needs of Specific Groups of Learners*, page IV–65.)

Q. Why do adults enroll in English language programs?

A. Adults enroll in English language programs for a variety of reasons, including job enhancement, educational advancement, improved communication with others in their everyday lives, citizenship attainment, and support of their children's education. (See *Adult English Speakers in the United States*, page I–3.)

Q. What challenges do adults face when participating in English language programs and learning English?

A. Although adult immigrants are generally highly motivated to learn English, they face other challenges in addition to communication difficulties: conflicting work schedules and multiple jobs; the stress of maintaining several jobs and family responsibilities; lack of transportation; limited access to affordable, high-quality child care; difficulty finding programs and classes that meet their needs and goals; lack of adequate, affordable housing; lack of adequate health care and medical insurance; and perhaps fear about their legal status in this country. (See *Adult English Speakers in the United States*, page I–3.)

Q. What strengths do adult English language learners bring to programs?

A. Adult English language learners have a great deal of life experience and background knowledge from which to draw when learning English. They are generally highly motivated to learn, and they usually enroll voluntarily in programs. If they have had formal schooling in their home languages, they have knowledge in subject matter areas like math, science, and social studies. Many adult learners also have strong and supportive families, and family members often help with child care. They may have support networks within their language and culture groups that help them adjust to life in the United States and access services. (See *Adult English Speakers in the United States*, page I–3.)

Q. What steps can I put in place so that new adult students will want to return after their first day in class?

A. By establishing an orientation process, administrators and staff will be prepared to welcome new English language learners into their program. Program staff anticipate questions new students may have, consider retention strategies, and consult community resource guides. (See *Orientation for New English Language Learners*, page II–1.)

Regarding Adult Education Programs and Instruction

Q. What types of education programs are there for adults learning English?

A. Following are the most common contexts in which adult ESL instruction is offered:

Lifeskills or general ESL classes focus on development of general English language skills. (See *Program Types and Challenges*, page I–8.)

Family ESL literacy programs address the family as a whole, providing English language and literacy instruction for adults and children. (See *Program Types and Challenges*, page I–8.)

English literacy/civics (EL/civics) programs integrate English language instruction with opportunities to learn about civil rights, civic participation and responsibility, and citizenship.

Vocational ESL (VESL) programs prepare learners for jobs by integrating language skills with vocational skills. (See *Program Types and Challenges*, page I–8.)

Workplace ESL classes are offered in work settings and focus on development of language that is directly relevant to that setting.

Pre-academic ESL programs concentrate on preparing learners for further education and training in postsecondary institutions, vocational education classes, or ABE and GED classes.

One-on-one or small-group tutoring situations may be offered in a variety of settings, such as libraries and community or religious organizations.

(See *Program Types and Challenges*, page I–9.)

Q. Are there standards for adult ESL programs and instruction?

A. Standards apply to both programs (quality of the program overall) and content (what is taught and expected outcomes). Standards have been developed by different entities.

- The membership organization, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), has developed program standards and a program self-review instrument for adult ESOL programs titled *Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs* http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp

- Some states also have developed program and content standards. (See a list of standards developed by states in *Program Types and Challenges*, page I–9, and in Part V, Adult ESL Resources, page V–9. See also an annotated list of program standards at http://www.cal.org/caela/prgstanbib.htm and of content standards at http://www.cal.org/caela/constanbib.htm. In the near future, check also for a warehouse of adult ESL standards. This is a work in progress, soon to be made available at the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education Web site http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html.

Q. How do I decide what topics and skills to address?

A. Different programs have different goals, and those goals help to determine the topics and skills to be covered. The program goals should be directly connected to the goals of the adult English language learners they serve. (See *Needs Assessment and Learner Self-Evaluation*, page II–5, and *Parent Education Overview*, page III–1.)

Q. How can I work with learners in class when they have different needs and skill levels?

A. Learners come to class with different backgrounds, abilities, and perceptions of what constitutes learning. They progress at different rates in each of the language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Many other factors contribute to the multilevel nature of a class. Because of these variables, planning to teach a multilevel class may be time consuming, and classroom management may be challenging. Effective teaching of a multi-level class requires learning activities and materials that address the learning styles and skill levels of each learner in the class. (See Part II, *Activity Packets.*)

Q. What factors affect the literacy learning of adults learning English?

A. Factors to consider in instruction include the type and extent of the learners' native language literacy; educational attainment; English language proficiency; goals for learning English; age; motivations to read and write; socio-cultural backgrounds; learning abilities or disabilities; and instructional, living, and working environments. (See *English Language and Literacy Learning: Research to Practice*, page IV–1.)

Q. How can I help English language learners develop and expand their English vocabulary?

A. Readers need to know from 3,000-5,000 words in a language to read it independently. Teachers can employ multiple strategies and activities to enhance students' vocabularies. These range from teaching sight words to using computer programs. (See *Activities to Promote Reading Development*, page II–57**.**)

Q. What does an effective lesson look like for beginning ESL students?

A. A lesson plan for use with any learner identifies the skills necessary to meet the lesson objective, the materials and equipment needed, and the activities appropriate to accomplish the objective. It includes a warm-up, a review of previously taught material, an introduction to the new lesson, presentation of new information, opportunities to practice and apply the new language or information, and an evaluation of how the lesson went and what was learned. (See *Lesson Planning*, page II–29**.**)

Q. How can I promote interaction and communication in my classes?

A. Offering well-designed and well-executed communicative activities can help make the English classroom an active, safe, and enjoyable place where literacy- and beginning-level learners can be successful. Communicative activities may be used effectively in all class levels, but they are especially important for literacy- and beginning-level classes as vehicles to move adults from their fears and self-doubt toward independent and confident learning. (See *Activities to Promote Interaction and Communication*, page II–41**.**)

Q. How can I help adult learners make transitions through and beyond my program?

A. Adult learners face many challenges in making transitions through adult education programs into other education programs and work opportunities. A transitional program provides orientation, counseling, and comprehensive services to help higher-level ESL learners proceed to higher education at community colleges and universities.

(See *Helping Adult English Language Learners Transition into Other Educational Programs*, page IV–71.)

Regarding Learner Assessment

Q. What instruments can I use to assess the English language and literacy levels of learners in my program?

A. Learner assessments are used in adult basic education (ABE), adult English as a Second Language (ESL), and family literacy programs for many different purposes. Because of these different purposes, programs use a variety of assessment instruments and procedures. For accountability purposes, programs use specific assessments selected by their states and that are in line with federal requirements (e.g., *BEST*, *BEST Plus*, and *CASAS*). (See *English Language Assessment Instruments for Adults Learning English*, page IV–31, and *Needs Assessment and Learner Self-Evaluation*, page II–5.)

Q. What are the requirements of the federal accountability system regarding assessment in adult education programs?

A. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998) requires that each state report learner outcomes in the following areas:

- Improvements in English language proficiency and literacy, numeracy, and problem solving;
- Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (GED);
- Placement in postsecondary education and training; and
- Entry into employment or retention in employment.

See http://www.nrsweb.org for a description of the purposes and structure of the National Reporting System (NRS) and the ESL functioning level descriptors. (See *Assessing Adult English Learners*, page IV–25.)

Q. Are there any Spanish language assessments that I can use in my program?

A. There are a few. Some programs use Spanish language assessments with Spanish speakers to identify students' native language literacy levels and skills that may transfer from the first language to English. Few such tests are designed for use with adults in adult education programs, but some programs use tests designed for use with students in high school and postsecondary programs. No Spanish tests are used for accountability reporting for the U.S. Department of Education's National Reporting System (NRS). (See *Spanish Language Assessment Instruments for Adult Spanish Speakers Learning English*, page IV–53.)

Part I: Background Information

Part I presents information for program staff about the population of adult English language learners in the United States. It describes the size of the population, countries and languages of origin, distribution in cities and states, first language background, English language and literacy levels, education levels, employment and income status, reasons for attending adult education programs, the challenges they face, and the strengths they bring to the learning setting. This section also describes types of programs that offer adult ESL instruction, the challenges that programs face, and some characteristics of effective programs.

Adult Non-Native English Speakers in the United States

The non-native English speaking adult population in the United States is large and diverse, and programs serve learners with very different backgrounds and needs. This section discusses the characteristics of non-native English speaking adults that program staff need to consider when planning or delivering instruction, the reasons these learners attend adult education and family literacy programs, the strengths they bring, and the challenges they face. The learner profiles in Figure I-1 give a glimpse of the diversity that is possible within a program or class.

***Figure I-1.* Diverse Adult Learner Profiles**

Rosa is a young mother in an ESL class in a family literacy program. She has three small children, whom she brings to the child care program. Rosa has been in the country for one year. Her ESL class has been running for a month, and the students are progressing slowly. Rosa wants to learn, but she attends class infrequently. She does not drive and so depends on family members for a ride, and she often is not able to bring one or more of the children because of illness. She understands no English, and another student translates for her. She has mentioned several times that she has no time to do any of the exercises outside of class.

Mohammed is 17 years old and has been in the country for six months. He is not enrolled in high school, because he needs to help his mother support their family of five, and he has two jobs. He finished elementary school in Iraq and can read and write in his native Arabic. He is learning to understand and speak a little English on the job, but he can read next to nothing in English.

Ibrahim is 60 years old and has come to the United States from Somalia, where he was a businessman and a tribal leader. He can read and write in his native language and in Italian. His refugee benefits have run out, and he has to work to help support his family. He is embarrassed about being in a beginning-level class, and he does not like to work in groups with women. When he speaks, he wants the teacher to correct everything he says.

What are the Characteristics of the Population?

Age. Any person who is 16 years of age or older and no longer enrolled in the K-12 educational system may enroll in adult education classes. Therefore, adult learners may range in age from teens as young as 16 to adults in their 90s.

Immigration Status. The learner population in a program may include permanent residents, naturalized citizens, legal immigrants, refugees, and asylees.

Numbers. The population of adults learning English has become a significant part of adult education programs. More than 35 million adults in the United States are native speakers of a language other than English (U. S. Census Bureau, 2001). In program year 2002-2003, 43% of participants in state-administered adult education programs were enrolled in ESL classes (U.S Department of Education, 2004). This does not include those served within other segments of the educational system—in adult basic education (ABE) and adult

secondary education (ASE) classes, private language schools and academic institutions, as well as volunteer literacy services and other community-based programs.

Locations of residence. In 2000, 68 percent of the nation's foreign-born population lived in California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas (Capps, Fix, & Passel, 2002). At the same time, states that have not previously had significant numbers of immigrants have witnessed a rapid growth of their immigrant populations. Between 1990 and 2000, the immigrant population in 22 states grew twice as fast as it did in the six states mentioned above. The following states experienced more than 125% growth: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Utah (Capps, et al., 2002).

Countries of origin. The foreign-born population comes from all over the world, but most people come from Latin America or Mexico. In 2000, more than one-quarter of the foreign-born population came from Mexico, and over half from Latin America generally (primarily Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador). Of the remaining immigrants from Latin America, 2.8 million were born in Caribbean countries, and 1.9 million in South America (Capps, Passel, Perez-Lopez, & Fix, 2004; U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). The next largest group of people came from Asia.

First language background. The majority of individuals who speak a language other than English at home speak Spanish (60%). The second most prevalent language is Chinese. The remaining eight of the top 10 languages spoken are (in descending order) French, German, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Italian, Korean, and Polish (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

Educational background. Adult English learners have a variety of educational backgrounds, ranging from no education at all to advanced degrees.

English speaking ability. The English speaking ability of adults learning English ranges from low beginning, with limited opportunities to use English outside of class, to high advanced (near native proficiency). Of the English language learners enrolled in state-administered adult education programs in program year 2001–2002, over half were enrolled in beginning literacy or beginning ESL classes (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

English literacy. The increase in English language learners has been accompanied by an increase in adults with limited literacy in English. The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) found that over half of the population studied had low English literacy skills and that a higher percentage of non-native English speakers than native English speakers read English at the lowest levels (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993).

Employment and income. In the 1990s, half of all workers entering the workforce were immigrants. While many had strong academic credentials and skills, many did not (Capps, Fix, Passel, Ost, & Perez-Lopez, 2003). Limited English skills are associated with low-wage jobs; nearly two-thirds of low-wage immigrants have limited English proficiency. Some studies indicate that immigrants have a positive effect on the overall U.S. economy,

contributing more in taxes than they use in services over a lifetime (Smith & Edmonston, 1997).

Why do adults learning English participate in adult education programs?

Participants in adult ESL classes give a number of reasons for enrolling in programs. They want to

- Learn English to communicate in their everyday lives
- Get a job or pursue better employment
- Become a citizen of the United States
- Get a high school diploma or GED (General Educational Development) certificate
- Acquire skills needed to advance to higher education programs (e.g., vocational training, college, university)
- Acquire skills to help their children succeed in school

(National Center for Education Statistics, 1995; Skilton-Sylvester & Carlo, 1998; Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2003, p. 6)

What strengths do adult English language learners bring to educational programs?

Whatever their educational background, all adult learners bring to the classroom a great deal of life experience and background knowledge. They are generally highly motivated to learn, and they usually enroll voluntarily in programs. They often have attended school in their country of origin and have learned to read and write a language before learning English. Many have positive memories of school and are eager to continue their education (Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003; Fitzgerald, 1995; Skilton-Sylvester & Carlo, 1998). If they have had formal schooling in their native languages, they may have knowledge in subject matter areas like math, science, and social studies. Many adult learners also have strong and supportive families, who often help with child care. They may also have support networks within their language and culture groups that help them adjust to life in the United States and gain access to services.

What challenges do adults learning English face?

ESL learners are not only trying to acquire a new language and a new culture; they also are working, managing their households, and raising their children. These challenges often present significant obstacles to learning. The National Center for Education Statistics (1995) listed the following barriers to program participation: limited time, money, child care, and transportation, and lack of knowledge about appropriate programs in the local area. The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL, 2004) surveyed community leaders and educators in communities with recent rapid growth in numbers of immigrant families, and respondents identified similar challenges.

Logistical challenges. By far the most frequently mentioned challenges in the NCFL survey were lack of transportation and child care, which seem to be problems in both rural and urban areas. Demanding work schedules also may make class attendance difficult.

Program availability challenges. Even when programs are accessible, potential ESL learners may have difficulty finding a program and class that meets their needs and goals, offers the right instructional intensity level, and allows them to make the transition to other levels of education.

Employment. Unemployment is a common problem, but even adults who are employed may have low-paying jobs or seasonal agricultural work that requires frequent moves. Many adults work at multiple jobs and accept irregular work shifts to earn the money they need to support their families.

Housing, language, and medical issues. The lack of adequate and affordable housing is a common challenge for immigrants to the United States. The language barrier in finding housing is another: Adults seeking assistance often find the service system complicated, confusing, and unresponsive and have difficulty communicating with service agency personnel. A third challenge is health care. Like others living in poverty, immigrant families may have physical and mental health issues that need to be addressed, and limited access to treatment and preventive care can result in even more illness. Lack of medical insurance, lack of transportation, and communication problems with medical personnel all make it difficult for families to get the care they need.

Psychological and social issues. The demands of juggling several jobs, family responsibilities, and education make daily life management extremely difficult. Added to this general stress are other emotional issues. Many immigrant adults feel embarrassed about their limited education. Some are living in fear about their legal status in this country. Even with supportive families and neighbors, on the job they may feel isolated and alone. Parents may be worried about their children's safety in this country and their success in school.

Conclusion

As described above, almost half of the adult education students served in federally funded programs are English language learners. Population trends and projections for the next 10 years indicate that the number of adult English language learners in the United States will continue to grow. Educators need to have information about these learners so they can serve them effectively.

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Program Types and Challenges

The major source of federal support for basic skills programs are grants to states authorized under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The purpose of the basic grant program is to provide educational opportunities for adults to function effectively in the workplace or in their daily lives. Both English as a second language (ESL) programs and family literacy services are supported by AEFLA funds.

Adult ESL programs in the United States work with adults (16 years and older), whose first language is not English and who are no longer attending public schools, to help those not fully fluent and literate in English to communicate effectively in English. This means developing their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Programs are designed to help these adults acquire the skills they need to meet their personal, vocational, academic, community, and employment goals. Many adult basic education (ABE) programs that serve native English speakers also serve adults learning English.

Family literacy programs are designed to help children become successful in school while their parents develop language and literacy skills in English. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act reflects this dual goal in its encouragement of adults to “become full partners in the educational development of their children.” The act also names as a goal helping adults to “become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency” (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, 1998).

Adult ESL and family literacy programs serve a diverse population through a variety of funding streams depending on learners’

- Status (e.g., immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers);
- Goals (e.g., basic or functional literacy, family literacy, workplace education, citizenship preparation, academic credentialing or preparation); and
- Circumstances (e.g., parents with young children, youth needing a high school credential, employed or displaced workers, farm workers, incarcerated youth and adults).

The diversity of learner populations served, program settings, systems of delivery, and instructional philosophies embraced result in a wide range of program designs and instructional practices. To be effective, programs need to offer classes that vary in terms of class schedules, location, duration, and content in order to maximize access to learning opportunities while accommodating the realities and constraints of adult learners’ lives.

Program Types

The most common contexts in which adult ESL instruction is offered include the following:

Lifeskills or general ESL classes focus on developing English language skills in the context of topics or functions of daily life, such as going to the doctor, getting a job, shopping, or managing money.

Family ESL literacy programs address the family as a whole, providing English language and literacy instruction for adults and children. Often these programs include parenting elements and information that parents can use to further their children's literacy and general educational development. Some programs, such as Even Start, are collaborations between K–12 and adult education programs.

English literacy/civics (EL/civics) programs integrate English language instruction with opportunities to learn about civic participation, civil rights and responsibilities, and citizenship.

Vocational ESL (VESL) programs prepare learners for jobs. These programs may concentrate on general pre-employment skills such as finding a job or preparing for an interview, or they may target preparation for jobs in specific fields such as horticulture or hospitality.

Workplace ESL classes are offered in work settings and focus on development of language that is directly relevant for employees in that setting.

Pre-academic ESL programs concentrate on preparing learners for further training and education in postsecondary institutions, vocational education classes, or ABE and GED classes.

For more information about types of programs see National Center for ESL Literacy Education, 2003; Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages [TESOL], 2003.

Open Entry/Open Exit Programs

One choice that all types of programs must make is whether to have an open or closed entry and exit system for students. Open entry and exit programs allow students to enter and leave when they can or need to. Some programs (e.g., in community colleges) provide self-paced courses, designed for students to progress through the course content at their own pace without attending regularly scheduled classes. Students meet with instructors and mentors and work at home or in a computer lab. However, open entry systems make it difficult for programs to gather information on learner progress in English. Furthermore, educators report that adult learners themselves prefer structured programs with stated beginnings and ends and clear criteria for completion and promotion (Marshall, 2002; Sticht, 1999). For these reasons, some programs have chosen to follow a closed entry and exit system (also referred to as managed enrollment), where students can enroll and enter classes only at specific times (for example, in a 12-week course at the beginning, after 3 weeks, and after six weeks).

Program Resources

Program resources and staff expertise vary from region to region and program to program. In some areas of the country, resources are limited because immigrant populations are new and programs have not been developed; there are few trained adult ESL teachers available; and professional development opportunities for teachers are limited. In contrast, some states, such as California and New York, have worked with immigrant and refugee learners for several decades and have better developed programs, more trained teachers, and better training systems for these teachers.

(For more information about program resources see Florez & Burt, 2001; Van Duzer, 2002).

Program Standards

Efforts to develop standards and indicators for program quality and learner performance are underway. These efforts include program standards and a program self-review instrument for adult ESOL programs from TESOL (2003) and state standards projects.

- Arizona adult education standards (http://www.ade.state.az.us)
- California model ESL standards (California Department of Education, 1992, http://www.otan.us/webform/emailproject/standard.pdf)
- Maryland adult ESL program standards (http://www.research.umbc.edu/~ira/ESLstand.html)
- Massachusetts adult ESL frameworks (Department of Education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1999, http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/curriculum_frameworks.htm)

For an annotated bibliography of states' ESL content standards, see Florez, 2002a, http://www.cal.org/caela/constanbib.htm; and for an annotated bibliography of program standards, see Florez, 2002b, http://www.cal.org/caela/prgstanbib.htm.

Instructional Configurations

Given the increasing demand for adult ESL instruction in many parts of the country, large classes or classes of learners with widely varied English language proficiency levels (multilevel classes) are becoming common (TESOL, 2003). In some places, instruction is provided in one-to-one tutoring, small-group, or large-group sessions. Some states and local ESL programs provide distance education opportunities for learners who cannot come to class consistently. The amount of instructional support that these distance programs offer varies. A combination of self-study and teacher support has shown promise in helping learners learn the language and in facilitating the transition into classroom-based programs (Center for Impact Research, 2002). Support may take the form of videos and other materials the learner takes home, in-person appointments, or periodic group meetings with an instructor or instructional aide.

Program Challenges

Programs face a number of challenges in responding to the needs of learners in their geographic area, maintaining high quality, and fulfilling accountability requirements from funders. Two major challenges discussed here are (1) the recruitment and ongoing professional development of high-quality teachers and (2) assessment of learners and reporting results for program accountability. A helpful publication for adult educators seeking to establish, expand, or improve a program is *Program Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs* (TESOL, 2003).

Teacher Recruitment and Professional Development

The demand for qualified personnel to work with adult English language learners has greatly increased in recent years as a result of ever-increasing demands for classes (Florez & Burt, 2002). New teachers are entering the field, experienced teachers are being asked to take on greater challenges, and many adult basic education teachers are working with English language learners who are in classes with native English speakers. Much of this is occurring in areas where the adult ESL infrastructure is limited or nonexistent. Experienced, effective teachers need to be recruited for programs, and ongoing professional development needs to be provided.

Most adult ESL teachers are part-time, hourly employees who come to the field with varied backgrounds, training, and experiences. The wide range of instructional contexts (e.g., academic, workplace, family literacy, and volunteer programs) and curriculum content (e.g., employment, parenting, life skills, and civics) makes uniform professional development challenging. Certification and training requirements for teachers vary from state to state, and sometimes from program to program within a state (TESOL, 2003).

Descriptions of professional development efforts in adult education indicate that effective professional development is ongoing, extensive, and based in solid theory and research; involves teachers in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the training efforts; provides teachers with opportunities and support to try new skills on the job and engage in feedback and follow-up activities; and provides adequate financial support for full-time and part-time teachers to participate in professional development activities. (For more information see Belzer, Drennon, & Smith, 2001; Florez & Burt, 2001; Smith, Hofer, & Gillespie, 2001).

Uses of technology for professional development are being explored by programs to increase delivery options and to address broad, often geographically dispersed audiences. Emerging technology applications for professional development include Web-based courses and training programs that integrate face-to-face meetings with Internet-based, video-based, or teleconferencing components.

Learner Assessment and Program Accountability

Learner assessment is an important priority in adult ESL education. Many adult ESL programs use a variety of assessments to place learners in classes, inform instruction, evaluate learner progress, and report outcomes. Informal assessments, for teachers' and programs' use in placing students and tracking their progress, include materials-based and teacher-made tests, projects, demonstrations, and portfolios that compile learners' work.

Formal assessments are used for accountability reporting purposes. The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA; Public Law 105-220), Title II, The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) provides funding for adult ESL instruction through the U.S. Department of Education. WIA requires states to evaluate each local program's performance according to outcome measures established under the National Reporting System (NRS) (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, 2001). States have flexibility to choose the assessments and procedures they will follow to measure these outcomes within acceptable parameters. Some states have chosen one standardized test, and others allow programs to choose from a list of approved tests. (For more information about learner assessment, see *Assessing Adult English Language Learners*, page IV–25, and *English Language Assessments for Adults Learning English*, page IV–31. See http://www.nrsweb.org for a description of the purposes and structure of the NRS.)

Conclusion

The number of adult English language learners in the United States will continue to grow. To ensure that these learners receive the best instruction possible, adequate resources and creative strategies are needed to address the challenges in the areas of learner assessment and reporting requirements and the recruitment and ongoing professional development of high-quality teachers.

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Part II: Activity Packets

This section of the Toolkit provides activities that teachers can use in their classes with learners from beginning to advanced levels of English language and literacy. Forms, surveys, and questionnaires that teachers can copy and use often accompany the activity descriptions. Activities are outlined in the following areas:

- Orientation of new learners to programs
- Needs assessment of learners and learner self-evaluation
- Lesson planning
- Activities to promote interaction and communication in classes
- Activities to promote reading development

Orientation for New English Language Learners

Adults come to adult ESL and family literacy programs for many different reasons. They may want to learn English to communicate in their daily lives, develop skills to find a new or better job, become a U.S. permanent resident or citizen, get a high school diploma or GED certificate, advance to higher education programs (e.g., vocational training, college, university), help their children succeed in school or they may simply love to learn (Houle, 1963; NCES, 1995; Skilton-Sylvester & Carlo, 1998; TESOL, 2003, p. 6).

When program staff conduct a thorough orientation process, adult learners new to a program feel at ease and welcome in the program. An orientation process also can minimize barriers to effective participation. Administrators and staff may begin by discussing what the new adult learner wants to know about the program. (See a sample interview guide on page II–17.) The interview may have to be conducted in the learner's native language. Staff should consider the questions that new students may have (see Figure II–1) and discuss how to answer them.

Figure II–1: **Anticipating Student Questions**

1. What will I learn in this program?
2. How will learning in this program differ from my previous experiences?
3. Will my records be kept confidential? (I don't want my spouse or employer to know.)
4. How long will it take me to learn English? (how to speak, how to read, etc.)
5. How much will I need to pay? What supplies and materials must I buy?
6. When are the classes? What time do they begin and end?
7. Will there be other students who speak my language?
8. What are the rules? (turn off cell phone, no smoking, etc.)
9. If there is an emergency while I am in class, how can my family reach me?
10. Where is the closest bus stop? What is the bus schedule?
11. If I drive my own car, where do I park? Do I need a parking permit?

The first day of class is a critical one for adult learners new to a program. From the moment they enter the classroom, learners begin to decide whether or not they will return (Lieshoff, 1995). Therefore, it is important to anticipate questions or needs they may have. The checklist in Figure II–2 provides matters for program administrators and staff to consider.

Figure II-2: **Orientation Checklist**

1. *What do we know about the culture of this new student? How can we learn more?*

   ___ Check the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA) Web site at http://www.cal.org/caela to learn more about issues in adult ESL education.

   ___ Check the Cultural Orientation Resource Center for profiles of different immigrant and refugee populations. http://www.culturalorientation.net/fact.html

   ___ Think of ways to honor and build on students' cultures in the classroom environment.

2. *How are we promoting a sense of community and friendship among students and staff?*

   ___ Assign a peer mentor to each new student on his/her first day in class.

   ___ Create a welcome committee of experienced students.

   ___ Present the new student with a welcome basket of supplies from local businesses.

   ___ Assign a staff member to call the new student at home the first evening to welcome the student, discuss events of the first day, and clear up any misunderstandings.

   ___ Set up a student contact system so that students may call each other outside of class.

3. *How do we orient the new student to our class, building, and campus?*

   ___ Familiarize new students with the classroom setup such as the coffee area, lounge/reading area, and the computer stations. Explain classroom rules.

   ___ Take the new student on a tour of the program facilities.

   ___ Teach the new students how to use the library, cafeteria, and bookstore.

4. *How do we make the first day of class a successful one for new students?*

   ___ Assess new students to determine the levels of instruction they require.

   ___ Break tasks into manageable bits to help reduce their frustration (and throughout the year).

   ___ Be sure that students leave the first day of class knowing that they have learned something.

5. *How do we strive to meet new students' needs and goals (the first day and throughout the program)?*

   ___ Conduct a needs assessment. (See *Needs Assessment and Learner Self-Evaluation* beginning on page II–5 for examples.)

   ___ Offer a curriculum that is based on learners' strengths and needs.

   ___ Offer a challenging curriculum.

   ___ Begin with the students' goals in mind and the expectation that they will advance to further education and lifelong learning.

During the initial interview and needs assessment, it may become evident that new students need services outside the ESL or family literacy program. Therefore, it is beneficial to consult a community services guide to determine which agencies might be the most appropriate for student referrals. Various agencies in communities across the country (e.g., Head Start programs, United Way, local libraries) create these guides, which list contact persons, location and phone numbers, program descriptions, services offered, and the target population. These are usually updated annually. The community services guides are available in various formats and contain different information, as dictated by the resources of the community. The following services may be included:

- Free or reduced-cost health services, social services, crisis services, housing assistance, or legal assistance
- Public transportation
- Head Start, Even Start, or other early childhood programs
- Adult education or community education services
- Elementary school services, such as after-school and parent involvement programs
- Women's centers and women's shelters
- Cultural centers
- Library services
- High school and college programs for adults
- Advocacy organizations offering job preparation and training

(King & McMaster, 2000)

The objective of the student orientation is not so much to present program information as to answer questions, allay fears, and make adult learners comfortable so that they will want to return. Through careful planning, administrators and staff can make the first days of a new adult learner's participation a pleasant experience.

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Needs Assessment and Learner Self-Evaluation

The assessment of literacy needs from the learner's perspective is an important part of an instructional program. Learners come to adult English as a Second Language programs for diverse reasons. Although they may say they just want to "learn English," they frequently have very specific learning goals and needs; for example, to be able to read to their children, speak with their children's teachers, get a job, or become a U.S. citizen. If their needs are not met, they are more likely to drop out than to voice their dissatisfaction. Therefore, using informal, self-assessment tools to gauge learner needs and goals is important. Also important, of course, is using formal assessment tools to gauge learner progress. For information about and descriptions of formal assessment instruments, see *Assessing Adult English Language Learners*, Part IV–25.

The needs assessment process can be used as the basis for developing curricula and classroom practice that are responsive to learners' needs. It encompasses both what learners know and can do and what they want to learn and be able to do. Learners also need opportunities to evaluate what they have learned—to track their progress toward meeting goals they have set for themselves in learning English.

What is Needs Assessment?

Needs assessments with adult English language learners examine the following aspects from the perspective of the learner:

- English language proficiency
- Native language literacy
- Literacy contexts in which the learner lives and works
- Learner need for native language translation or aid of an interpreter
- Learner wants and needs for functioning in specified contexts
- Learner expectations from the instructional program

The needs assessment process focuses and builds on learners' accomplishments and abilities rather than deficits, allowing learners to articulate and display what they already know (Holt & Van Duzer, 2000). It is a continual process and takes place throughout the instructional program. The process can influence student placement, materials selection, curriculum design, and instructional practice (TESOL, 2003). At the beginning of the program, needs assessment might be used to determine course content, while during the program, it assures that learner goals and program goals are being met and allows for necessary program changes. At the end of the program, needs assessment can be used for planning future directions for the learners and the program (Marshall, 2002). These same tools also may be used as a way to measure progress at the end of the year. However, for reporting outcomes

to funders and external stakeholders, standardized assessments must be used. See page IV–31 for an annotated list of standardized assessments of English language and literacy.

What Do Assessment Tools Look Like?

Learner self-assessment tools may have a variety of formats, including survey questionnaires that require learners to check areas of interest or need, open-ended interviews, or informal performance observations. For assessment to be effective, tools and activities must be appropriate for the particular learner or group of learners. For example, materials written in English might be translated into the learners' native language, read aloud by the teacher or an aide (in English or the native language), or represented pictorially. Types of needs assessment tools and activities are described in Figure II-1, followed by samples of assessment tools that may be used or adapted to meet particular program needs.

Figure II-1: **Types of Needs Assessment Tools and Activities**

Type of Tool/Activity	Description	Samples
Survey questionnaires of learners' needs and goals	Many types of questionnaires have been designed to determine learners' literacy needs and goals. Frequently they consist of a list of topics, skills, or language and literacy uses. The learners indicate what they already know or want to know by checking in the appropriate column or box, or they may be asked to use a scale to rank the importance of each item. For beginning learners who do not read English, pictures depicting different literacy contexts can be shown, and learners can mark the contexts that apply to them. The list of questionnaire items may be prepared ahead of time by the teacher or generated by the students themselves through class discussion.	Samples 1-6 (pp. II–8 - II–13)
Inventories of language and literacy use	Checklists may be used here, as well as more open-ended questions requiring learners to keep lists of ways they use language and literacy and update them periodically.	Samples 7-9 (pp. II–14 - II–16)
Learner interviews to assess needs and interests	Interviews with learners may provide valuable information about what learners know, what their interests are, and the ways they use or hope to use literacy. Interviews may be done one-on-one or in small groups, in their native language, or in English.	Samples 10-11 (pp. II–17 - II–26)
Personal or dialogue journal	Learners' journals, in which they write freely about their activities, experiences, and plans, may be a rich source of information about their literacy needs.	Sample 12 (p. II–27)
Timelines to express learners' short-term and long-term goals	Learners may prepare their own personal timelines, in writing or pictorially, that indicate major events in their lives as well as future goals. Discussion can then focus on how progress towards those goals may be met through the class.	Sample 13 (p. II–27)

(Adapted from Weddel & Van Duzer, 1997)

The amount of explanation required for the following sample activities, and the writing required from the students for each form will vary according to their level of English proficiency. The activities may need to be explained in more detail for beginning level learners. Also at the beginning level, the teacher might need to simplify the language in the forms or translate them and explain them in the learners' native language.

These forms are designed to provide examples of learning activities with English language learners. Practitioners are asked to include the reference at the bottom of the forms if they are duplicated.

Needs assessment may take many forms and may be carried out at different times during the instructional process. Whatever the focus and format, the basic purpose is to determine what learners want and need to learn. When learners know that educators understand and want to address their needs and interests, they are motivated to continue in a program and to learn.

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Sample Needs Assessments

Sample II–1: Beginning-Level Questionnaire Guide

Even in literacy- and beginning-level classes, it is important to conduct some needs assessment in the first days of class. Needs assessment should then continue informally throughout the entire class cycle. Typically when literacy-level adult English language learners are asked which English skill is most important for them—reading, writing, speaking, or listening—they say "everything." A teacher might agree with the students, but then explain that they cannot learn everything at once, so the teacher needs an idea of what is most important to particular learners. This will enable the teacher to set priorities for what is to be taught. The following steps may be useful in assessing needs and determining priorities.

1. Elicit from the students situations and places where they might need English, such as getting a job or going to the doctor. Discuss whether they need to read, speak, listen, or write (or often, all four) in these situations.
2. Label four cards, each card representing one of the skills—reading, writing, speaking, listening—and put a simple graphic on each card, e.g., an ear for listening, a mouth for speaking, a book for reading, and a pen for writing. Post one skill card in each corner of the room.
3. Ask the students (and demonstrate, if necessary) to stand by the card representing the English skill they most need to improve. If students are confused, repeat and demonstrate the directions and allow them to help each other in their native languages. While students are standing in their chosen corners, have them write their names on the appropriate skill card. Leave the card on the wall for the rest of the class cycle.

The above "four corners" activity helps prepare learners for the more complicated task of choosing which topics to study.

1. Create a simple form asking students to indicate which topics are the most important for them to learn. Draw or find illustrations of possible topics to be studied in class, such as health, housing, shopping, and transportation. (See sample on page II–9.)
2. For group instruction, make transparencies of the pictures on the form. The form can contain basic words such as *work, health, community*.
3. Discuss the pictures and words on the form.
4. Give each learner a handout of the form and ask them to circle the topics most important to them. Ask them to choose 3-5 topics, depending on the length and intensity of the instruction. Some learners may help each other in their native languages, or volunteers may assist in English or the native language. Individuals may circle words or pictures.
5. While the students are working, circulate to help with the process and confirm with each adult learner that he or she has chosen important topics.

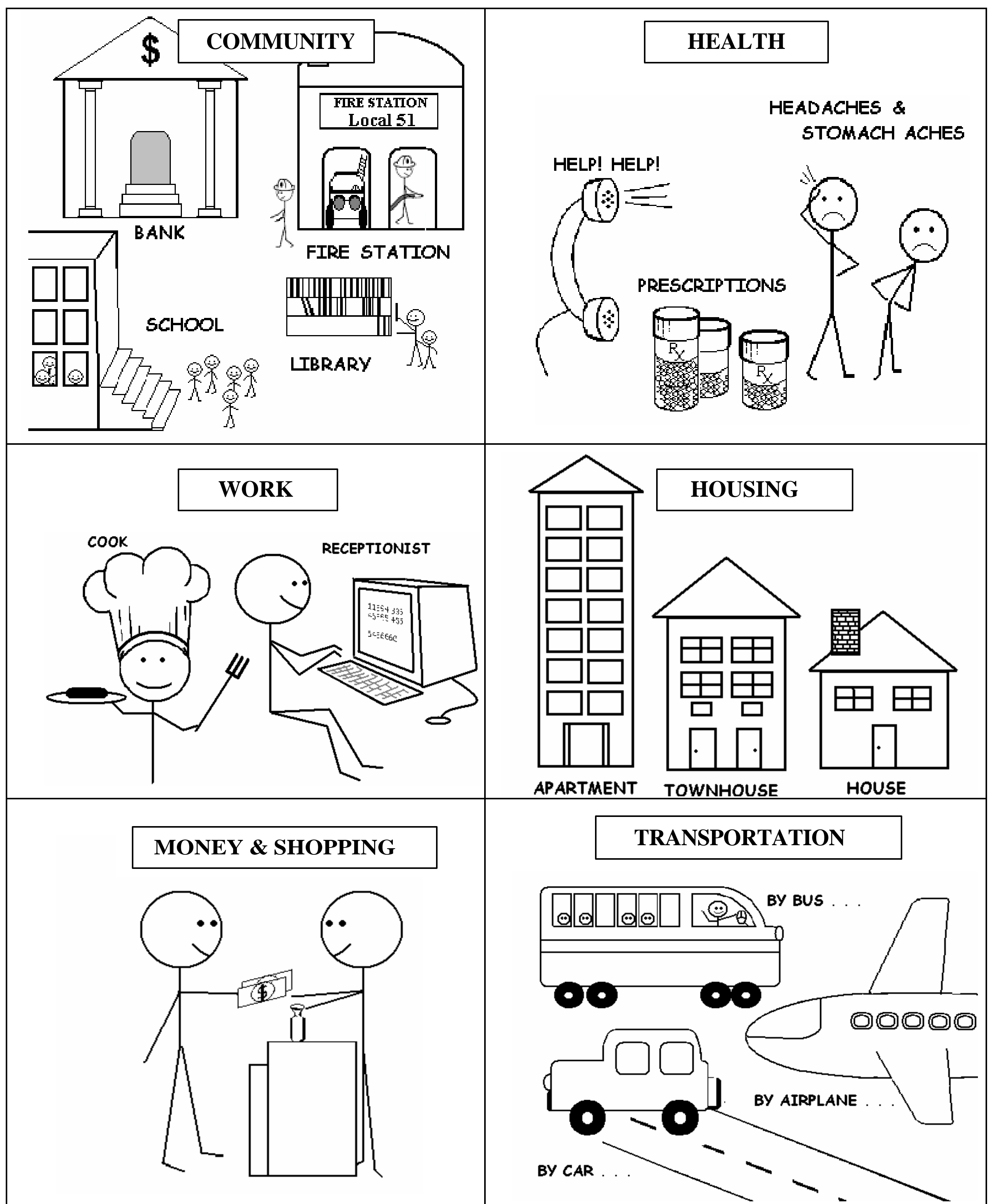
The next day, on the original transparency or on the board, present a tally of the topics that were marked, and decide with the class which topics are important to the most people. Some may find the entire task challenging because they are unfamiliar with the concept of needs assessment and because of difficulties in understanding and expressing themselves in English. But everyone ultimately understands the inherent fairness of this group process. The process itself serves to forge a strong class bond while showing adult English learners that their voices have been heard. These activities also allow the teacher to assess the skills, ideas, and feelings of each individual in the class.

(Adapted from Shank & Terrill, 1997.)

Sample II–1a: Beginning Level Questionnaire

What do you want to study?
Circle three topics.

Name ___________________________
Date ____________________________



Sample II–2: **Intermediate/Advanced Level Questionnaire**

Name ____________________________ Date ________________________

1. Why do you need to learn more English? Please be specific. Give examples of situations that are difficult for you in English.

2. What specific areas of English would you like to improve before you leave this class?

3. When people speak English to you, how much do you understand? Check the amount.

   ___ everything ___most ___some ___a little ___very little

4. When you watch TV, how much do you understand? Check the amount.

   ___ everything ___most ___some ___a little ___very little

5. When you speak English, how much do other people understand?

   ___ everything ___most ___some ___a little ___very little

6. Order the skills that you need from 1 to 6. Number 1 is the most important and number 6 is the least important to you at this time. Please use each number only one time.

   ___ Reading

   ___ Writing

   ___ Listening

   ___ Speaking

   ___Vocabulary

   ___ Pronunciation

(Adapted from Marshall, 2002. Used with permission.)

Sample II–3: Intermediate Level Questionnaire: Family Activities

Purpose: To identify literacy practices in the home, record parent-child interactions, and provide a baseline for documenting changes over time.

Process: Either as part of a whole-group or small-group discussion, have learners discuss activities they currently do with their children. Give the learners the following prompts: "Parents and children can do many things together. They go to the park on Sunday, go fishing, cook food, clean the house, go hiking, watch TV, work in the garden, or look at magazines. In many families, parents help their children with homework or check their assignments. What do you do together with members of your family?" Record their responses on the lines below.

Luisa and her husband go to church together on Sundays.

Then they watch their son Marcos play soccer.

____

(Adapted from Holt & Van Duzer, 2000. Used with permission.)

Sample II–4: Intermediate Level Open-Ended Questionnaire: Home Literacy Activities

Purpose: To record home literacy events and activities that parents regard as essential and to gain insights into educational values and opinions about learning.

Process: As part of a whole-group or small-group discussion or through pair activities, have the learners discuss and then record their views of how children learn and how parents can help their children learn. Give the following prompt:

In my opinion, these activities help children learn.

Talking about (for example, field trips, birthday parties)

____

Teaching children to (for example, ride a bicycle, use the stove)

____

Helping children with (for example, math homework, spelling words)

____

Asking children questions about (for example, their friends, their favorite class, personal problems)

____

Telling children that (for example, everybody makes mistakes, you learn by doing)

____

(Adapted from Holt & Van Duzer, 2000. Used with permission.)

Sample II–5: Intermediate Level Can-Do List for Self Assessment

Directions: Put a check mark (✓) in the box that best describes you. Put only one check for each row.

Here's what I can do.	I can do this. No problem.	I do OK most of the time, except when things are complicated.	This is a little difficult for me, but I can do it with some help from others.	This is very difficult for me. I can only do it with a lot of help from others.	I can't do this. No way. It's much too difficult.
Talk about my country and my city with a friend or neighbor					
Ask for directions on the street or ask where something is in a store					
Ask someone to speak more slowly or to say things in a different way					
Fill out a form (name, birthdate, address, phone)					
Explain about myself and my work in a job interview					
Understand the notes that my child's teacher sends from school					
Figure out my phone bill or electricity bill					
Explain to the doctor in detail what's wrong					
Pick a story in the newspaper and read it					
Understand the news on TV					

(Adapted from Holt & Van Duzer, 2000. Used with permission.)

Sample II–6: **Beginning Level Self-Assessment Instrument**

Purpose: To set personal goals and develop an individualized plan for documenting progress.

Process: Give this form to the students. Explain the meaning of "once in a while" if they don't know it. Then, give them the following prompt:

Based on home literacy activities identified in the Open-Ended Questionnaire on page II–11, list activities you plan to do with your children. Indicate how often you might do each.

Family Activity	Almost every day	Once or twice a week	Several times a month	Once or twice a month	Once in a while
My children and I plan to … *go to the library*				X	

(Adapted from Holt & Van Duzer, 2000. Used with permission.)

Sample II–7: Beginning Level Language Log

Purpose: To track the amount of English used during the prior week and to consider that which was difficult and that which was easy.

Process: Give this form to the students. Explain that the more we think about our English language use, the more we are able to improve our ability to use English. This language log will help them track the amount of English they use weekly. Ask them to try to increase their English language use each week.

Name ______________________________ Date ______________________________

Where did you speak English this week?

____

____

____

To whom did you speak English?

____

____

____

What did you read in English this week?

____

____

____

What did you need to study this week?

____

____

This week, ____was difficult in class.

This week, ____was easy in class.

(Adapted from Marshall, 2002. Used with permission.)

Sample II–8: Beginning Level Language Use Inventory

Purpose: To practice thinking, writing, and speaking English by answering simple questions.

Process: Give this form to the students. Display the handout on an overhead transparency. As a large group activity, walk through the handout, offering suggestions and asking for examples from the students. Have students work on their handout individually, then have them get into pairs and work on interviewing each other.

Answer for YOU

	To whom did you speak?	What did you say?	Was it easy? Difficult?
At home?			
At work?			
At the store?			
Another place?			

Now ask your PARTNER

	To whom did you speak?	What did you say?	Was it easy? Difficult?
At home?			
At work?			
At the store?			
Another place?			

(Adapted from Marshall, 2002. Used with permission.)

Sample II–9: Beginning Level Family Events Questionnaire

Purpose: To record literacy events and learners' accomplishments related to literacy and to compare learners' plans with actual activities.

Process: Ask the learners to record the activities they do together with their children each week. Then have them discuss this with a partner. At key points in the class cycle, meet with learners to compare their list with their planned activities (Self-Assessment Instrument, page II–13). Then discuss the plan again and renegotiate, if appropriate.

Learner's name ______________________ Week of ______________

This week I….

helped my son with his math.

____

____

____

(Adapted from Holt & Van Duzer, 2002. Used with permission.)

Samples II–10 and II–11 (Spanish version) that follow are examples of comprehensive enrollment interview forms used by some family literacy programs. Since they are rather lengthy, programs may select only the information that they wish to have upon enrollment of families. Other portions of the forms may be used at a later date.

Purpose: These multi-purpose interview guides help programs gain basic enrollment information, as well as information that can be used to guide services that meet the needs and interests of the families.

Process: The interviewer instructions are provided in the boxes. Interviewers should read over the entire form to become acquainted with the questions before interviewing new parents. As stated above, programs may pick and choose sections that they want to use. The interviewer should strive to make this interview a pleasant and stress-free activity. Since this is an oral interview process, it may be used with adults of all literacy levels.

Sample II–10: Family Literacy Program Needs Assessment Interview (All Levels)

City: ________________________ Site: ____

Date: ________________________ Interviewer: ____________________________________

Information about Parent or Guardian Enrolling

Interviewer Introduction: My name is (*Interviewer's Name*). With your permission I would like to ask you some questions about you, your background, why you are enrolling in a class, and are enrolling (*Child's Name*) with you.

Parent and Child Information: First I need to get some general information about you and (*Child's Name*), such as your address and telephone number. (Fill in information.)

Full Name of Adult: ____

First Name: __________________________ Date of Birth: _____________________________

Address: ____

Telephone: ______________ Cell Phone: _________________ E-mail: __________________

Date of Enrollment: _______________ Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

1. Adult Learner Background

Interviewer Instructions: What is your race or ethnicity? (Check all responses given.)

☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native ☐ Asian ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐ Black or Afro-American ☐ Hispanic or Latino ☐ White ☐ Other:

What is the usual (main) language spoken in your home? ☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Other (Specify):

____

Interviewer Instructions: What is the highest grade or year of schooling that you completed? (Check one.)

☐ No schooling (skip to question #2)

☐ Completed grades 1-8

☐ Completed grade 9

☐ Completed grade 10

☐ Completed grade 11

☐ Completed grade 12, but didn't receive a diploma

☐ Completed high school and received a diploma or GED

☐ Attended some college, no degree

☐ Completed 2-year Associate's degree

☐ Completed 4-year Bachelor's degree

☐ Completed Graduate degree (Master's, Professional, or Doctorate)

Where did you go to school and complete the education mentioned above?
☐ In the United States
☐ In another country (Specify): ____

What is the main reason for leaving school when you did? ______________________________

____

2. How did you learn about the family literacy program? ______________________________

____

3. Information about Child to be Enrolled

Full Name of Child: ____

Child's Date of Birth: ________________ Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Is (*Child's Name*) enrolled in grade school now? ☐ Yes ☐ No In what grade? _____

Child's education before attending grade school:

☐ Head Start ☐ Title I Preschool ☐ Other Preschool ☐ Infant/Toddler Program

☐ Kindergarten ☐ 1st grade ☐ 2nd grade

Information about Work and Family Activities

Interviewer Instructions: Please tell me about your work situation. (Read each category to the parent before asking for a response. Check one)

4. Work Situation

☐ You are currently employed.

☐ You are currently not employed, but would like to find work. (If yes, skip to question #5.)

☐ You are currently not employed, and do not plan to seek work. (If yes, skip to question #5.)

How many hours a week do you work? _____

When do you work (hours of the day)? ☐ Day (8-5) ☐ Evening ☐ Night

☐ Rotating/Swing Shift Are the shift changes always the same? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How long does it take you to go to/from work (one way) each day? Hours_____ Minutes_____

How do you get to work? ☐ Your own car ☐ Ride with a friend ☐ Ride the Bus ☐ Walk

5. Personal Learning Goals

Interviewer Instructions: (Read the following explanation to the parent.) Listed below are some statements concerning goals that adults have given that describe what they hope to get out of attending a family literacy program. Listen to the items in the list and tell me which two goals are most important to you.

I want to accomplish the following two goals:

☐ Get a paying job or a better job.

☐ Earn a GED certificate or earn a high school diploma.

☐ Work toward enrolling in a job training or higher education program.

☐ Improve my English speaking, writing and reading skills.

☐ Work toward U.S. citizenship.

☐ Become a better parent.

☐ Be with adults with similar needs.

☐ I have other reasons for enrolling (describe): ____

6. Literacy Activities in the Home and in the Community

Interviewer Instructions: (Please read the following list to the parent and check the appropriate box.) I am going to mention a list of some things that people may read. When you hear them, please tell me if you read the materials **every week** and in what language.

Advertisements received in the mail.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both
Letters, bills	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both
Coupons	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both
Labels on food, cooking recipes.......	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both
Religious materials	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both
Instructions and papers at work.......	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both
Bus schedules................................	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both
Street signs, bus signs	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both
Newspapers....................................	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both
Television listings or TV Guide	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both
Magazines......................................	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both
Books	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ English	☐ Spanish	☐ Both

Do you know where the public library is located? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you or does anyone else in your household have a library card? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you visited the library? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If no, skip to question #7)

How many times in a month do you visit a public library? ________________________________

Do you have (*Child's Name*) along when you visit the library? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Your Child's Activities

Interviewer Instructions: (If the response to the first question is "zero" skip to question #8)

Please tell me how many hours (*Child's Name*) watches television each day. _____ hours

What television programs does (*Child's Name*) usually watch? ______________________________

What are the languages used in the television programs that (*Child's Name*) watches? ___________

☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Both English and Spanish ☐ Other Language ______________

8. In the past week, how many times did you or someone in your family read to (*Child's Name*)?

☐ Not at all ☐ Once or twice ☐ Three or more times ☐ Every day

What language is used when reading to (*Child's Name*)?

☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Both English and Spanish

☐ Another Language (Specify):_________________ ☐ Unable to read to my child

9. Last week, did anyone in your family do any of the following things with (*Child's Name*)?

☐ Tell him/her a story

☐ Teach him/her letters, words, numbers

☐ Teach him/her songs or music

☐ Talk with him/her about family history, family culture or ethnic heritage

10. In the past year, did anyone in your family do any of the following things with (*Child's Name*)?

☐ Visit a zoo or aquarium

☐ Visit a local park, playground, gym, or swimming pool

☐ Go to an event sponsored by a community group, ethnic group or religious organization

☐ Go to a live show, concert, or play

11. How far do you think (*Child's Name*) will go in school?

- ☐ Plans to finish high school
- ☐ Will earn high school diploma or GED
- ☐ Will earn high school diploma and then complete vocational, trade, or business school, or military service
- ☐ Will complete at least one year of college
- ☐ Will earn a college degree
- ☐ Will earn a professional degree (Law, Veterinarian, MD) or graduate degree (Master's, Doctorate)
- ☐ I don't know

12. Child's Elementary School Experience

Interviewer Instructions: (If the parent said in question #3 that the child did not attend elementary school, indicate "Does not Apply" for each item below and end the session. Read the following statements and check the responses.) If (*Child's Name*) attended elementary school last school year, did you go to (*Child's name*) elementary school for any of the following reasons?

For a conference or informal talk with (*Child's Name*) teacher, director, or principal	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Does Not Apply
To observe classroom activities	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Does Not Apply
To attend a school event in which (*Child's Name*) participated, such as a play, art show, party	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Does Not Apply
To attend after-school programs, such as crafts or music	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Does Not Apply
To meet with a parent-teacher organization, such as PTA	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Does Not Apply
To attend a parent advisory committee meeting	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Does Not Apply
To volunteer in the school office, cafeteria, or library	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Does Not Apply
To volunteer in (*Child's Name*) classroom	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Does Not Apply
To volunteer for school project or a school trip	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Does Not Apply

For other reasons (specify): ____

Interviewer Instructions: Thank you for your assistance in helping us plan the most appropriate educational program for you and *(Child's name)*.

(Adapted from NCFL, 2004a; NCFL, 2004b; & NCFL, 2004c. Used with permission.)

Sample II–11: Family Literacy Program Needs Assessment Interview (Spanish Version – All Levels)

Ciudad: ______________________ Sitio: ____

Fecha: _______________________ Entrevistador: _________________________________

Información acerca del Padre/Madre o Guardián:

Introducción del Entrevistador: Mi nombre es (*nombre*). Con su permiso quisiera hacerle unas preguntas acerca de sus antecedentes, sus razones para inscribirse, y las razones para inscribir a (nombre del niño/niña).

Información del Padre/Madre e hijo: Primeramente necesito información general acerca de usted y su hijo/hija, por ejemplo su domicilio y números de teléfono.

Nombre completo: ____

Apodo: ____________________________ Fecha de nacimiento: ______________________

Domicilio: ____

Teléfono: ______________ Número de celular: ____________ E-mail: _________________

Fecha de inscripción: _____________ Género: ☐ Masculino ☐ Femenino

1. Antecedentes del adulto

Entrevistador: ¿Cuál es su raza/origen étnico? (marque toda respuesta)

☐ Indígena norteamericano o nativo de Alaska ☐ Asiático

☐ Nativo de Hawaii o de otra isla del pacífico

☐ Negro o afro-estadounidense ☐ Hispano o Latino ☐ Blanco ☐ Otro (especifique)

¿Cuál es el idioma que más se habla en su hogar? ☐ Inglés ☐ Español ☐ Otro (especifique):

____

Entrevistador: ¿Cuál fue el último nivel (año) escolar que pudo terminar? (marque uno)

☐ No ha asistido a la escuela (siga con la pregunta #2)

☐ 1-6 Primaria

☐ 7-9 Secundaria

☐ 10-11 Preparatoria (Bachillerato)

☐ Completó la preparatoria (Bachillerato) sin recibir diploma

☐ Completó la preparatoria (Bachillerato) o el GED

☐ Asistió a la universidad sin recibir diploma

☐ Carrera técnica

☐ 4 años de universidad

☐ Licenciatura o Doctorado

¿Estudió aquí o en otro país?

☐ Sí, aquí

☐ No, fue en otro país (especifique): ____

¿Cuál fue la razón por la que usted dejó sus estudios? ____________________________________

____

2. ¿Cómo se enteró del programa de educación familiar?___________________________________

____

3. Información del niño/niña

Nombre completo del niño/niña: ____

Fecha de nacimiento:________________ Género: ☐ Masculino ☐ Femenino

¿Está el niño inscrito en la escuela?☐ Sí ☐ No ¿En qué grado?_____

Experiencia educacional del niño/niña:

☐ Head Start ☐ Title I Pre-escolar ☐ Escuela Pre-escolar ☐ Programa de guardería infantil

☐ Kindergarten ☐ Escuela primaria (grado 1) ☐ Escuela primaria (grado 2)

Información acerca de trabajo y actividades familiares

Entrevistador: ¿Cuál es su situación de empleo? (Lea todas las opciones antes de marcar una)

4. Situación de empleo

☐ Tiene empleo

☐ No tiene empleo, pero quiere encontrar uno (siga con la pregunta #5)

☐ No tiene empleo, y no está buscando empleo (siga con la pregunta numero #5)

¿Cuántas horas trabaja por semana?_____

¿Cuáles son sus horas de trabajo? ☐ Día (8-5) ☐ Turno de tarde ☐ Turno de Noche

☐ Turno rotante ¿Cambia de turno frecuentemente? ☐ Sí ☐ No

¿Cuánto tiempo dura para llegar a su trabajo? Horas_____ Minutos_____

¿Qué modo de transporte utiliza para llegar a su trabajo? ☐ Auto propio ☐ Con un amigo ☐ Autobús ☐ Caminar

5. Metas Personales

Entrevistador: (Lea lo siguiente.) Lo siguiente son ejemplos de unas metas que otros adultos han dado acerca de sus razones por asistir a un programa de educación familiar. Por favor escuche la lista e indique las dos metas más importantes para usted.

Mis metas son:

☐ Obtener empleo o obtener mejor empleo

☐ Obtener un certificado de GED o diploma de la escuela preparatoria

☐ Obtener la educación necesaria para un entrenamiento vocacional o para continuar mis estudios.

☐ Mejorar mi inglés, escritura y lectura

☐ Obtener mi ciudadanía de los EE.UU.

☐ Para ser mejor padre o madre

☐ Para involucrarme con otros adultos con necesidades similares

☐ Otro (Especifique): ____

6. Actividades en casa y en la comunidad

Entrevistador: (Lea la siguiente lista y marque la respuesta adecuada.) Lo siguiente es una lista de artículos que la gente puede leer. Por favor indique si usted lee estas cosas durante la semana.

Anuncios en el correo……………..	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Cartas, cuentas…………………..	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Cupones…………………………..	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Etiquetas en los alimentos	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Recetas de cocina	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Libros religiosos……………….	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Instrucciones……………………	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Horario del autobús………………	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Letreros o señalamientos………..	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Periódicos…………………………	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Notas del profesor o de la escuela…	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Revistas…………………………...	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas
Libros……………………………..	☐ Sí	☐ No	☐ Inglés	☐ Español	☐ Ambos idiomas

¿Sabe usted donde está su biblioteca local? ☐ Sí ☐ No

¿Tiene usted tarjeta de la biblioteca? ☐ Sí ☐ No

¿Ha visitado usted una biblioteca pública? ☐ Sí ☐ No (No, siga con la pregunta #7)

¿Cuántas veces visitó usted una biblioteca pública? ____

¿Cuando visita usted la biblioteca pública lleva a su hijo/hija? ☐ Sí ☐No

7. Actividades de su hijo/hija

Entrevistador: (Si la respuesta es cero o nunca siga con la pregunta número #8)

¿Cuántas horas de televisión ve su niño/a al día? _____ Horas

¿Qúe programas de televisión ve (Nombre de hijo/hija) regularmente? ________________________

¿En qúe idioma se presentan estos programas? ____

☐ Inglés ☐ Español ☐ Ambos idiomas ☐ Otro (especifique)________________________

8. Durante esta semana, ¿cuántas veces se le ha leído a (Nombre de hijo/hija?)

☐ Ninguna ☐ Una o dos veces ☐ Tres o más ☐ Todos los días

¿En qué idioma le lee a (Nombre de hijo/hija)? ☐ Inglés ☐ Español ☐ Ambos idiomas

☐ Otro idioma (especifique):______________________ ☐ No puedo leer

9. ¿Durante la semana pasada, algún miembro de su familia ha hecho una de las siguientes actividades con *(*Nombre de hijo/hija*)*?

☐ Contarle un cuento

☐ Enseñarle las letras, números, o palabras

☐ Enseñarle canciones o música

☐ Contarle historias de sus antepasados o de las tradiciones

10. Durante el año pasado, ¿Ha hecho alguna de las siguientes actividades con *(*Nombre de hijo/hija*)*?

☐ Visitar un zoológico ó acuario

☐ Visitar un parque local, gimnasio, o piscina para nadar

☐ Asistir a un evento patrocinado por su comunidad, grupo étnico, o religioso

☐ Asistir a una obra de teatro o concierto

11. ¿Hasta qué nivel académico cree usted que *(*Nombre de hijo/hija*)* llegará en sus estudios?

- ☐ Planea terminar la preparatoria (Bachillerato)
- ☐ Obtendrá su diploma de la escuela preparatoria (Bachillerato)
- ☐ Completará algún tipo de entrenamiento vocacional, como comercio ó servicio militar
- ☐ Terminará por lo menos un año de universidad
- ☐ Se graduará de la universidad (Leyes, Veterinario, Medico) maestría o doctorado
- ☐ No sé

12. Experiencias con la escuela primaria de su hijo/hija

Entrevistador: (Si la respuesta a la pregunta es no, no siga con la pregunta, indique "no aplica" para cada una de las siguientes preguntas.) Si su hijo/hija asistió a la escuela primaria el año pasado, ¿participó usted en una de las siguientes actividades?

Para una conferencia o charla informal con el profesor o director ...... ☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No aplica

Para observar actividades en el salón de clase................................. ☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No aplica

Para asistir a un acontecimiento de la escuela en el cual su niño participó, por ejemplo demostración de arte, obra de teatro, o fiesta.. ☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No aplica

Para asistir a las actividades escolares como artística o musical......... ☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No aplica

Para una reunión del comité consultivo para los padres..................... ☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No aplica

Para ofrecerse voluntariamente en la oficina, la cafetería, o la biblioteca... ☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No aplica

Para ofrecerse voluntariamente en el salón de clase.......................... ☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No aplica

Para ofrecerse voluntariamente para algún proyecto o excursión........ ☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No aplica

Otra razón (Describa): ____

Entrevistador: Gracias por su asistencia con esta encuesta. Sus respuestas nos permitirán crear un plan educacional apropiado para las necesidades de su hijo/hija y para sus propias necesidades también.

(Adapted from NCFL, 2004a; NCFL, 2004b; & NCFL, 2004c. Used with permission.)

Sample II–12: Beginning Level Diary/Journal

Purpose: To help students become aware of their daily use of English.

Process: Give this form to the students. Display the handout on an overhead transparency. As a large group activity, walk through the handout, offering suggestions and asking for examples from the students. Have students work on their handout individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

Complete the follow statements:

Today I learned ____.

Today I read _______________________ in English.

Today I spoke English to _____________________________________.

Today I wanted to speak English when ______________________________.

Today I learned some new words. They are ___________________________.

Tomorrow I am going to __________________________________to practice English.

(Adapted from Marshall, 2002. Used with permission.)

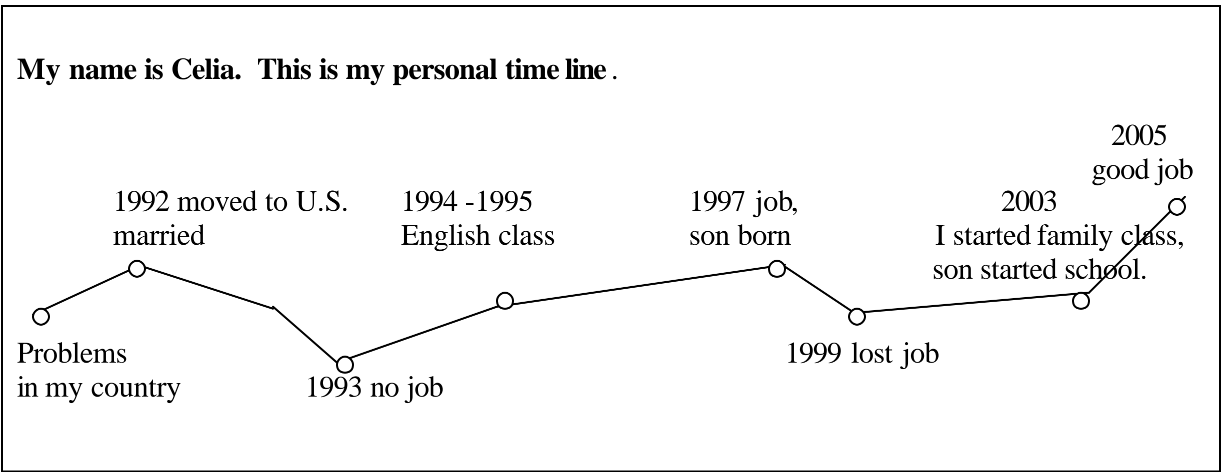
Sample II–13: Intermediate Level Timelines

Purpose: Students may use timelines to reflect on elements of their past and present lives and to express needs and goals for the present and future.

Process: High points on the timeline mark important points and goals met. The low points mark difficult times or unmet goals. To support students in creating timelines use the following process:

- Brainstorm words and phrases and write them on the board (e.g., *came here in 1992*; *married in 1993; started school in 2003; my son is an honor student*).
- Show a model of your own timeline.
- Provide magazines, scissors, markers or crayons, and glue sticks for students to use to design and illustrate their timelines.
- When students have finished their timelines, have them ask and answer questions about each other's timelines (e.g., *When did you come to the United States? What do you want to do in the future?*).

Share the sample on the next page as a model for learners.



(From the classroom of Lynda Terrill, 2004. Used with permission.)

Additional Timeline samples are available at:
http://www.Arlington.K12.Va.Us/Instruct/Ctae/Adult_Ed/REEP/Reepcurriculum/Timelines.Html

Lesson Planning

Adult English language learners generally have limited time to devote to participating in language classes. A good lesson plan is an important tool that focuses both the instructor and the learners on the purpose of the lesson and, if carefully constructed and followed, enables learners to efficiently meet their goals.

A lesson is a unified set of activities that focuses on one teaching objective at a time. A teaching objective states what the learners will be able to do at the end of the lesson. Teachers use the information learned through the needs assessment to develop the objectives (See *Needs Assessment and Learner Self-Evaluation Activity Packet*, page II–5.) For example, if the learners identify "understand written communication from my children's teachers" as a goal, an objective might be "learners will be able to interpret a child's weekly homework form" or "learners will be able to read the notes that their children's teachers send from school."

What Are the Essential Components of a Lesson Plan?

A lesson plan identifies the enabling objectives necessary to meet the lesson objective, the materials and equipment needed, and the activities appropriate to accomplish the objective.

- *Enabling objectives* are the basic skills (language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation) and the life skills (including cultural information) that are necessary to accomplish the objective.
- *Materials and equipment* should be identified and secured well before class time to ensure that activities can be carried out as planned. These may include realia (real-life materials like bus schedules and children's report cards), visual aids, teacher-made handouts, textbooks, flip chart and markers, overhead projector, tape recorder, etc.
- *Activities* generally move from more controlled (e.g., repetition) to a less structured or free format (e.g., interviewing each other). They should be varied in type (e.g., whole group, paired, individual) and modality (e.g., speaking, listening, writing).

a. What Are the Stages of a Lesson?

Good lesson design begins with a review of previously learned material. New material is then introduced, followed by opportunities for learners to practice and be evaluated on what they are learning. In general, a lesson is composed of the following stages:

- Warm-up/Review—encourages learners to use what they have been taught in previous lessons
- Introduction to a new lesson—focuses the learners' attention on the objective of the new lesson and relates the objective to their lives

- Presentation—introduces new information, checks learner comprehension of the new material, and models the tasks that the learners will do in the practice stage
- Practice—provides opportunities to practice and apply the new language or information
- Evaluation—enables the instructor and learners to assess how well they have grasped the lesson

What Are Some Practical Considerations in Planning Lessons?

A good lesson plan involves consideration of more than just what is going to be taught (the objective) and how it will be taught (materials, equipment, and activities). The following elements also need to be thought about and planned for:

- Sequencing—Do the activities move logically so learners are progressively building on what they already know? Do the activities flow well? Are transitions between activities smooth?
- Pacing—Are activities the right length and varied so that learners remain engaged and enthused?
- Gauging difficulty—Do the learners have enough skill and knowledge to do the planned activities? Are the instructions clear?
- Accounting for individual differences—Do the activities allow for learners of varying proficiency levels to receive extra attention they might need, whether below or above the norm? Are all students actively involved?
- Monitoring learner versus teacher talk—What is the balance between learner talk and teacher talk? Does the lesson allow a time for learners to interact, producing and initiating language?
- Timing—Was the amount of time allotted for each part of the lesson sufficient? If the planned lesson finishes early, is there a backup activity ready? If the lesson wasn't completed as planned, how can the next class be adjusted to finish the material?

Most of these aspects of lesson planning are learned by experience, so it is important for the instructor to evaluate how the lesson went at the end of each class period. Ask the following questions:

- What went well? Why?
- What did not go as planned? Why?
- If I had it to do over again, what would I change?

- What have I learned about my students that I can account for in future lesson planning?

A lesson plan acts as a road map for a class session. It identifies the destination (objective of the lesson) and marks out the route (activities for each stage of the lesson). It is an aid for both new and seasoned teachers. New teachers should write down the details of each activity—perhaps even script them. Experience will guide how detailed a lesson plan needs to be. Sharing the plan with learners (e.g., writing the objective and a brief description of activities on the board) keeps both the teacher and the learner focused on where they are going, how they are going to get there, and when they arrive.

Sample Lesson Plans

The lesson plans that follow are broken down into three categories.

1. Lesson Plan Format
2. Beginning Level Lesson Plan
3. Intermediate Level Lesson Plan

References

Arlington Education and Employment Program. (1994). *The REEP curriculum (3rd ed.).* Retrieved May 27, 2004, from http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/instruct.ctae.adult_ed/REEP/reepcurriculum/

Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Longman.

McMullin, M. (1992). *ESL techniques: Lesson planning. Teacher training through video.* White Plains, NY: Longman.

Schaffer, D. & Van Duzer, C. (1984). *Competency-based teacher education workshops in CBE/ESL.* Arlington, VA: Arlington County Public Schools.

Sample II–14: **Lesson Plan Format**

Class ____________________ **Date**______________________

Time:

Lesson Objective:

Language Skills:

Life Skills:

Materials: ***Equipment:***

Stages of the Lesson

Warm Up/Review

Introduction

Presentation

Practice

Evaluation

***Sample II–15:* Lesson Plan: Beginning Level**

Class Beginning **Date**_____________

Time: We are assuming the class period is a minimum of two hours. Times listed for the activities are approximate. Times for each of the activities will vary depending on number of students in the class, literacy level of the class, and other factors. A specific lesson plan will always occur in the context of prior and subsequent lessons and objectives and other class activities.

Lesson Objective**:** Telephone the school office to report a child's absence. (In a telephone conversation role play, students will be evaluated on the following content: giving the name of the child, the child's teacher or class, and the reason for the absence.)

Language Skills
Possessive pronouns
Vocabulary: illnesses; sick, absent, appointment; holidays

Life Skills:
Cultural information: Schools expect to be informed about a child's absence.
Reasons for absence include sickness, doctor or dentist appointment, religious holiday, family emergency (e.g., death in family)

Materials:

- Practice dialogues (handouts, transparency)
- Butcher paper for teacher to draw stick figures of mother on phone and child with thermometer in mouth
- Evaluation Checklist
- Listening grid

Equipment:

- Overhead projector (OHP)
- Practice telephones

Stages of the Lesson:

Warm Up/Review (10 minutes)

From previous lessons, review health problems that children frequently have (e.g., stomachache, sore throat, fever).

Introduction

"Today we are going to talk about calling the school office when your child is sick and not going to school."

Presentation (30 minutes)

1. Show the students the teacher-created stick drawing of mother and child. Ask the learners what is happening.
2. Read dialogue 1 (page II–35) to the students. Ask if they were right about what is happening.
3. Read the dialogue again and ask the following comprehension questions:

    Who is Mrs. Sanchez calling?
    Why is she calling the school?
    Who is sick? What is the matter with her?
    Who is Mrs. Johnson?

4. Have the class practice the dialogue several times, repeating each sentence after you. Then divide the class in half and have one half repeat part A and the other half part B. Switch parts.
5. Show the dialogue in writing (Transparency of Dialogue 1). Have the students read the dialogue. Ask if there are any words they do not know. If so, discuss the meanings.
6. Hand out Dialogue 1 to each student. Have the students work in pairs and practice reading the dialogue.
7. Brainstorm with the whole class other reasons for being absent. Write the reasons on the board. Discuss which are acceptable and which might not be. Have the students practice the dialogue, substituting the reasons for absence.
8. Point out the possessive pronouns "my" and "her." Discuss their meaning and give several other examples (e.g., hold up your book and say, "This is my book." Introduce (or review) my, your, his, her, our, their.
9. Hand out Dialogue 2 (page II-33) to each student and put the transparency of Dialogue 2 on the OHP. Ask the students to circle the possessive pronouns on their copies. Then ask a student to come up and circle them on the transparency. Have the students check their papers. Discuss why the "her" changed to "his."
10. Have the students work in pairs to read the dialogue.

Practice (15 minutes)

1. As a whole class, brainstorm a list of names of the parents' children's schools and teachers.
2. In pairs, have the students practice the dialogues, substituting their own information (i.e., school name, child name, teacher name).

Evaluation (30 minutes)

1. In pairs, have the students create their own dialogues patterned after Dialogues 1 and 2, selecting information from the brainstormed lists on the board.
2. Have each pair come to the front of the room and use the practice telephones to demonstrate their dialogues. Use the Evaluation Checklist (page II-36) to note inclusion of the following information: name of child, name of child's teacher, and reason for the absence.
3. Have the students in the audience listen for the reason for the absence and write it down on the listening grid provided (page II-36). (Note: This is preparation for taking a phone message; it also keeps the listeners focused.)

Teacher Instructions: See *Sample II–15* Lesson Plan: Beginning Level, pages II–31-32, for instructions on how to use these dialogues.

***Sample II–16:* Student Activity Sheets/Transparencies**

Dialogue 1

Telephoning the School Office

A. Good morning. Grover Elementary School.

B. Hello. This is Mrs. Sanchez.

A. How can I help you?

B. My daughter won't be in school today. She has a fever.

A. What's her name?

B. Maria Escobar.

A. Who is her teacher?

B. Mrs. Johnson.

A. Thank you for calling. I hope she feels better tomorrow.

B. Thank you. Goodbye.

A. Bye.

Dialogue 2

Telephoning the School Office

A. Good morning. Grover Elementary School.

B. Hello. This is Mrs. Sanchez.

A. How can I help you?

B. My son won't be in school today. He has a fever.

A. What's his name?

B. Jose Escobar.

A. Who is his teacher?

B. Mrs. Johnson.

A. Thank you for calling. I hope he feels better tomorrow.

B. Thank you. Goodbye.

A. Bye.

Sample II–17: Evaluation Checklist

Teacher Instructions: Use this checklist to evaluate students' practice telephone conversations as described in the preceding Sample Lesson Plan, pages II–33-34.

Student's Name	Child's Name	Teacher/Class	Reason

Sample II–18: Listening Grid

Instructions: Have the students listen for the reason for the absences and write it down in the grid below as described in the preceding Sample Lesson Plan, pages II–33-34.

Parent Name	Reason For Absence
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

Sample II–19: Lesson Plan: Intermediate Level

Class Intermediate ESL **Date**______________________

Time: We are assuming the class period is a minimum of two hours. Times listed for the activities are approximate. Times for each of the activities will vary depending on number of students in the class, literacy level of the class, and other factors. A specific lesson plan will always occur in the context of prior and subsequent lessons and objectives and other class activities. The following is a sample plan using a commercially published textbook. It is included because it contains an activity for interpreting a weekly homework form, a type of document literacy that most parents will need to read and fill out for their children. Also, we want to show that it is not necessary to create all your own activities in your lesson plans; textbook exercises can often be adapted or even used as is to meet your objectives.

Lesson Objective: Interpret elementary school weekly homework form.

Language Skills:

Read a simple chart and explain the following orally:

- Days of the week
- School subjects
- Other vocabulary: daily, weekly, each, comments (new)

Life Skills:

Cultural information: parents are often expected to monitor or help with children's homework

Materials:

- Sample homework forms from local schools
- Transparency of one form
- *A Day in the Life of the Gonzalez Family* (text, page 49 and video scene 6), by C. Van Duzer & M. Burt (1999). Available from the Center for Applied Linguistics, at http://calstore.cal.org/store/ Used with permission.

Equipment:

- Overhead projector
- VCR

Stages of the Lesson:

Warm Up/Review (10 minutes)

Review school subjects by asking learners what their children are studying in school and which subjects and skills are listed on their children's report cards (This is a review of a previous lesson on interpreting report cards).

Review days of the week by asking learners if their children study these every day or only on certain days.

Ask what days the learners study English and what they do other days.

Introduction

"Elementary school teachers often prepare weekly homework forms so parents can help their children with homework. Today we are going to learn how to read and fill out these forms."

Presentation (20 minutes)

1. Play the video, scene 6 (Class has previously seen this during a lesson on permission slips and report cards). Ask the learners what Maria can do to help her daughter do better in school. Elicit the suggestion that she can review the weekly homework sheet.
2. Show the Sample Homework Form A (page II–39) on the Overhead Projector. Have the learners read the form silently and note any words they don't know. Ask what words they noted and write them on the board. Have the learners discuss the meanings. Hand out copies of the form to the students. Then ask the following comprehension questions:
    - What do the children have to do every day?
    - How often do they have a math worksheet?
    - How often do they create a special project?
    - What is Catalina having difficulty doing?
    - What does her mother ask the teacher to do?

Practice (30 minutes)

1. Have the learners open their books to page 49 of the textbook. Have them read the form silently and then work in pairs to answer the discussion questions on the page.
2. Hand out Sample Homework Form B to each pair (page II–40). Have them write questions about this form. Have them exchange papers with another pair and answer the questions that the pairs have written. Discuss as a whole group.
3. As a whole group, have the learners list the homework assignments that their children usually have and write them on the board.
4. In pairs, have the learners create a homework form for their children.

Evaluation (30 minutes)

1. Ask the learners to bring their children's weekly homework forms to the next class and to prepare a short oral presentation that gives information about what their child needs to do for homework that week, how often, and any help needed from family members.
2. During the presentations, evaluate each learner on the inclusion and accuracy of the information stated above.

Sample II–20: **Homework Form A**

(See the sample lesson plan on page II–37-38 for general instructions.)

Directions: Read the form and answer the questions below about it.

Carter Elementary School
Weekly Homework Plan – Fifth Grade

Child's Name *Catalina Gomez*
Teacher *Mr. Peepers*

Students will:	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
• read 20 minutes each night.	X	X	X	X	X
• complete a math sheet (M-W-F).	X		X		X
• complete a spelling activity (Monday-Thursday) and study for a quiz on Thursday night.	X	X	X	X	
• prepare a Science or History project once a month. Instructions will come home 2 weeks before the Friday it is due.	X	X	X	X	

Parents: Please help your child every day. After finishing the homework each night, check the appropriate boxes. Return the folder each Friday. You can write any comments you have below.

Parent Comments *Cati had trouble with the math on Wednesday. Can you explain how to subtract fractions again? Thank you.*

____

Parent Signature *Eliana Flores Gomez* Date: Friday *9/17/04*

- What do the children have to do every day?
- How often do they have a math worksheet?
- How often do they create a special project?
- What is Catalina having difficulty doing?
- What does her mother ask the teacher to do?

Sample II–21: **Homework Form B**

(See the sample lesson plan on page II–37-38 for general instructions)

Directions: With a partner, write questions about this form. Then exchange papers with another pair and answer the questions that the pairs have written. Discuss as a whole group.

Carter Elementary School Child's Name ______________________________

Weekly Homework Plan –Third Grade Teacher __________________________________

Students will:	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
• read 20-30 minutes each night.					
• complete a math sheet (M-T-W-Th).					
• complete a nightly spelling activity and study for a quiz on Thursday night.					
• prepare a Book project once a month. Instructions will come home 2 weeks before the Friday it is due.					

Parent Comments ____

____

____

Parent Signature ______________________________ Date: Friday __________________________

Activities to Promote Interaction and Communication

Adult English language learners at all proficiency levels, including literacy- and beginning-level learners, need to speak and understand spoken English for a variety of reasons. Immigrant adults need English for daily life to communicate with the doctor, the school, the community, and the workplace. Learners at all proficiency levels *can* communicate, and they appreciate being encouraged and challenged to further their skills. They participate in interactive, communicative activities in all facets of the class—from ice-breaking activities, needs assessment, and goal-setting to life-skills, phonics, and spelling. This is especially true where there is a strong classroom community that supports natural language production.

What are Communicative Activities?

Communicative activities include any activities that encourage and require a learner to speak with and listen to other learners, as well as with people in the program and community. Communicative activities have real purposes: to find information, break down barriers, talk about self, and learn about the culture. Even when a lesson is focused on developing reading or writing skills, communicative activities should be integrated into the lesson. Furthermore, research on second language acquisition (SLA) suggests that more learning takes place when students are engaged in relevant tasks within a dynamic learning environment rather than in traditional teacher-led classes (Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003).

Benefits of Communicative Activities

Some immigrants, such as parents, elders, or people who work in isolated environments (like housekeepers and babysitters) may feel lonely and experience depression or have low self-esteem. They may begin to feel that they will never learn English or never feel comfortable in the United States. Offering well-designed and well-executed communicative activities can help turn the English classroom into an active, safe, and enjoyable place where literacy- and beginning-level learners can learn what they need and want to learn.

Challenges

Most English language learners have had access to some schooling in their native countries. Their school was probably very teacher-directed. Learners were expected to be quiet and listen to the teacher and then, when asked, to respond to the teacher in unison with the one correct answer. Because of this, some adult English language learners may be initially disconcerted when their English teacher begins asking them to get up and move around, work in pairs or groups, and talk to one another. It also may be difficult for learners to realize that there can be more than one correct response to a question and many ways to ask a question. However, many, if not most, learners adapt and prosper with increased interactivity and independence.

Tips for Maximizing the Effectiveness of Activities

Communicative activities such as those described below can be used successfully with many class levels. They are especially crucial for literacy- and beginning-level classes as vehicles to move learners toward independent and confident learning. To make these activities as useful as possible there are a few things to remember:

- Keep teacher talk to a minimum. Explain as much as possible by demonstrating the process, explaining in different ways, and repeating. Don't worry if every learner doesn't understand every part of an activity. Move on when the majority of the learners get the idea, and then circulate and help as needed—unobtrusively. One way to gauge the success of a class for English language learners is to observe how much or how little the students are depending on the teacher. The more learners are working independently, in pairs, or in small groups, the more successful the class.
- Literacy- and beginning-level learners, as well as those at intermediate and advanced levels, are highly competent individuals. They may lack English and (for some) school skills, and it is the teacher's job to help them with that. These adults have successfully weathered many difficulties to get to class. Give them the credit they deserve.
- Have fun. Communicative activities are designed to be lively, interactive, and fun. When people are comfortable they are likely to learn more. An active, cooperative class is a class where a great deal of learning—social, cultural, and linguistic—is evident.

Communicative activities provide opportunities for learners to use the language with one another and with people in the community. The activities included on the following pages can be used with literacy- and beginning-level learners.

Sample Activities

The following activities provide opportunities for interaction and communication:

Activity II–1: Class Survey
Activity II–2: Conversation Grid
Activity II–3: Line Dialogue
Activity II–4: Information Gap
Activity II–5: Language Experience Approach
Activity II–6: Games

Reference

Moss, D., & Ross-Feldman, L. (2003). *Second-language acquisition in adults: From research to practice*. Retrieved December 14, 2004 from http://www.cal.org/caela/digests/SLA.htm

Activity II–1: Class Survey

Highlights: Class surveys are fun and not overly challenging. They are very effective as ice-breaking activities, especially at the beginning of a course. They also let learners know that class will be more than sitting at a desk and copying the teacher's words. It is important to do something with the survey information. Otherwise, there is no intrinsic reason for gathering the information. Therefore, plan ways to process the information. **Note:** Make sure the survey questions are appropriate to the class. For example, if everyone in the group is from Mexico, then asking, "What country are you from?" will not be pertinent. Similarly, asking a group of elderly seniors, "How many of your children go to school?" may not be appropriate. Watch for American cultural taboos about age, money, religion, etc. Also, make sure not to inadvertently ask about an uncomfortable topic.

Objective: Learners gather information about a particular topic. They increase proficiency and confidence in asking one or more questions at the same time as they are increasing graphic literacy skills.

Context: This class survey activity is especially useful for beginning levels because not much information needs to be asked or recorded and only one or two questions and answers need to be learned. Surveys can be used with higher levels if more complex questions and answers are required. Surveys are suitable for general ESL classes, but can also be tailored to a workplace (see examples that follow).

Estimated time: Time varies according to how much information is gathered. In the literacy- or beginning-level class, a survey might consist of one question that simply requires students to ask and record the name of every person in class (either first or last, but probably not both at once). In a more advanced class, a survey might require students to ask and record the names of television shows watched and time spent watching these shows in the past week. In both of these cases, the time to do the survey will vary according to how many learners there are in the class, and how long it takes for the spelling and the recording to take place. **Note:** If information gathering takes more than 20-30 minutes, you might consider debriefing during the next class session.

Materials: The teacher needs to make a survey form so learners can easily ask the question or questions and record answers. If the information is going to be gathered into a simple bar graph or pie chart, or recorded on flip chart paper, this needs to be ready in advance.

Procedure:

1. Build on what learners already know (e.g., the common question, "Where are you from?"). Therefore, pre-teach and practice the questions and vocabulary needed to answer the questions. For example, in a class where learners are collecting information about native countries, record the names of those countries in advance so that students have the information available to them.

2. Hand out the survey forms and explain the task to learners. (They need to walk around the room asking everyone the question and recording the answers).

3. Model the procedures with one or two learner volunteers and check comprehension of instructions. For example, ask, "What are the questions on the survey form?" "How many people will you talk to today?"

4. Once learners begin to complete the survey, monitor the process and be ready to assist learners if they ask for help. **Note:** Don't be alarmed if you see someone copying from another's paper or someone writing information down right on the questioner's sheet. The main idea is to get

authentic communication going, and it is good for people to help each other. Do watch out for one person overpowering a quieter or less comfortable person; this would defeat the purpose of the exercise and be counter to the egalitarian structure of the class.

5. Discuss the information with the class. Using the information from the surveys (see *Sample Surveys*, page II–45), you can ask questions such as, "How many people are from El Salvador? Bosnia? China?" or: "How many people watched TV more than 10 hours last week? What shows were watched the most frequently?" You can have learners work in small groups to categorize information, create graphs, or write sentences summarizing the information.

Evaluation: Circulate and listen to the questions and answers. Collect the information sheets to look for writing issues.

Note: The sample survey on the next page would typically be used at the beginning of a class cycle. Not only is it important for every student to know all the other learners' names (and at least an approximation of the pronunciation), but asking each other the question "What is your first name?" helps learners begin to navigate first name, family name issues, as a real life skill. Furthermore, in all facets of life learners must spell their names so they need to be familiar with the phrase "spell it, please." As learners spell their names and hear others spell theirs, they may solidify their alphabetic knowledge. Particularly with native Spanish speakers, understanding and applying the changes in vowel sounds from Spanish to English may take some time, but this survey provides a good start.

After the learners have written down all the names (including their own names), there are several ways to process the information:

1. The teacher can pass out another blank list and ask learners to work in pairs or small groups to alphabetize the first names and then to transcribe them again in alphabetical order. As the teacher demonstrates the process using several examples, the learners are continuing to memorize their classmates' names at the same time they are working on the basic skill of alphabetizing. Learners will be much more interested in this activity than if they were asked to alphabetize a list of words that had no meaning for them.

2. As an alternative, the teacher and the class can work through the alphabetizing as a group activity at the board or on an overhead or poster.

In the same class period or in the next class session, the teacher can demonstrate that she knows everyone's first name (a teacher needs to know all of the learners' names and be able to pronounce them by the end of the second or third class meeting). Then, teacher can ask for volunteers to see if they can say each classmate's name. This can be challenging, but several learners usually do volunteer and successfully remember all the names. This is an important activity because it validates skills that many literacy-level learners employ—careful observation and good memory. Follow-up activities might include conducting the survey using the last names, often a slightly more difficult task or reviewing questions in a line dialogue (page II–48).

Sample II–22: Class Survey (Beginning Level)

Teacher Instructions: See page II–44, #5.

Name ______________________________

Date ______________________________

Directions:
Please ask the question of **every** student in class.
Write down the names.

What is your first name? (Spell it, please)	**Where are you from?**
________________________________	________________________________
________________________________	________________________________
________________________________	________________________________
________________________________	________________________________

Sample II–23: Class Survey (Intermediate to Advanced Levels)

Teacher Instructions: See page II–44, #5.

Name ______________________________

Date ______________________________

Directions:
Please ask the questions of **every** student in class.
Write down the answers they give you.

What is your name?	**How many hours did you watch TV last week?**
________________________________	________________________________
________________________________	________________________________
________________________________	________________________________
________________________________	________________________________

Activity II–2: Conversation Grid

Highlights: The power of using conversation grid activities is that learners are involved in authentic, independent, and cooperative conversation without direct teacher involvement. These grids can be used with any topic as teaching or assessment activities. Learners usually enjoy them greatly.

Objective: Learners practice and increase knowledge of language structures (such as what, when, where, and why questions and their typical answers), vocabulary (as related to a particular topic such as “on the job”), and cultural aspects related to a topic. They ask questions, listen to answers, and record information on the grid.

Context: This activity is suitable for general ESL classes as well as specific classes such as family literacy or workplace classes.

Estimated time: The time varies (see explanation for Activity II–1, page II–43: Class Survey), but usually ranges between 20 and 30 minutes.

Materials: Draw a large grid on the board or have an overhead transparency with a sample of the grid to explain the activity. Learners need conversation grids to record answers. (See examples that follow. Grids can have complete questions (e.g., What is your job now? What do you like to do in your free time?) or cue phrases (e.g., job in United States; hobbies).

Procedure:

1. Review language structures and key vocabulary that have been previously taught and are needed to successfully complete this activity. The review should be verbal and written with plenty of input from the learners. For example, if one of the questions is going to be about native country, with learner input, get all the names of countries up on the board or on flip chart paper so it will be easily accessible when learners begin to work on their own grids.
2. Hand out the grids and explain the task: “Today you’re going to interview five classmates. You will write their answers to your questions on this form.”
3. Discuss conversation questions, e.g., “What is your job now?” “What do you like to do in your free time? What else do you like to do?”
4. Talk about possible answers such as *construction worker, play soccer, watch soccer on TV.*
5. Model the task with one or two learner volunteers. It’s important to model several answers and questions so that learners know that full sentence answers such as “I am a construction worker” or short answers such as “construction worker” are both acceptable. **Note:** As in all activities, modeling correct answers to issues such as “Her name” vs. “she name” is more effective than giving a big explanation about the correct grammar. This is especially true with formulaic phrases that use structures not yet discussed in class.
6. Check comprehension of instructions. For example, ask, “How many questions are you asking each classmate?” “How many people will you speak with today?”
7. Once learners begin the activity, monitor the process and be ready to assist learners if they ask for help. **Note:** Some will finish only one conversation while others may do several. That’s okay; people process, learn, and interact at different rates.
8. When the general buzz quiets down, it is time to stop the activity. Discuss the information with the class, for example, “Tell the class something you learned about one of your classmates.” You can tabulate information on a master grid or have learners work in small groups to do a tabulation of their grid information.

Evaluation: Evaluation is ongoing and informal. The teacher can participate or just observe the conversations to note communicative abilities (as well as observe writing abilities from the grid). It is particularly useful as you can watch individual learners progress from week to week.

Teacher Instructions: See page II–46 for instructions on using these grids.

***Sample II–24:* Conversation Grid**
Personal Identification (All Levels)

What is your first name? (Spell it please)	Where are you from?	What is your address?
Rosario	Mexico	701 N. Oak St.

***Sample II–25:* Conversation Grid**

Work (Intermediate and Advanced Levels)

What's your name?	What's your job now?	How long have you had this job?	What was your job in your home country?
Jose Gomez	construction worker	5 months	engineer

***Sample II–26:* Conversation Grid**
Free Time (Intermediate and Advanced Levels)

What's your name?	What do you like to do in your free time?	When do you have free time?	What did you do in your free time in your country?
Hajib Mansoor	play soccer	on Sunday afternoon	play soccer and go fishing

Activity II–3: *Line Dialogue*

Highlights: This activity is good for a change of pace and gets learners out of their chairs interacting with everyone in the class. A great deal of peer teaching and friendly conversation can happen throughout this activity.

Objectives: Learners get intensive (repeated many times) practice using the targeted language in short dialogues. Learners may get to know one another in an atmosphere where peer teaching is naturally supported.

Context: This activity can be used in all levels or multilevel classes. It is suitable for general ESL classes as well as specific classes such as workplace or family literacy classes. This activity works best for classes with at least 10-12 learners.

Estimated Time: The first time this activity is used, the explanation may require several repetitions and demonstrations. Afterwards, line dialogues should take no more than 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, the activity may become a little tedious.

Materials: Learners in one line have **Cue Cards** that are used to elicit responses from learners in the other line. Cue cards can contain word or picture clues for responses to questions. Realia (authentic items) are also effective for beginning level classes. If learners are using familiar questions such as "What is your name?" or "How are you?" no cue card prompts may be necessary. For higher level students, cue cards will probably not be needed. Questions for higher level students come from the targeted language. "What would you do if you won one million dollars?" or "What would you like to be doing 10 years from now?" might be questions asked and answered in a line dialogue with intermediate or advanced learners.

Procedure:

1. Pre-teach dialogue.
2. Learners form two lines facing each other. Hand out cue cards to learners in LINE A. These cue cards are used to elicit responses from learners in LINE B.
3. LINE A remains stationary, repeating the same questions to every learner in Line B. Learners in LINE B listen to the question, look at the cue cards, respond to the question, and then move to the right and face another learner in Line A. All pairs talk at once. The last person in Line B moves to the beginning of the line. The activity continues until everyone in Line A has asked a question to everyone in Line B. **Example:** Task: Learners will identify body parts from visuals. Dialogue: A: What's wrong? B: My back hurts.

Note: There are a variety of ways to set up a line dialogue. There may be only one line asking questions, or both lines can ask questions. As discussed above, cue cards may or may not be used. In classes where learners have some comfort and familiarity with everyday language, learners decide on their own what questions to ask. In all cases, one line remains stationary and the other moves.

Evaluation: This activity provides the teacher with an excellent opportunity to unobtrusively evaluate learners; once learners understand how to conduct a line dialogue, they usually have so much fun that they don't pay attention to the teacher at all. During this activity, the teacher can observe learners' speaking and listening skills, vocabulary knowledge, question formation or clarification skills, and even comfort level using English.

Extension activities: To give learners an opportunity to speak English with others, two small classes could participate in the line dialogue. These classes could be at approximately the same level or the less advanced class could comprise the stationary line and practice the questions in advance.

(Adapted from the *REEP ESL Curriculum for Adults* at http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/instruct/ctae/adult_ed/REEP/reepcurriculum/linedialogues.html Used with permission.)

Activity II–4: *Information Gap*

Highlights: In this activity two learners share information to complete a task. In one-way gap activities, one learner has all the information (e.g., one learner describes a picture and the other learner draws it). In two-way gap activities, both learners have some information and must share it with the other to complete the task. Because this activity usually combines speaking and listening with reading and writing, all the skills are practiced.

Objective: Learners find and share information by asking and answering questions in order to complete a task.

Context: This activity can be used in all levels or with multilevel groups. It is suitable for general ESL classes as well as specific classes such as family literacy or workplace classes.

Estimated time: The time varies, but usually ranges between 20 and 35 minutes.

Materials: The teacher prepares a master handout based on information, language structures, and vocabulary the students have been working on. Then, the teacher deletes pieces of information on two sets of handouts. For example, Handout "A" will have some information deleted that handout "B" will provide. Handout "B" will have other pieces of information deleted that handout "A" will provide. For example, in a workplace context the master could be a weekly schedule or list of work tasks. The teacher can make one side more challenging than the other, to meet the needs of learners at different levels.

Procedure:

1. Pre-teach and practice vocabulary and structures for the particular task. Learners should also be familiar with question and answer formulas (e.g., "What time is ___" and "It's at ___"), and ways to ask for clarification (e.g., "Excuse me, can you repeat," or "I'm sorry, I don't understand"). These can be introduced in the beginning days of a class, and recycled, adapted, and extended over time.
2. Explain the information-gap procedures by modeling a sample gap activity with an able volunteer from the class.
3. Have learners work with a partner. One learner in each pair gets Handout "A" and the other gets Handout "B". Ask two learners to model the asking and answering of questions in the gap activity before the whole class begins the activity.

Notes: For a multilevel class you can make the "A" form more difficult than the "B" form. Be sure to pass out the papers to the appropriate person. The first time you do this activity, some learners may be somewhat confused, but as you reuse this activity in other contexts, learners will feel comfortable. Ask learners not to show each other the forms, but don't worry when that occurs.

4. Learners ask and answer questions and record answers until both form "A" and form "B" have been completed.
5. Ask learners to compare their papers with each other.
6. To complete the activity as a whole group, you can ask volunteers to come up to the board or overhead to fill in information they've gathered from their partner. This helps solidify the knowledge and gives some slower learners or pairs a chance to catch up and check their work without stress.

Evaluation: Walking around the room observing learners during the activity will let you know how well individual learners use and understand English in the activity.

Variations: The handouts may be menus, store ads, maps, pictures, or charts, as well as readings.

Extension activities: Let learners create their own information gap activities.

Sample II–27: **Two-Way Information Gap Activity (Intermediate Level)**

Student A:	**Student B:**
Read the story to your partner. When you find a blank _______, ask your partner for help. The Pilgrims came from (1) ___________. They came on the ship, the Mayflower, in the winter of (2) ________. Before these immigrants landed on shore at Plymouth Rock, they signed a document to form a simple government called the (3) _________________________.	**Listen to the story. Help your partner with words on the list.** 1 England 2. 1620 3. The Mayflower Compact
Listen to the story. Help your partner with words on the list. 1. Atlantic Ocean 2. Squanto 3. Massasoit **Now, take turns reading the entire story.**	**Read the story to your partner. When you find a blank _______, ask your partner for help.** The Pilgrims had a difficult time because many were sick from crossing the (1) _______________, the weather was very cold, and they had only a little food. Native Americans including (2) ____________ and (3)____________ helped the immigrants by giving them food and advice. **Now take turns reading the entire story.**

(Adapted from the *REEP ESL Curriculum for Adults* at http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/instruct/ctae/adult_ed/REEP/reepcurriculum/informationgap.html and used with permission.)

Activity II–5: Language Experience Approach

Highlights: The language experience approach to instruction builds learners' literacy skills as their personal experiences are transcribed and become reading material for them. In this type of activity, spoken language and written language are linked. A language experience story can be effective for class community building. It also provides reading material for beginning level learners whose English oral skills exceed their literacy skills. Follow-up activities can include using the class-generated text to teach explicit literacy skills through activities that require learners to select words from the story for vocabulary, spelling, or sound-symbol correspondence activities. The text can also be used to review a grammar point, such as sequence of tenses, word order, or pronoun referents (see Cloze Activity, page II–53).

Objective: To record learners' own ideas and oral language and use the stories to increase literacy skills.

Context: This activity can be very effective in literacy- and beginning-level classes where most of the students have limited writing skills. It is suitable for general ESL classes as well as specific classes such as workplace or family literacy classes. It is not usually used in intermediate level or above classes.

Estimated time: The time varies widely depending on whether the shared activity the class writes about was a lengthy activity such as a class field trip or a shorter activity such as the shared viewing of a photograph in class. The core of the language experience approach—the group telling process while the teacher writes down the learners' words—may take a short time, between 10-20 minutes. This document then can be used in multiple ways over time (e.g., for building sight vocabulary, spelling practice, listening to dictation, or learning basic grammar points, like personal pronouns or the verb "to be").

Materials: You will need the shared experience of the learners, or the "prompt." In addition, you will need a chalkboard or flip chart to record what students say. (See sample language experience activities below.)

Procedure:

1. First, learners need to share an experience, such as going to a museum exhibit, the local fair, or the grocery store. Sharing an evocative photograph or picture story or watching a video could also provide the prompt.
2. After the shared experience, elicit the story of the experience by asking learners questions and encouraging learners to contribute to the story. **Note:** Each member of the whole group can make a comment. In some groups it might be most effective to go around the room in order, assuming that all will respond. You can also ask for volunteers and in more multilevel groups, the more proficient or confident learners might share first, giving the other learners more time to think and to pattern their responses after the other students.
3. Write down what learners say. **Note:** There are opposing ideas about how a language experience approach activity should be conducted. Some teachers say that, to be authentic, the teacher must record exactly what each learner says, even if it is not correct. Other teachers say that a teacher should model a learner's words correctly (e.g. changing incorrect number, pronoun reference, or verb form) because students want to use English correctly and that writing down mistakes reinforces the mistake. Writing the learners' words correctly often better serves the learners' needs and wishes.
4. After recording the story, read it aloud to the group and give the group an opportunity to edit or revise (adding or eliminating information).

5. Provide learners with an opportunity to read the story. They can read it in unison, or take turns reading it out loud.
6. Use the story to develop reading skill-building activities. For example, you can make sentence strips and have learners put the sentences in order. To build vocabulary sight words, you can create cloze activities in which learners fill in the blanks with key words. See sample language experience approach activities below.

Evaluation: The sharing of the experience and the language experience approach activity itself can give the teacher an idea about how comfortable learners are feeling with the class, other learners, and the topic. An individual's part of the group story can give a little bit of information about oral proficiency. Teachers can monitor reading and writing skills as learners complete follow-up activities.

Extension activities: Learners can write a letter to someone they know telling about the experience in their own words.

(Adapted from the REEP Curriculum at http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/instruct/ctae/adult_ed/REEP/reepcurriculum/lessonplanform.html and used with permission.)

Sample II–28: Language Experience Story and Follow-up Activities (High Beginner Level)

Yesterday our class went to the National Zoo in Washington, DC. At 9:00 AM we took the Metro and got off at the Woodley Park stop. We walked about three blocks from the Metro to the National Zoo. First, we saw the giraffes and elephants. Then we saw the seals. Finally we saw the pandas. The pandas were so cute! We stayed at the National Zoo for two hours. At 11:30 AM we took the Metro back to school.

Sample II–28a: Strip Story

Directions to the teacher: Cut the following sentences into strips. Give each pair or group of students a sentence. Suggest that the students read each of the strips aloud to start. Then, tell them to put the story back in order without looking at the original. Tell them to notice words that tell you when something happens, such as "first," "then," and "finally." When the students are ready, they can read the story to you, each group or pair reading their sentence strips in order. Discuss with them why they put the sentences in the order they did.

We stayed at the National Zoo for two hours.

Then we saw the seals.

The pandas were so cute!

At 11:30 AM we took the Metro back to school.

Yesterday our class went to the National Zoo in Washington, DC.

At 9:00 AM we took the Metro and got off at the Woodley Park stop.

We walked about three blocks from the Metro to the National Zoo.

First, we saw the giraffes and elephants.

Finally we saw the pandas.

Sample II–28b: Cloze Activity—Practicing Prepositions

Directions: Read the paragraph about our trip to the National Zoo. Then use the words from the list below the paragraph to fill in the missing words. Use each word just one time.

Yesterday our class went to the National Zoo ____ Washington, DC. ___ 9:00 AM we took the Metro and got off at the Woodley Park stop. We walked three blocks ___ the Metro to the National Zoo. First we saw the giraffes and elephants. Then we saw the seals. Finally we saw the pandas. The pandas were so cute! We stayed at the National Zoo _______ two hours. At 11:30 AM we took the Metro back _____school.

at *in* *to* *from* *for*

Activity II–6: Games

Highlights: There are several kinds of games that learners enjoy in the classroom. Games give learners opportunities to use the language they are learning in non-threatening, enjoyable contexts. Teachers can adapt standard games like *Bingo* or make up their own simplified versions of games based on TV game shows like *Jeopardy* or *The Price is Right*.

Context: Games like *Bingo*, *Concentration*, *The Price is Right,* or *Go Fish* are appropriate for literacy- and beginning-level classes including general ESL, family literacy, and workplace. Spelling bees may work with beginning or intermediate classes. Team competitions or more complicated games such as *Jeopardy* (where students are given answers and have to ask questions) can be appropriate at any level. However, as with any instructional activity, students need to be told why they are doing the activity (for example, to practice asking "what," "when," "where," and "why" questions, or to practice the letters of the alphabet). Otherwise, they may think the activity is not serious and may be hesitant to participate.

Estimated time: At least initially, it may take some time for students to learn the rules of the game. After a few practices, however, the games should take less time. However, games should not be overused. For example, in an intensive class of 10-15 hours a week, learners might want to play *Bingo* or another game for an end of the week treat (that reinforces the week's new vocabulary). In a non-intensive class of four hours a week, students might not want to give up their learning time to play a game.

Materials: Items vary according to the game, but many can be homemade. Some ESL specific games are sold by educational companies, and the rules of some standard games can be adapted for classroom use.

Objectives: Adult students learn to understand a variety of spoken (and written) instructions and how to make appropriate conversation in social groups, including asking for clarification and politely disagreeing. Specific goals such as learning numbers or new vocabulary are associated with particular games.

Procedure: Luckily, most students are familiar with game-playing and may know the same or similar games as the ones you introduce. The best way to introduce a game is hands-on. That is, demonstration is more effective than lengthy explanation.

Practice: Learners work in groups or pairs to play the game. There may be some confusion and game rules may evolve, but as long as learners are participating, the activity is useful.

Evaluation: If the adult English language learner can successfully and happily participate, the activity has been successful. For example, in bingo learners are able to identify letters and numbers correctly, and in *Jeopardy*, they are able to ask questions.

Extension activities: Games like *Concentration* can be played alone at home for practice. Other games like *Go Fish* can be played with friends or family.

Sample II–29: Jeopardy Game (Intermediate and Advanced Levels)

Directions to the teacher: After you have written the grid below on the board, cover each box with a piece of paper that has a money designation (so that Cherries is covered with $100, Apples, $200, and so on until $500). Covering the items makes it "real" when the student says: "I want fruit for $300." It also ensures that students do not know which food item they will need to use in the sentence before they make their selection.

Sample "Jeopardy" Game Board

Fruit	**Vegetables**	**Meat**	**Dairy products**	*Some or Any*
cherries	onion	fish	yogurt	pasta
apples	beans	hot dogs	milk	turkey
fruit	chili pepper	beef	butter	green beans
orange	potato	chicken	ice cream	rice
banana	squash	sausage	cheese	hamburgers

Jeopardy style activity: This activity will be similar to the TV program. The contestants can choose an answer word from the board, and then must respond using a question form correctly. (If you are not familiar with the TV show, it might be helpful to watch, although this activity is just a rough approximation of the show.)

The board shown above gives students practice informing appropriate questions related to "How many," "how much," "some," "a little," "too much," and "a few," and count and non-count nouns.

Examples:

1. **Correct question**

   Host: Choose a category, (Contestant A).

   Contestant A: I'll take fruit for $100 (or may (or can) I have fruit for $100?)

   {fruit for $100 box is uncovered by host; it's cherries}

   Contestant A: Do we need some cherries?

   Judges: That's correct!

   Host: Good job; choose again, (Contestant A).

OR

2. **Incorrect question:**

   Contestant A: Do we need much cherries? (should be "many cherries")

   Judges: Sorry, the question is not correct.

   Host: Okay, Contestant B, your turn

Process:

- Before students come to class, write the categories and answers on the board (from the grid) and cover up the words with pieces of papers that say $100, $200, etc.
- Set up the room with a place for three contestants where they can see the board. Instead of a buzzer, each person could have a bell to signal when he or she knows the answer.
- Ask students whether they have watched *Jeopardy*. If someone says yes, ask that person to explain the show.
- Explain that the class is going to conduct a *Jeopardy* game based on food words, count and non-count things, and how much and how many. (Prizes are not necessary, or you could adapt by giving monopoly/play money for each correct response and give the high amount winner a gag gift or candy bar, etc.)
- Ask for three volunteers as contestants and one to play the host (Alex Trebek), and one to be a timekeeper using a stopwatch or a watch with a second hand. Also ask for three volunteers to be the judge's panel—to tell who was first, and whether the answer is correct (you can override the judges if necessary).
- Rules: (Explain these a couple of times; it's probably better to have the students understand orally—so they don't start worrying about the written language.)
  - Contestant with the last name closest to "A" begins.
  - That person chooses a category and questions (e.g., I'll take meat for $100, Alex).
  - That person has 30 seconds to respond (adapt time as seems appropriate), if that person can't answer correctly, another person can ring in for another 30 seconds (you can adapt these specific rules to your own situation).
  - Judges will decide whether the question is correctly formed and reasonable.
  - Audience (the rest of the class) is not allowed to call out the answers!

Activities to Promote Reading Development

Adult English language learners come from diverse backgrounds and have widely differing literacy experiences in their first languages. A number of factors influence the ways their English literacy develops and the progress they make in learning to read English. These factors include level of literacy in their first language and in English, oral language proficiency in English, educational background, personal goals for learning English, and the structure and writing system of their first language. These factors must be taken into account in all areas of program planning, learner placement in classes, and instructional approaches. This section looks at types of native language literacy and the reading process.

What Types of Native Language Literacy Might Learners Have?

Six types of first language literacy can be described: *preliterate* (learners come from cultures where the native language is not written or is in the process of being written); *nonliterate* (learners come from cultures where literacy is available, but they have not had sufficient access to literacy, often because of their socio-economic or political status); *semiliterate* (learners have had access to literacy in their native culture, but because of their socio-economic status or political or educational situation, they have not achieved a high level of literacy in their native language); *non-alphabet literate* (learners are literate in a language with a non-alphabetic script [e.g., Chinese or Japanese]); *non-Roman alphabet literate* (learners are literate in a language with a non-Roman alphabetic script [e.g., Arabic, Greek, Korean, Russian, or Thai]); and *Roman-alphabet literate* (learners have literacy in a language such as French, Italian, or Croatian, which use the same alphabet as English). Teachers need to know the type and amount of literacy learners have in their native language, because this will affect the rate and the way in which they learn to read in English.

What Do Learners Need to Know to Read English?

Researchers working with adult English language learners have focused primarily on the following component skills of reading development: phonological processing, vocabulary knowledge, syntactic processing, and background knowledge. (See *English Language and Literacy Learning: Research to Practice*, page IV–1, for discussion.)

Phonological processing (or decoding) involves interpreting written letters as sounds and combining letters correctly into words. This skill includes awareness of individual speech sounds and the ways they are represented in print, and the way that language is represented in print by letters, words, syllables, and word breaks. For example, in the sentence "My sister bought a new dress," the sound /b/ in the word *bought* is represented by the letter "b" and the sound /a/ is represented by the letters "ough;" *sister* divides into two syllables—*sis/ter*; and the sentence is composed of six discrete words.

Vocabulary knowledge has been found to have a strong effect on reading comprehension. The components of vocabulary knowledge include **breadth** (the number of words a learner knows) and **depth** (the amount of knowledge a learner has about a specific word).

- Breadth of vocabulary knowledge is important to English language learners, as they frequently know far fewer English words than native speakers and find themselves at a disadvantage, particularly in academic contexts (Folse, 2004; Qian, 1999).
- Depth of word knowledge includes knowing how to pronounce and spell the word; what the root of the word is, whether there are prefixes or suffixes attached to the word, and what part of speech the word is; how the word is used in sentences; what connotations the word has; whether there are multiple meanings of the word; and in what contexts the word is used.

For example, deep knowledge of the word *rider* means knowing how to spell the word, knowing that the "i" is pronounced /ay/, knowing that the word is a person or thing (a noun), knowing that because the word has the suffix "er" it refers to a person or thing that rides, and knowing that the word might appear in a sentence such as "There was no rider on the horse." Deeper knowledge of the word means knowing that *rider* has other meanings, and that another fairly common use of the word is to refer to an additional clause or piece of legislation that is attached to another bill without being related to the original piece of legislation. Still deeper knowledge of the word would mean knowing that in this case, the connotation of the word may be somewhat negative, as can be seen in the sentence "The senator was famous for adding *riders* that were unrelated to the bills to which they were attached, but which would bring industry and money to his state."

Syntactic processing involves understanding the structures of the language and making connections among words in a sentence or sentences in a text. For example, learners need to learn the forms that signal different word meanings (e.g., *-ed* form of verbs to denote past tense and passive voice), forms that change word meanings (e.g., prefixes such as *non, in, im,* and *un* that make words negative, and words that bring cohesion to a text (e.g., *however, therefore, nevertheless*).

Background knowledge facilitates reading comprehension. Readers generally understand texts more easily if they are familiar with the topics covered and the genres and text structures involved. Especially for beginning-level readers, readings about culturally familiar topics should be selected, and teachers should build on ideas and concepts from learners' cultures and personal experiences whenever possible. For example, prior to reading about schooling in the United States, the teacher might ask learners about schooling in their home countries, what ages children go to school, how classes are divided, and what kind of testing or assessment is used. The teacher might then move to a discussion of what the students know about schooling in the United States, asking similar questions. Important vocabulary words (especially those in the reading) such as *grades, assessment, testing, classes*, can be written on the board as they come up during the pre-reading discussion.

Reading Lessons

The four reading components described are integrated into a reading lesson, but they may not all be practiced in any one day. A reading lesson may cover several class periods. Throughout the lesson, the teacher should be aware of gaps in the learners' skills and plan activities that give them the practice they need. For example, if students are having difficulties comprehending past tense verbs in a reading, the teacher would then include activities to practice using *-ed* to form past tense (syntactic processing); if students demonstrate difficulties in pronouncing the past tense marker, the teacher could then include activities to practice the pronunciations of *-ed* (phonological awareness).

The following activities give examples of reading activities that can be used with learners who are preliterate, those who have minimal reading skills in any language, and those who have some literacy in English. As always, it is up to teachers to adapt the activities for use with the learners in their classes.

Sample Set II–30: Techniques for Teaching Reading to Beginning Literacy Learners

Sample Set II–31: Techniques for Teaching Vocabulary

Sample II–32: Beginning Reading Lesson Plan

Sample II–33: Multilevel Reading Lesson Plan

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Sample Set II–30: Techniques for Teaching Reading to Beginning Literacy Learners

Pre-literacy Reading Readiness Skills Development: Pre-alphabetics

Adult English language learners who have little or no literacy in English may have little or no literacy ability in their native language. They may come from countries that have no written alphabet, or where an alphabet is just being developed, such as with Somali Bantu. If there is a written tradition in their country, the alphabet may be written from right to left, as is the Arabic alphabet; or the writing may not be alphabetic, as with Chinese languages (Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003). This means that, before they can receive instruction in alphabetics skills including phonological processing and decoding, learners may need to develop pre-literacy concepts and skills. These include distinguishing same and different objects and shapes, how to hold a pencil and paper, copying shapes and patterns, and understanding directionality (i.e., top, bottom, left, and right).

Distinguishing same and different objects

a. Hold the same ordinary object in each hand (e.g., pen or cup). Say, "These are the same." Have the students repeat "same" several times.

b. Hold one object in one hand and another in the other (e.g., pencil in one and book in the other). Say, "These are different." Have the students repeat "different" several times.

c. Repeat "a" and "b" a few times, varying the objects (e.g., eraser, notebook paper, stapler). Have the students say "same" or "different" according to what you hold up.

Distinguishing same and different shapes

a. Cut out two circles, two triangles, and two squares.

b. Hold up the two circles and say, "These are the same." Say "same" several times and have the learners repeat.

c. Hold up a circle and a triangle and say, "These are different." Say "different" several times and have the learners repeat.

d. Repeat steps b and c, varying same and different shapes. Have the students say "same" or "different" according to what you hold up.

Holding a pencil and paper

a. Demonstrate how to hold a pencil.

b. Have the students practice holding their pencils correctly.

c. Demonstrate how paper is placed on the table at a slight angle.

d. Give each student a piece of paper and have them place it correctly on the table.

Understanding directionality

a. Hold up a piece of paper.

b. Point to the top of the paper and say, "This is the top." Repeat "top" several times. Have the students repeat after you.

c. Point to the bottom of the paper and say, "This is the bottom." Repeat "bottom" several times. Have the students repeat after you.

d. Point to the left side of the paper and say, "This is left." Repeat "left" several times. Have

the students repeat after you.

e. Point to the right side of the paper and say, "This is right." Repeat "right" several times. Have the students repeat after you.

f. Give each student a piece of paper. Say, "left" and have the students point to the left side of the paper. Repeat with "right," "top," and "bottom."

g. Mount a piece of paper on the wall. Draw a line from left to right across the top of the paper. Have the students do the same on their own papers. Draw several more lines from left to right. Have the students do the same. Check to make sure they are drawing the lines from left to right.

h. Draw a line from the top to the bottom of the paper. Have the students do the same on their own papers. Draw several more lines from top to bottom. Have the students do the same. Check to make sure they are drawing the lines from top to bottom.

Copying shapes and patterns

a. Mount a piece of paper from a flip chart on the wall, or draw a large rectangle on the board.

b. Draw an "X" in the upper left corner by making the first stroke from top left to bottom right and the second stroke from top right to bottom left.

c. Give each student a piece of paper and have them copy the "X."

d. Have them make several more Xs across the paper from left to right.

e. Mount another piece of paper (or draw another rectangle).

f. Draw an "O" counterclockwise.

g. Give each student another piece of paper and have them copy the "O."

h. Have them make several more Os across the paper from left to right.

i. Draw a pattern of Xs and Os (e.g., three Xs, two Os, and three Xs). Have the students copy the pattern on their own papers. Repeat with several different patterns.

j. As students learn to form the letters of the alphabet, this type of activity may be repeated with the letters they are learning.

Beginning Reading Skill Development Techniques

Activity for Teaching the Alphabet

Learning the alphabet should be spread out over several class periods. Introduce only 4-5 letters (uppercase) at a time. Learners should not be expected to master the alphabet all at once. Letters can be cut out of construction paper and should be at least four inches high. Post a chart of the whole alphabet during each class.

a. Point to the letter “A” on the alphabet chart and say, “This is the letter ‘A.’”

b. Write the letter “A” on the board and say, “This is the letter ‘A.’”

c. Hold up the cutout letter “A” and say, “This is the letter ‘A.’”

d. Hold up the letter and ask the students, “What letter is this?” Have the students respond, “A.”

e. Repeat steps “a-d” until all letters of the alphabet are introduced. This will take several class periods.

f. Once the uppercase letters have been introduced, teach the lowercase letters in a similar manner. Use the words “Capital A” and “Small A.”

Activity for Teaching the Sounds of Letters

Learners need to learn the sounds of the letters in English. Begin with the consonants. It is helpful to begin with the consonants that the learners are most familiar with—from their names or common words they have been studying. Introduce a few sounds each class period.

a. Point to or hold up the letter “B.” Ask the students, “What letter is this?” Have them respond, “B.”

b. Say, “The letter is “B”; the sound is /b/.”

c. Say, “This is the letter “B.” Ask, “What is the sound?” Have the students respond /b/ (sound of the letter, not the name).

d. Repeat with other consonants.

Activity for Teaching Sight Word Reading (Individual Words): Vocabulary Development for Beginning Level Learners

Beginning literacy learners whose native language is not English have additional barriers to learning to read that most native speakers do not have. English language learners often have a limited oral vocabulary (Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003). Yet they need to be able to read common words that they see every day or are learning in class, even if they do not know all the letters of the alphabet. Teaching sight words is a technique that can be used with this level learner every time new vocabulary words are introduced. Because a learner needs to know 95-98 percent of the words in a text to be able to predict from context (Qian, 1999), teaching vocabulary through context clues has limited success with adult English language learners. Therefore, teaching words *before* they appear in a text is recommended. The following technique can be used with literacy- and beginning-level learners whenever new vocabulary words are introduced.

a. Make two sets of flash cards: one set of five or six vocabulary items to be practiced and the other depicting visuals of the words.

b. Hold up one of the cards and say, "This word is [say the word]."

c. Have the students repeat the word several times.

d. Hold up another card and repeat the procedure until all the vocabulary words have been introduced.

e. Display the card next to the appropriate visual and have the students read the word, first chorally, then individually.

f. Hand out the word cards to students.

g. Have the students put the word cards next to the appropriate visual and say the word.

h. Repeat until each student has had the opportunity to place and read each word.

Once the learners have a good grasp of the new words, they can continue to review them in subsequent classes through games such as *Bingo* and *Concentration.* (See *Activities to Promote Interaction and Communication,* beginning on page II–41, for further ideas.)

Activity for Teaching a Dialogue: Beginning Level

A dialogue often provides the content for the reading for beginning-level learners. (See *Lesson Planning, Beginning Level*, page II–33.) Again, because of limited written and oral vocabulary, beginning-level students will need to hear a dialogue several times before they feel comfortable reading it.

a. Draw stick figures of two people.

b. Move from side to side in front of each figure as you model the dialogue.

c. Have the students repeat each line several times.

d. Ask for two volunteers to repeat the dialogue. Have them come to the front of the room. Have one student repeat one of the parts after you; then have the other student repeat the other part.

e. Divide the class in half. Have each half take a part of the dialogue and repeat after you.

f. Have the students work in pairs, saying the dialogue.

Activity for Teaching Sight Word Reading (Phrases and Sentences)

Once the learners have practiced the dialogue orally, they can begin to read it.

a. Write each line of the dialogue on a strip of paper.

b. Mount the strips, in order of the conversation, on the board or a wall.

c. Read the sentences, pointing to each word as you read it.

d. Have the students read aloud with you several times, first chorally, then individually.

e. Hand each of the sentence strips to students and have them come to the board to order them. Repeat several times until each student has had an opportunity to order the sentences.

f. The dialogue also may be typed so that each student or pair of students can have a copy. Cut the dialogue into strips and put the strips in an envelope. Give each pair of students an envelope and have them put the strips in order at their tables.

Teaching with the Language Experience Approach

Creating a language experience story is a technique that enables beginning-literacy learners to read what they can already say. It reinforces the connection between the spoken word and the written word as learners begin to recognize their own words before reading texts created by someone else. Activities performed in connection with the story can strengthen phonological processing, vocabulary development, syntax, and schema activation skills. The technique can be used in a one-on-one or group setting. Learners dictate a story to an experienced writer (teacher, tutor, classroom volunteer, or proficient student) and then learn to read the story they just told.

a. Elicit a story by asking the students questions about an experience they all have had together and that they have the language to talk about (e.g. a class field trip, coming to the United States, shopping for food). Encourage them to talk in full sentences.

b. Write on the board, a flip chart, or an overhead transparency, in paragraph form, exactly what the students say.

c. Read the story to the students, pointing to each word as you read. Repeat several times.

d. Then read the story one sentence at a time and have the students repeat each sentence.

e. Save the story for follow-up activities in subsequent classes:

   1. Type the story on the computer and make a copy for each student to read.
   2. Match vocabulary flash cards for words in the story.
   3. Create a cloze activity from the typed story where every fifth word, or vocabulary items you wish to highlight, are left out and students fill in the missing items.
   4. Hand out the complete typed story to the learners. Each learner cuts the story into strips so that there is one sentence on each strip of paper. Learners scramble the sentences and rearrange them in the proper sequence.
   5. More advanced learners can cut sentences into words, scramble the words, and rearrange them in order.

(See *Activities to Promote Interaction and Communication,* Language Experience Approach, page II–41, for examples of some of the activities described above.)

Sample Set II–29: Techniques for Teaching Elements of Vocabulary Development to Intermediate and Advance Levels

Intermediate- and advanced-level students also need direct instruction in vocabulary. Like beginning-level learners, their oral vocabulary is below the level needed to learn word meanings from context (Folse, 2004). The following activities that build learners' vocabularies are described below: building vocabulary lists, teaching prefixes and suffixes, using the dictionary, and using 3 x 5 cards to study vocabulary.

Vocabulary List Activity: Intermediate and Advanced Levels

Keep a running list of vocabulary items posted in the class. On a flip chart, write words that are new to most of the learners. These can be words from instructional materials, class discussions, or outside the classroom (i.e., words that learners have heard at home, at work, or in the community and bring to the class to find out the meaning). Have the learners keep their own vocabulary notebook where they write down the word and its definition and other strategies that help them remember the words (e.g., translation in native language, drawing, use in a sentence).

Every class period, review several of the words in a different way so that the learners have lots of exposure to the words. Choose from the following list:

a. Give the meaning of the word and ask which word it is.

b. Find a theme and ask which words belong. For example, ask which are colors or numbers or things to eat, as appropriate.

c. Ask about words that can go together. For example, ask which words can be used to describe something else on the list.

d. Ask which words are hard to remember and which words are easy to remember.

Activity for Teaching Prefixes: Intermediate and Advanced Levels

Knowing that certain prefixes can change the meaning of a word can increase students' vocabulary. To focus students' attention on prefixes that make a word negative, the following activity could be done:

a. Present a sentence, optimally from students' reading, which contains a word with a negative prefix; e.g., in the United States it is *illegal* to sell certain drugs without a prescription.

b. Explain that the underlined part of the word is called a prefix because it comes at the beginning of the word. It changes the meaning of the word. In the case above, the "il" makes the word negative, so the meaning of the word *illegal* is "not legal." Other prefixes that change the meaning of a word to make it negative include *un, ir, im.*

c. Provide the students with examples of words that use these prefixes:

Unopened	She returned the letter unopened.
Irresponsible	It is irresponsible to cry "fire" in a crowded theater when there is no fire.
Impossible	It is impossible to travel faster than the speed of light.

d. Exercise: Give the students an exercise with negative prefixes that attach to words they already know, such as *opened, used, polite, responsible, possible, legal, safe, able, decided.* Review the meaning of these words so that you are certain students do understand them. Then hand out a worksheet such as the following that the students will fill out in pairs. When they have completed the activity, go over it orally in class.

Sample Activity Worksheet: Negative Prefixes

Directions: Find the word in the box that has the same meaning as the underlined words in the sentences. Rewrite each sentence using the correct word from the box to replace the underline words in the sentences. Then, cross out each word as you use it in a sentence. The first sentence has been done for you.

irresponsible	unsafe	undecided	~~illegal~~	impolite

1. It is against the law to use firecrackers in Washington, DC.

   It is illegal to use firecrackers in Washington, DC.

2. It is dangerous to smoke while filling your car with gasoline.

   ____

3. It is bad manners to cough without covering your mouth.

   ____

4. Many voters are not sure yet about which candidate they will support.

   ____

5. Many people think that teenagers are not dependable.

   ____

Activity for Teaching Suffixes: Intermediate and Advanced Levels

It is important to teach word suffixes as well. Suffixes change the part of speech of a word. By teaching suffixes, teachers can increase learners' vocabularies both in depth and breadth. The following activity is one way to teach suffixes.

1. Present the following short passage:

   I felt bad when my daughter forgot my birthday. Then I remembered that teenagers are often thoughtless.

   (Optimally the passage should be taken from students' reading or from conversations you have had in class, which contains a word with the *-less* suffix).

2. Explain that the underlined part of the word is called a suffix because it comes at the end of the word. A suffix changes the part of speech of the word. Sometimes the suffix also changes the meaning of the word. In the passage above the suffix *less* has been added to the noun *thought.* The new word, *thoughtless,* is an adjective. It means "without thought, especially for other people."

3. Hand out the *Using the Suffix -less* worksheet that follows.

4. Read the words at the top of the worksheet and go over their pronunciation and meaning orally with the students.

5. Have the students complete the worksheet individually and then check their answers with another student.

6. Go over the worksheet orally with the students.

Sample Activity Worksheet: Using the Suffix -less

Directions: Choose the best word to complete each sentence. Write the word in the sentence. Then, cross out each word as you use it in a sentence. The first sentence has been done for you.

useless	**homeless**	**fearless**	**senseless**	**~~painless~~**

1. "Don't worry," said the doctor. "This won't hurt. It will be *painless*."
2. There is usually no reason for violence. It is ____________________.
3. Young people are often __________________ because they think that nothing bad will happen to them.
4. Many of the people who live on the streets have no other place to live. They are __________.
5. When people will not listen, it is ________________ to try to talk to them.

Note: These types of activities can be difficult to create, so teachers should feel free to use prefix and suffix activities in reading texts that are written at the appropriate level for their students. A follow- up activity to this one could be having students create their own sentences with the vocabulary items. For example, the teacher could present the situations and the students could complete the sentences:

My nephew is fearless. Last week he ____ .

Activity for Using the English Dictionary: Intermediate and Advanced Levels

Some students have difficulty using an English dictionary. Many words have more than one meaning and students may not know which definition is the correct one. They also may not understand the abbreviations for noun, verb, adjective, and adverb, which are included in a dictionary entry. To get students acquainted with using the dictionary, the teacher might do the following activity:

1. Ask the students what they do when they encounter an English word that they do not know. Discuss whether they try to guess the meaning from context, look up the word in a bilingual dictionary, or use an English-English dictionary. Point out that sometimes there are no clues to meaning in the sentence and sometimes there are many translations in the bilingual dictionary, so it is hard to select the correct one. Tell them that today you will give them some practice using an English dictionary.
2. Present them with a worksheet such as the one on the following page. Go over the explanation and first example with them as a whole group.
3. Ask the students to complete the activity individually and then to check it with a classmate.
4. Go over the worksheet orally with the whole class.

Sample Activity Worksheet: Choosing the Correct Dictionary Definition

Sometimes you need to look up the meaning of a word in an English dictionary. Use a learner's dictionary such as *Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English* because learner dictionaries are generally written clearly and show the words in sentences. To choose the correct definition, follow the steps below:

1. Look at the word in the sentence to get a general idea about the word. What part of speech is it?

   A noun? An adjective? A verb? An adverb?

2. Here are the abbreviations that are used in most dictionaries to show the parts of speech.

   Noun = (n) Adjective = (adj) Verb = (v) Adverb = (adv)

3. Look at the sentence and decide which part of speech the word is.

4. Choose the definition that is the correct part of speech *and* makes the most sense in the sentence.

Directions: Read the following sentences and choose the dictionary definitions (adapted from *Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1999) that best fits the meaning of the underlined word in the sentence.

1. That witch put a spell on me.

   spell [1] /spel/ *n* a condition caused by magical power. *I fell under the spell of his wonderful green eyes.*

   spell [2] /spel/ *v* to say or write the letters of a word in order. *He spells his name S-M-Y-T-H, not S-M-I-T-H.*

   spell [3] /spel/ *n* a period of time during which a specific activity or type of weather has occurred. *We've had a cold spell all month.*

   Definition number _____

2. At the close of the meeting, no one was speaking to any one else.

   close [1] /kloz/ *v* to shut, make no longer open. *Close your mouth when you chew!*

   close [2] /kloz/ *n* the end of an activity or period of time. *At the close of the day, the crickets start to chirp.*

   close [3] /klos/ *adj* near. *Don't stand so close to me!*

   Definition number _____

(From: *Longman Basic Dictionary of American English.* (1999). Essex, England: Pearson Education.)

Study Strategy: Using 3 x 5 Cards: All levels

Learners can create their own study guide for learning new words by using 3 x 5 cards.

a. Have the students take a 3 x 5 file card and, with a pen or pencil, mark off four quadrants.

b. In the upper left quadrant, have the students write the vocabulary word.

c. In the upper right quadrant, have the students write a translation of the word in their native language.

d. In the lower left quadrant, have the students write a brief definition in English.

e. In the lower write quadrant, have the students write a phrase or sentence that shows how the word is used. For example, the word "squander" is usually paired with "money" or "time" or "fortune." The student might write, "squander money.").

f. Then have the students take a blank 3 x 5 file card and cut out one of the quadrants. This card can then be placed over the vocabulary card to reveal one of the four quadrants. The student then can be encouraged to remember what is under the other quadrants. For example, if the vocabulary word is exposed, the student would say the definition, sentence or phrase, and translation. If the translation is exposed, the student would say the word, the definition in English, and the sentence or phrase.

Students can use their sets of cards to study on their own, in pairs, or small groups. For example, an advanced-level Spanish speaking student might write the following on a card:

squander	**derrochar**
to waste, to spend foolishly	**squander time**

Sample Set II–32: Techniques for Beginning Reading – A Lesson Plan

Class Beginning **Date** ____________

Lesson Objective: Read a simple story.

Language Skills: Present tense verbs: have, say, look, read, study, help

Life Skills: Study strategies

Materials:

- "Mesud's Story," from Moss, D., Shank, C. C., & Terrill, L. (1997). *Collaborations: English in Our Lives, Literacy Worktext.* Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 31-32.
- Accompanying transparencies and tape (optional)
- Conversation grid
- Cloze activity
- Tape recorder and overhead projector (OHP)

Stages of the Lesson:

Warm Up/Review

Review classroom objects

Introduction

"Today we are going to read a story about a man named Mesud."

Presentation (Pre-reading activities)

1. Show the transparency picture of Mesud on the OHP. Ask the students who he is and what they see.
2. Have the students listen to the story on tape several times (or read it aloud to them).
3. Ask questions about whether their predictions were right. Ask comprehension questions (e.g., What is Mesud studying? What does he look at? What does he say?).

Practice (Reading)

1. Have the students open their books to "Mesud's Story" (p. 31).
2. Have them listen to the tape of the story and read along (or read along with you).
3. Have the students read the story silently.
4. Have them circle any words they do not know. Write these words on the board and discuss them as a class.

(Post-reading activities)

1. Ask the students, "Do you study at home?" and "What helps you learn English?"
2. Hand out the conversation grid. Have the students get up and move around the room to talk to four other students to complete the grid.

Evaluation: Cloze activity

Sample Worksheet: Conversation Grid

Directions: Talk to four other people. Write down their information.

What is your name?	What did you learn about Mesud that you think is interesting?	Do you study at home?	What helps you learn English?

Sample Worksheet: Cloze Activity

Directions: Write the correct verb. Choose from the list below.

I ____________________ English at home.

I ____________________ pictures with words.

I ____________________ at the pictures.

I ____________________ the words.

I ____________________ the words.

have   **say**   **look**   **read**   **study**

Sample Set II–33: Techniques for Multilevel Reading – A Lesson Plan

Teachers often struggle when instructing students who have different levels of literacy. The following lesson plan demonstrates how a teacher can take advantage of learners' differing abilities through a reading assignment that requires students to find the answers to specific questions about a health clinic in their community. The activity combines practice in speaking, listening, reading, and writing as students read an actual brochure and tell each other what they have learned. Of course, when doing this activity, teachers should use brochures from their community and create questions from those brochures, rather than using the sample provided here from Arlington, Virginia.

Multilevel Reading Lesson Plan

Class Multilevel **Date**_______________

Time: A two-hour class period is assumed as this is typical for adult ESL classes. This lesson would not last the entire two hours.

Lesson Objective: Read a brochure about a community service.

Language Skills: Reading, speaking, listening, writing

Life Skills: Access community services

Materials:

- Brochure from local service agency
- KWL transparency (see example on p. II–74)
- Copies of brochure text divided into four reading sections (see example on pp. II–73-74)
- Questions on each section of the reading (see example on p. II–75)

Stages of the Lesson

Warm Up/Review (10 minutes)

Review health problem (e.g., fever, flu, broken leg) as well as when and where to go for help

Introduction

"Today we are going to read about a place to go for medical help—the Arlington Free Clinic."

Presentation (Pre-reading activity) (15minutes)

1. Using the KWL transparency, brainstorm what students already know about the clinic and what they want to know about it (schema activation).
2. Show students the brochure.
3. Prepare a jigsaw reading activity:
   - Divide the students into heterogeneous groups of four (i.e., groups of mixed reading abilities) and let the students name their group.
   - Assign each student a letter (A, B, C, or D): A for highest level readers and D for lowest level readers.
   - Regroup the students so that all the As are together, all the Bs, etc.

- Hand out the reading sections from the brochure (A is the most difficult, so this would be given to the students with the best English literacy and proficiency skills. D is the easiest, so this would be given to students with the least proficiency and literacy in English.) The accompanying questions would also be handed out at this time.

Practice (35-45 minutes)

Have each group read their section and answer the questions. Have them make sure that each member of the group writes down and understands the answer to the questions.

When they have completed their questions, have the students return to their original heterogeneous groups of four. Hand out complete copies of the brochure text and all the questions. In their groups, have the students share the answers to their reading section.

Evaluation (10 minutes)

Put up the KWL transparency and ask the students what they have learned about the clinic.

Brochure Information: Arlington Free Clinic

Group A

New Free Clinic Offers Medical Care

History

In 1991, physicians with the Arlington County Medical Society were increasingly aware that the number of people needing free or low-cost medical care was growing. It was estimated that approximately 10% of the county's population of 185,000 people were low-income and without health insurance. Through the efforts of these physicians, a Steering Committee was formed in 1993 to evaluate the possibility of establishing a free clinic in Arlington.

At that time, Virginia had 20 free clinics in other communities around the state. It now has 29 clinics and each is designed with the specific needs of its community in mind. All are staffed by volunteer physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and other community volunteers.

The Arlington Free Clinic opened its doors at Thomas Jefferson Middle School on January 11, 1994, treating people on that cold, wintry night. The Arna Valley Clinic site opened independently as a result of a grassroots community effort in November 1995, and became part of the Arlington Free Clinic in the fall of 1996.

The Free Clinic now treats approximately 75 people each week in its four clinics:

- General Medical at Thomas Jefferson
- General Medical at Arna Valley
- Women's Health at Thomas Jefferson
- Chronic Care at Thomas Jefferson

Group B

New Free Clinic Offers Medical Care

Mission

Operated primarily by volunteers, the Arlington Free Clinic provides free medical services to low-income, uninsured Arlington County residents.

Volunteers

Nearly 50 volunteers work each week in the clinics including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, physician's assistants, pharmacists, lab personnel and other non-medical people who act as receptionists, screeners and translators. Please call the Clinic if you are interested in becoming a volunteer.

Group C **New Free Clinic Offers Medical Care**

Services

- General medical care for adults and children
- Specialized screening services for women
- Lab tests and X-rays as ordered by physicians
- Medications
- Education and treatment for persons with chronic illnesses

The Arlington Free Clinic does not provide any services which are available at the Department of Human Resources. Referrals will be made for those services.

Clinic services are available to low-income residents of Arlington County. Patients must bring documentation regarding residency and income level.

Group D **New Free Clinic Offers Medical Care**

Hours by Appointment

General Clinic at Thomas Jefferson
Open Tuesdays 6-9 PM
Appointments made Fridays at 10:00 AM
Call 703-522-3733

General Clinic at Arna Valley
Open Wednesdays 6-9 PM
Appointments made Fridays at 10:00 AM
Call 703-522-3733

Women's Health Clinic at Thomas Jefferson
Open 2nd & 4th Thursdays 6-9 PM
Appointments made anytime
Call 703-522-3733

Chronic Care at Thomas Jefferson
Open 3rd Thursday 6-9 PM
By referral only

Sample Transparency: Arlington Free Clinic (KWL)

K	W	L
What do you *know* about the Arlington Free Clinic?	**What do you *want to know* about the Arlington Free Clinic?**	**What did you *learn* about the Arlington Free Clinic?**

Sample Worksheet: Jigsaw Reading Handout

(For use with Sample Arlington Free Clinic Brochure. (n.d.). Arlington, VA. Reprinted with Permission. See page II–72 for directions.)

A. (History)

1. When did The Arlington Free Clinic open at Thomas Jefferson Middle School?
2. When did the Arna Valley Clinic open?
3. What are the three clinics at Thomas Jefferson?

B. (The Mission)

4. What does the Arlington Free Clinic do?
5. Who works at the clinics?
6. Do the people who work at the clinic get a salary?

C. (Services)

7. What kind of medical care do they have for adults and children?
8. I have a chronic illness. How does The Arlington Free Clinic help me?
9. Can I get lab tests and x-rays ordered?
10. What do I need to bring with me to the clinic?

D. (Hours by Appointment)

11. How many clinics are at Thomas Jefferson?
12. What telephone number do I call to make an appointment?
13. When is the General clinic at Arna Valley open?
14. When is the general clinic at Thomas Jefferson open?

Part III: Parent Education in Family Literacy Programs

Part III presents information about parent education as one of the four components of family literacy. Parent education is designed to help parents improve their skills at being the primary teacher for their children and become full partners in the education of their children.

This section begins with a brief description of family literacy, explains the goals and structure of parent education, offers strategies for implementing parent education, and provides activities that parents can engage in with their children at home and in their communities.

Parent Education Overview

Parent education is one of the four components of family literacy. Comprehensive family literacy services are defined as: "services that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family, and that integrate all of the following activities:

- Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children (PACT Time).
- **Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children (Parent Education)**.
- Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency (Adult Education).
- An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences." (Children's Education).

This standard definition can be found in several pieces of federal legislation, including the Head Start Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and the Community Services Block Grant Act.

The full power of comprehensive family literacy services lies in the integration of these four components to create a seamless approach to education. Family literacy programs recognize that the education of children and parents is interdependent. Through intensive education of more than one generation, family literacy programs:

- Build upon families' strengths.
- Provide the tools and support families need to build on their strengths as learners and expand their roles as family members, workers, and community members.
- Create life-long learners.

Family literacy programs have been recognized as a way to help children become successful in school while their parents develop literacy skills. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, reflects this dual goal in its encouragement of adults to become full partners in the educational development of their children. Family literacy programs have created many learning opportunities for adult English language learners and their children.

To learn more about family literacy, adult education, and ESL education, visit the Verizon Literacy Campus at http://www.literacycampus.org/. This site offers numerous self-paced 30-60 minute online courses at no cost.

Parent Education Goals and Features

Parent education in family literacy programs provides opportunities for parents (or children's primary caregivers) to discover their own strengths; to enhance their parenting

skills and life competencies; and to learn more about children's cognitive, literacy and developmental growth. Parent education can take place at home during home visits, as well as in a group setting in family literacy program centers. When parent education occurs in a group setting, it also provides opportunities for bonding with other parents for support and friendship.

Parent education is designed to help parents learn how to improve their skills in being the primary teacher for their children, and to help parents learn how to become full partners in the education of their children.

Although it is important for family literacy staff to respect the cultural differences of the families they serve, it also is important that parents learn how to interact with school personnel in their children's schools. For example, in the U.S., school personnel expect parents to be involved with their children's education and to be full educational partners with their children. In many cultures, however, children's education is viewed as the responsibility of the teacher—not the parents.

Attitudes toward teachers and schools, as well as beliefs about parenting, may be different among individuals from various cultures. Consequently, teachers need to be explicit when teaching parents about school expectations and parents' roles in enhancing their children's literacy development. Although foreign-born parents want to support their children's learning, their expectations about the role of schools and teachers will affect how involved they become in their child's education.

Immigrant families differ in the characteristics of the primary caregiver, the number of adults in the home, and the availability of stable or temporary housing. Therefore, it is important to know something about the families in the program and the differences within cultures surrounding the parent's role. It is also important to focus on what parents will need to know to support their children's success in the American educational system.

How Parents Help Support the Language and Literacy Development of Children

Many studies have shown a link between parental involvement and a child's success in school. Children whose parents are involved in their school not only have better grades, but also have fewer behavioral problems and are more sociable (National Center for Family Literacy, 2003).

The research-based suggestions in Figure III–1 provide information on how parents can strengthen their children's language and literacy development. These can be discussed during parent education sessions, either in the parents' native language or in English. The important thing is to encourage parents to support their child's learning regardless of the language used.

***Figure III–1:* How Parents Can Strengthen their Children's Language and Literacy Development**

1. Parents can strengthen their children's language and literacy development and school-related competence by engaging in language-rich interactions with their children.
   - Engaging in frequent and increasingly complex verbal interactions
   - Actively participating in joint book reading or storytelling—including in the native language
   - Finding recommended book lists on the Internet (refer to *Using Multicultural Children's Literature in Adult ESL Classes* at http://www.cal.org/caela/digests/Kidlit.htm, and *Database of Award-Winning Children's Literature* at http://www.dawcl.com)
   - Posing questions that enhance their children's problem solving abilities
   - Participating in attentive interactions with their children
   - Promoting a predictable environment through routines
2. Parents can provide support for literacy in the family.
   - Providing easy access to reading and writing materials including those in the native language
   - Modeling using reading and writing to get things done and solving problems in everyday life
   - Demonstrating enthusiasm for reading
3. Parents can gain knowledge of their children's learning and development.
   - Seeing their children as active contributors to their own development
   - Becoming aware of their children's interests and abilities
   - Having appropriate expectations of their children's achievements
4. Parents can strengthen their children's school-related competence.
   - Viewing their parenting role in a positive manner as they guide their children
   - Establishing and maintaining positive relations with community resources, including schools, community groups, and native language groups
   - Advocating for high-quality child and family resources in the community
   - Developing coping strategies for adapting to changes in family and community environments

(Adapted from Powell & D'Angelo, 2000.)

How to Develop a Parent Education Program

The first step in developing a parent education program is to find out what parents want to learn, and then decide how parents and staff can help develop appropriate parenting curricula. Each person has a role in this development. For example, program staff and parents can work together to:

- Establish cultural diversity guidelines (such as respect for other opinions, ideas and ways of learning) for deciding what is taught and how it is taught.
- Incorporate the native languages into the fabric of the classroom.
- Develop culturally diverse content from a variety of different viewpoints and perspectives across the four components.

- Incorporate in-class celebrations of cultural heroes and holidays.
- Share cultural items such as—magazine pictures, family recipes, dramatic play props, information about holidays and celebrations.
- Share family experiences through stories and artifacts.

Some parent education topics—basic children's growth and development information, or techniques for how to read to children, can be planned ahead of time. Almost every parent can learn something from these topics. While the majority of the sessions should center on the language and literacy development of children, deciding on all the topics for parent education sessions before the parents arrive may not take parents' interests and goals into consideration. Parents should have an opportunity to provide suggestions for discussion topics they would find most beneficial. A simple needs assessment can be used to determine parents' interests, as shown in Figure III–2. Once parents' priorities have been acknowledged, teachers can begin to gather resources and plan parent education sessions to meet parents' needs.

Figure III–2: **Sample Parent Education Needs Assessment**

Parent Interest Inventory. Place a checkmark next to the topic you would like to discuss.

Health	**Nutrition**	**School**
___ Women's health	___ Dieting	___ Child development
___ Children's health care	___ Meal planning	___ School Policy
___ Alcohol/drug abuse	___ Children's eating habits	___ Reading report cards
___ Other ____________	___ Other _____________	___ Other ____________
Children's Literacy Development	**Family**	**Community and Services**
___ Vocabulary development	___ Child discipline	___ Local library
___ Reading encouragement	___ Spouse abuse	___ Social services/agencies
___ Literacy expectations	___ Retaining home language	___ Local attractions
___ Other ____________	___ Other _____________	___ Other ____________

(Adapted from National Center for Family Literacy, 1997.)

Parent education happens in a variety of settings and in a variety of ways. Teachers serve as role models for parents who are learning new concepts. It is important for teachers to be explicit in their instruction, which is designed to help parents help their children. No matter where or when services are delivered, parents should learn new information, new ideas, and new skills; receive encouragement and support; and learn to advocate for themselves and their families.

Parent Education Instructional Strategies

English language learners come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and have a variety of approaches to learning. It is important that adult education and family literacy program staff new to working with English language learners understand the impact of culture on learning in order to best serve learners' needs. Programs can enhance parents' learning by incorporating learners' prior knowledge and experiences into the curriculum, thereby providing a culturally responsive learning environment. Teachers can help parents by recognizing and positively affirming the role of culture in learning. To begin this section, some general considerations for adult education family literacy practitioners are listed.

Implementing programs of sufficient duration to enhance learner progress. This is particularly important with adult English language learners, because they may need time to understand American school culture and expectations while they are increasing their literacy skills.

Building on parents' language and literacy. Many immigrant parents have literacy skills in one or more languages other than English. Others are not literate in any language. Researchers and practitioners are exploring the value of learning to read in a first language other than English both for its own sake (i.e., as a vehicle for passing on culture and knowledge) and to facilitate becoming literate in English.

Respect parents' cultures and ways of knowing. Immigrant parents are eager to understand U.S. culture in general, and specifically, the complexities and expectations of school. Family literacy practitioners and parents themselves need to understand that telling stories and sharing cultural traditions with children in any language help prepare children to do well in school, even when the language is not English, and even when this is done orally rather than through print (Weinstein & Quintero, 1995).

Cultural Considerations

Immigrant parents enter education programs with many strengths. Their knowledge about learning and child rearing may be different, but not deficient. By understanding this, adult education and family literacy practitioners can learn about and respect these parents and their cultures, which often include strong, intact, multigenerational family structures. These parents want to learn, but they also have much to teach (National Center for ESL Literacy Education, 2002). The variety of cultural backgrounds may be seen in the following areas.

Culture and Family. In some cultures, family is the first priority. Children are celebrated and sheltered, the wife fulfills a domestic role and family mobility is limited.

Culture and Education. Teachers/tutors may find that parents come from countries in which the education culture is based on memorization with a lot of emphasis on theory and a rigid, teacher-centered, curriculum.

Work/Leisure. Some parents may feel that they work to live and that leisure is considered essential for a full life. Other parents may feel that they live to work and leisure is the reward for hard work.

Competition. Teachers/tutors may find parents from a culture in which personal competition is avoided, while others come from cultures where it is important to prove oneself in competitive situations.

Time. Some parents may come from cultures in which time is a relative concept and deadlines are flexible. Others may believe that deadlines and commitments are firm.

Instructional Approaches

In order to develop a curriculum that supports learners' goals and that relates to their lives outside the educational setting, programs should select approaches appropriate for program needs, student needs, and program intensity. The following approaches are widely used today. (See Crandall & Peyton, 1993, for a detailed discussion of these approaches.)

Competency-based approaches stress the importance of learning the language in order to accomplish real-life tasks (also known as life skills or survival skills), such as completing applications, reading schedules, and asking for information.

Freirean and participatory approaches start with real issues in the learners' lives and develop the curriculum and language skills to address those issues, such as advocating for children, speaking up on the job, or dealing with legal problems. These approaches are based on the work of Paulo Freire. (See http://www.cal.org/caela/digests/freireQA.htm for more information.)

Integrated, theme-based approaches link language learning to topics of interest to the learners, such as cultural comparisons, health practices, or citizenship attainment.

Language experience approaches use shared events and experiences from learners' lives as starting points for creating stories. The language experience approach builds on learners' experiences and oral language to develop reading texts. Typically the teacher elicits a story from students by asking them questions about an experience they have had together, or that they have shared knowledge about, and that they have the language to talk about (e.g., a class field trip, shopping for food, coming to the United States). The teacher writes the story on the board, a flip chart, or an overhead transparency; reads the story to the students; and works with the students so that they can copy and read the story. (See *Language Experience Approach*, pages II–51 and II–64, for a more detailed description and examples of activities that can be used with this approach.)

Task-based and project-based approaches require learners to use English to solve a problem or complete a project as a team. For example, teams can research strategies for

immigrant parents to work more effectively with schools, compile stories for a newsletter or book, or prepare visual presentations or events (Florez, 1998; Seufert, 1999).

Strategies

When developing instructional strategies, there are some specific considerations to address before attempting to implement these practices. One of the most important considerations is to focus on the information and skills parents will need to help their children, rather than focusing on cultural differences. Some specific considerations are listed below.

Get to know parents and their needs. Knowing what they need to function both inside and outside the classroom is key to successful strategy choice and implementation. For example, parents need to learn how to purchase groceries and ask for assistance when needed.

Use visuals to support your instruction. Bring authentic materials to the classroom. Use materials parents encounter every day, newspapers, magazines, flyers, pamphlets, utility bills, school notes. Also, be aware of the learning preferences of parents and try to engage them in learning activities that use various modalities (visual, oral, tactile).

Foster a safe classroom environment. Encourage parents to try new things, and praise them for their efforts. Don't overwhelm parents with too much new material. Be aware of their educational experiences, and respect their learning differences.

Balance variety and routine in classroom activities. Allow parents to work individually and in groups, and keep lessons dynamic by varying group size and group members.

Celebrate success. Each accomplishment, however small, is worthy of recognition. Staff must recognize parents' achievements.

(Adapted from Florez & Burt, 2001.)

Parent Education Activities

Parent education sessions need to be planned and should follow a similar sequence each time. The suggested sequence is listed here and is explained later in this article. Also, see *Sample Parent Education Lessons* beginning on page III–17 for examples.

- Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity
- Presenting new information
- Processing the information through activities
- Helping parents apply the new information

Topics may vary, but the majority of the sessions should center on the language and literacy development of children. It takes careful planning to provide opportunities for parents to learn about their child's language and literacy development, as well as opportunities for parents to discuss and gain the skills to support this development. Often, parent education sessions provide the opportunity to dispel common misconceptions regarding children's language and literacy development.

Discussing strategies or activities with parents that support their child's learning is a fundamental goal of parent education. These activities should be appropriate for the age of the child and can be done in the parent's native language. Figure III–3 provides some tips from the Reading Rockets Web site (http://www.readingrockets.org/) to share with parents.

***Figure III–3:* Parent Tips for Developing Language and Literacy in Children**

Infants:

- Talk and sing to your baby when you change his diaper, give him a bath, feed him lunch, or join him in play.
- Help increase your baby's vocabulary by asking "What's that?" or "Where's the dog?" when looking at and enjoying books together.

Toddlers:

- Read stories before bedtime. It makes a good transition between active play and rest time.
- Take short trips to new places and talk about what is happening around you.

Preschoolers:

- Encourage preschool children to carry out steps to written recipes or to look at labels.
- Play picture-card games with your child.
- Point out words on signs.

Primary grade children:

- Continue to read with your child even if he has already learned to read.
- Visit the library on a regular basis.
- Show children that you read books and magazines for information and enjoyment.

(Adapted from National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1997.)

The Learning to Read and Write Overview below (adapted from Neuman, Copple & Bredekamp, 2000) is a broad look at children's language and literacy development from birth to approximately age eight, including children with special needs, children from diverse cultures and English language learners. Teachers may encourage parents to consider and discuss ways to incorporate the following aspects of literacy development into their family routines:

The Power and Pleasure of Literacy. Children's success with language and literacy requires opportunities to enjoy and value the power that comes with literacy. A critical feature that supports this enjoyment is meaningful interactions with adults through positive literacy experiences. When children see parents reading for pleasure, children see reading as a positive activity.

The Literate Environment. A literate environment provides opportunities to broaden social knowledge and language development. It includes use of print in purposeful ways, language-rich experiences with others, a variety and abundance of literacy materials, and representations of varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Language Development. Language development involves understanding the role of language skills and word knowledge in meaningful contexts. It is important that children experience a large quantity of discourse and a variety of language. How language is used in home and educational settings influences children's literacy learning.

Building Knowledge and Comprehension. Through enriching experiences with their families and in educational settings, children build knowledge that allows them to assimilate new learning and refine knowledge and concepts.

Phonological Awareness. In infancy, children begin to attend to the sounds of speech. Gradually children become more aware of the sounds around them that eventually lead to making connections between sounds and letters.

Letters and Words. To become proficient readers, children learn that letters of the alphabet form patterns to become words. In becoming skilled readers, they are able to use their beginning knowledge of letters and words to increase word recognition and support their efforts to read and write.

Types of Text. When children become familiar with, experience, and distinguish different types of text (such as stories, conversations, poetry, dramatization, and messages) they are able to read and create these forms themselves.

Knowledge of Print. Children develop knowledge of print when they observe and interact with others as they read, write, and use print for many purposes. In addition, children's awareness of letters, the general shape and length of familiar words, the mechanics of reading and writing, and features of text increase their knowledge of print and how it works.

Planning Parent Education Sessions

In some family literacy programs, parents attend regularly scheduled group sessions facilitated by a parent educator. In other programs, staff members may alternatively lead parent education sessions. Thus, it is important that all staff members be sensitized to the various cultural aspects of the families enrolled.

Parent education sessions involve various planning steps, beginning with the identification of a topic about which parents want to learn. Some examples might be learning how children's cognitive abilities develop and grow, learning how to read a book with your child, or even learning how to help a school-age child with homework. Figure III–4 displays a typical parent education lesson format.

Figure III–4: **Parent Education Lesson Format**

1. Engaging parents in a short motivating introductory activity
2. Presenting new information using a video, an article, a guest speaker, or a children's book
3. Processing the information through activities such as a discussion, writing on the topic, role-playing, or playing a game
4. Helping parents apply the new information in their own lives

Typical Parent Education Lesson

The following is an example of a typical parent education lesson. This example is based on a program that serves parents and their young children. The teacher knows the parents can read the books she has chosen. For parents who have very low English literacy skills, the activity could be adapted by encouraging the parents to tell a story, by using picture books, or by providing books in the parent's native language.

1. ***Engaging parents in a short motivating introductory activity.*** "Today we will discuss storytelling. How many of you have told a story to your child? Storytelling is one of the most enjoyable activities you can do with your child. Storytelling will promote language development by giving your child various opportunities to use and listen to language. Take a few moments to remember your favorite storytelling experience. Would anyone like to share their story?" (The teacher may want to model by telling a favorite story.)
2. ***Presenting new information using a video, an article, a guest speaker, or a children's book.*** "Now that we have shared a few stories, let's look at several examples of children's storytelling books. Please choose one. Now, take a few moments and look through the book." (Allow time for parents to ask questions about their book choice. This is very important when working with parents who have limited English language skills.) Distribute the handout, "Checklist for Reading Aloud to Infants and Toddlers." (See Figure III–5.) Discuss each aspect of the handout with parents to make sure they understand what is expected.

3. ***Processing the information through activities such as discussions, writing on the topic, role-playing, or playing a game.*** Model how to read a book to a child, while parents look at their handouts and check off each bullet. Ask parents to find a partner and have them take turns practicing reading or telling their book to each other.

4. ***Helping parents apply the new information in their own lives.*** Have parents check out their chosen book to read to their child (or discuss) at home. Ask them to notice what part of the reading/storytelling activity goes well and which part of the activity they need to improve. During the next parent education session, ask parents questions about their experiences before, during, and after reading the story. Encourage group discussion.

Figure III–5: **Checklist for Reading Aloud to Infants and Toddlers**

Before Reading the Story

- Make sure everyone is comfortable and can see the book
- Read the title aloud
- Show children the cover of the book and talk about it

While Reading the Story

- Make eye contact with children
- Vary your voice to fit the characters and plot
- Read one-to-one (or for toddlers, in very small groups)
- Stop sometimes to:
  - Show the pictures
  - Share your own reactions to the story and characters through voice or gestures
  - Encourage children's reactions to the story
- Encourage children to participate by:
  - Inviting toddlers to join in with rhymes, sounds, and repeated words or phrases
  - Imitating the children's vocalizations and/or actions during the story
- Understand and change plans when children get tired or seem uninterested

After Reading the Story

- Give children opportunities to:
  - Explore the book and/or props
  - Talk about the story (toddlers)
- Reread the book often with the children

(National Center for Family Literacy, 2002, p. 63.)

Getting Started

Program teachers provide the structure for parent education sessions. However, the topics will be determined by parent interests and program goals. The staff may wish to brainstorm and create an outline for the first parent session, including surveying parents to identify their interests and concerns. (See the example on page III–4.) The first couple of parent education sessions are the best time to include activities that will help parents and staff members get acquainted. The third session might include setting goals and discussing guidelines for future parent education sessions.

Planning Literacy Development Activities

Figure III–6 provides a sample of possible parent education session topics and suggested activities incorporating research-based information on children's language and literacy development. The first column provides research excerpts describing the concept addressed. The second column provides suggested parent education topics, and the third column provides suggested activities that parents can practice during parent education sessions and then practice with their child at home. A guide (in parentheses) following each topic and activity indicates the age of children for whom the topic is most appropriate. *All* indicates children age 3 through children in the third grade, 3-5 indicates children in preschool, and K-3 indicates children in grades K-3.

Figure III–6: **Learning to Read and Write Instructional Topics and Activities**

Learning to Read and Write Overview	Parent Education Topics	Suggested Activities
The Power and Pleasure of Literacy • There is a strong correlation between children being read to by their mother and the children's interest in books (DeBaryshe, 1995). • Many researchers suggest enthusiasm about literacy activities as a route to development of the child's active engagement in literacy tasks (Snow & Tabors, 1996).	• Reading and telling stories with children (All) • Having fun with language (All) • Creating enjoyable times to read and write with children (3-5, K-3) • Discovering the benefits of reading and writing in everyday activities (3-5, K-3)	• Model book reading for parents (All) • Share rhyming games in English and the home language (3-5, K-3) • Illustrate a favorite family story (3-5, K-3) • Model reading and writing family recipes (K-3)

Learning to Read and Write Overview	Parent Education Topics	Suggested Activities
The Literate Environment • Print-rich environments—which include the presence of such items as magnetic refrigerator letters, posters, writing materials, newspapers and books in the home, have been linked to children's language acquisition or an awareness of print (Goodman, 1986). • Attention to children's language and literacy environment during the preschool years constitutes a crucial prevention effort for young children at risk (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).	• Finding a variety of literacy materials for the home (All) • Creating a literacy-rich home environment (All) • Promoting home culture and language (All)	• Discuss a variety of ways to create a print-rich environment in the home (All) • Provide parents opportunities to work with a variety of literacy materials such as menus, bus schedules, and ads (All) • Share literacy materials from parents' native country or in their native language (All)
Language Development • Optimal oral language development occurs when children have numerous opportunities to use language in interactions with adults and each other (Neuman, Coppel, & Bredekamp 2000). • The amount of language children hear and interact with during the formative infant, toddler, and preschool years has a significant impact on the quality of their language skills (Hart & Risley, 1995).	• Having extended, meaningful conversations with children (All) • Incorporating meaningful conversations into everyday activities (All) • Encouraging children to use words to talk about wants and needs (3-5, K-3)	• Discuss the features of extended conversation and the benefits of extended conversations at home (3-5, K-3) • Provide opportunities for parents to role play various interactions (3-5, K-3) • Share ideas about how to encourage children to talk about their day (All)
Building Knowledge and Comprehension • Through conversations about books, adults may induce higher-level thinking by moving experiences in stories from what children may see in front of them to what they can imagine (Snow, 1991). • Talk that surrounds reading helps children bridge ideas and information from the book to their own lives (Dickinson & Smith, 1994).	• Having "book talks" with children (All) • Planning learning experiences, and following up on family outings to build children's background knowledge (All)	• Take turns reading aloud during parent education sessions (3-5, K-3) • Take turns telling a story; reflect on different stories and storytelling styles (3-5, K-3) • Plan a family experience after reading a book on the topic (All)

Learning to Read and Write Overview	Parent Education Topics	Suggested Activities
Phonological Awareness • Phonemic awareness instruction helps children of all ages (National Reading Panel, 2000). • Few children develop phonemic awareness naturally. When teachers plan activities and interact with children to draw attention to phonemes, children's awareness develops (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).	• Using rhymes, songs and chants with children in English and the home language (3-5, K-3) • Using books in English to promote phonological awareness (3-5, K-3) • Helping children write words based only on sounds (K-3)	• Demonstrate rhyming songs in English for parents; ask them to share rhyming songs in their home language (3-5, K-3) • Record parents singing a favorite song in their native language and provide copies for them to share (3-5, K-3)
Letters and Words • Letter and word knowledge is a precursor to a child becoming a productive reader (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). • Teachers can facilitate children's alphabetic learning through practice in recognizing, naming, and producing letters of the alphabet (Neuman, 2001).	• Playing and experimenting with letters and their sounds (3-5) • Making letters with a variety of household materials (3-5)	• Share ideas on how to use items in the home—alphabet soup or pasta, cereals, and cartons— to teach letters. (3-5) • Demonstrate the concept of letter walls and labeling (K-3)
Types of Text • When adults read to children regularly, children learn to distinguish the language used in books from conversational language (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000). • Children need to have access to an abundance of high-quality books and magazines on a daily basis (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999).	• Exploring different genres and how to read them with children (3-5, K-3) • Selecting a variety of children's reading material (All) • Exploring the different forms and functions of print (3-5, K-3)	• Discuss different types of texts with parents • Provide parents the opportunity to interact with a variety of texts • Discuss the process of choosing appropriate books (All)

Learning to Read and Write Overview	Parent Time Topics	Suggested Activities
Knowledge of Print • Literacy experiences in the home are related to a child's understanding of the functions of print and later acquisition of literacy (Britto & Brooks-Gunn, 2001). • Children learn a lot about reading from the labels, signs, and other kinds of print they see around them (McGee, Lomax, & Head, 1988).	• Exploring the many purposes for reading (K-3, 3-5) • Learning about the concepts of print (K-3, 3-5) • Helping children engage in meaningful reading and writing experiences (K-3, 3-5)	• Demonstrate the uses of print by creating a reading log. (K-3) • Gather samples of print in the environment and create a scrapbook using these materials. (K-3, 3-5)

Conclusion

Parent education sessions in family literacy programs are a powerful educational opportunity for parents with limited English language and literacy skills. These sessions offer parents a chance to meet and discuss matters of importance to them as new immigrants in this country. Most importantly, parents learn how to support their children's language and literacy development as they learn to navigate the American school system.

Sample Parent Education Lessons

These sample lessons are based on the concepts presented in the Learning to Read and Write Overview on page III–10. Each lesson can be adapted to the educational needs of the parents in the program. The activities are geared towards working with parents to support their child's language and literacy development overall. It is important to review each lesson to determine if it is age appropriate for the children in the program and to make changes accordingly. Each lesson is designed to take approximately one hour. However, each can be adapted to the time frame required. Suggestions for adapting the lessons for use with ELL parents are provided in the samples that follow.

Sample III–1: **The Power and Pleasure of Literacy (3-5, K-3)**

1. ***Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.*** "Yesterday we discussed storytelling and the benefits this activity has for your child's language development. Remember that the more language a child hears the more opportunity he/she has to hear new vocabulary. You can find other opportunities to use language, too. For instance, a picture can give you lots of ideas. You could talk about pictures in magazines or family photos. As an example, let's talk about what you think about this picture. (Show a picture from a book or calendar — anything that is a conversation starter. You could also prepare for this activity by asking parents to bring in a family picture. Allow a few minutes for discussion.) Also, don't forget to use the language you are most comfortable using during these interactions. The most important thing is to talk a lot with your child."
2. ***Presenting new information.*** "Now that we have shared a few stories let's look at the parts of children's books. Take a few moments and look through one of the books on your table. Notice that on the title page we will find the name of the author and under that the name of the illustrator. Today we will discuss book illustration. Illustration refers to a picture or drawing in a book. Look at the book you chose and take note of the illustrations. With your partner, discuss the things you see in the illustrations in your book. Then compare the illustrations in your book with those in your partner's book. These are some things to consider:
   - Discuss what the book may be about by looking only at the illustrations on the front and back pages of the book.
   - Notice how the rest of the illustrations add to the experience of understanding the story.
   - Ask questions about the illustrations.
   - Point out the shapes and colors within the illustrations.

3 ***Processing the information through activities.*** "Yesterday you practiced storytelling with your child. Today you will illustrate that story. Take a few minutes to think about that story and write down a few of the main ideas. Now, using the materials on your tables (paper, colors, markers, etc…) begin to illustrate each idea. Make sure to draw one picture per page just in case you need to add more illustrations later. Staple the pages together and create a book."

4. ***Helping parents apply the new information.*** "Now that you have finished, take turns and practice re-telling your story using your illustrations with a partner. You now have a wordless book you can share with your child. Remember to schedule time to read to your child daily." (Remind parents they do not need to know English to share a wordless book with their child.)

Sample III–2: The Literate Environment (3-5, K-3)

1. ***Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.*** "Who would like to share how their child enjoyed the wordless book you created for them? Wordless books are a wonderful way to create new storytelling experiences for your child and build language skills. Today we are going to learn about creating a print-rich environment for your child at home."
2. ***Presenting new information.*** "Take a few minutes to think about and write a list of some examples of print materials in your home. Print materials are items that have words written on them." (Some examples might be children's books, food labels, mail, coloring books, shopping bags, informational pamphlets, brochures, dictionaries, grocery store ads.) "Now that you have a preliminary list, let's share some of your ideas." (Have parents share their lists, and add other suggestions.) "Did you learn about something you already own, but never thought of as 'print'?" **Note:** Sometimes, as in this example, the parents learn from each other, not an outside source.
3. ***Processing the information through activities.*** "We are going to create a picture survey you can use with your child about his print environment. This survey will not only teach him new words, it will teach your child how to identify new objects. Use the materials on your table (paper, colors, markers, etc…) and write the following title on the first page, "Print Materials in Our Home." Draw two pictures of print materials from your list per page. Don't forget to label each picture." **Note:** This activity is most suitable for parents of young children who are still learning the names of objects, and can be labeled in both English and the native language.
4. ***Helping parents apply the new information.*** "Now that you have your picture survey, share it with a classmate and make sure your pictures are easily identifiable. Now you have the perfect tool to help your child become aware of his print environment."

Sample III–3: Language Development (3-5, K-3)

1. ***Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.*** "We began to discuss language development when you created your wordless books. At that time our goal was to help children enjoy literacy by participating in the fun activity of storytelling. Today we will practice a strategy to extend conversations with your children. As an example of extended conversations, let's see who can think of the most things to say about the new plants by the front door (or the new wallpaper on the classroom wall, Maria's skirt, the weather, etc.)." Allow a few minutes for parents to jot notes; then have them share ideas.
2. ***Presenting new information.*** "Take a few minutes to think about and write down at least three things you said to your child this morning. Now count the number of words contained in those statements. Studies tell us that children exposed to a great deal of language attain a larger vocabulary and are better equipped to learn to read. Talking and listening to children is critical to their language development." (Share listening and speaking skills from *Teaching Our Youngest* (2002), available from http://www.ed.gov/about/pubs/intro/index.html)
3. ***Processing the information through activities.*** "So if the goal is to provide your children with language rich experiences, how can you extend the statements you just shared? For example, several of you mentioned 'Get out of bed!' To make this a much more language rich statement, you might say, "Johnny, get out of bed, it's a new day and you have lots to learn!" This statement is rich with positive language and much nicer to wake up to! What else could you say?" (Allow time to share examples and chart their responses.)
4. ***Helping parents apply the new information.*** "Now take your other statements and make them richer statements. You may want to post your list on the refrigerator to remind you to practice language-rich conversations with your child."

Sample III–4: Building Knowledge and Comprehension (3-5, K-3)

1. ***Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.*** "A few weeks ago we worked with the book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar,* by Eric Carle. In the story we read about a caterpillar that eats and eats and eats in preparation for becoming a butterfly. What was your favorite part of the book?" Share ideas.

2. ***Presenting new information.*** **"**Now that we have shared our ideas, we are going to discuss how to support your child's language and literacy development by planning a family outing. For example, I just found out that our local library is having a special exhibit on the life of butterflies. Your child learned something about butterflies from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. This would be a perfect trip that would encourage your child to learn about something with which he is familiar."

3. ***Processing the information through activities.*** **"**How do you plan a family outing?" (Give parents time to discuss and share ideas.) "Two of the most important factors to consider are cost (entrance fees and transportation) and age appropriateness. Family outings can be a great learning experience if you plan ahead. Let's use the library example to plan a future outing."

   (Create a plan through discussion with parents. Offer your ideas, and ask for theirs. The results might look something like the plan below. Write the planning steps on the board or chart paper.)

   - Before you head out, think about your child's interest in butterflies. Talk about *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* with your child. Talk about the TV show on butterflies. Talk about butterflies you see during a walk in the neighborhood.
   - Contact the library and find out the hours of the butterfly exhibit.
   - Before your visit share another story about butterflies with your child.
   - Decide what day you will visit and create some excitement for your child through conversation.
   - During the tour of the butterfly exhibit, remember to engage your child in rich conversation.
   - Finally, after your trip to the library, review and discuss with your child all that you saw there.

   "Above all, follow through. Do not make any promises you cannot keep. Most of all, be creative. Even a visit to a local airport can be a learning experience if your child is interested in airplanes! You now have the basic plan." (Allow parents an opportunity to write a preliminary plan for their next family outing.)

4. ***Helping parents apply the new information.*** Encourage parents to check out a book to read at home related to a family outing they would like to plan. During the next session, ask parents about their experiences.

Sample III–5: Phonological Awareness (3-5)

1. ***Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.*** "A few weeks ago, you learned the importance of extended conversations. How is this strategy working?" (Encourage parents to share their ideas.) "We have been having fun with language, books, and storytelling. Let's sing one of the songs your children have been learning." (Sing a song.) "Did you notice all the rhyming words? Which words rhyme? Rhyme is an important type of phonological awareness. Today we will learn more about phonological awareness."
2. ***Presenting new information*****.** "Phonological awareness is the process through which children become aware of the sounds of letters. It is an auditory and oral skill not a print skill. But it's an important pre-reading skill. You just experienced a phonological awareness activity by singing a song. Children enjoy singing and through singing they begin to distinguish different sounds. Helping your child expand phonological awareness will make it easier for him/her to learn to read. One way to do so is by singing rhyming songs such as *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*."
3. ***Processing the information through activities*****. "**Think about one of your child's favorite rhyming songs and write the words down. (Encourage parents to write and share their ideas.) Who would like to share their song?"

   Note: If parents can't write well in English they could write a song in their native language, or the teacher could write it down for them. If some of the parents have not learned to write in their first language, adapt the activity by having them just sing the song or recite the verses.
4. ***Helping parents apply the new information*****. "**Now that you have practiced singing, be sure to share your song with your child. Don't forget to sing, sing, sing to your child." Tell parents you will discuss how they used this strategy during the next session.

Sample III–6: Letters and Words (3-5)

1. ***Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.*** "Take a look at the books on your table. What do you notice about them? Yes, they are all alphabet books. These books are one way to help your child learn about letters, their shapes and sounds. Take another look at the book you chose. What would your child enjoy about the book?" (Allow for discussion.)
2. ***Presenting new information*****. "**Now that we have shared a few alphabet books, take a few moments and think about other items in your home that you can use to teach letters. For example, how many of you have alphabet soup or pasta at home?" (Encourage parents to write and share ideas.)
3. ***Processing the information through activities*****.** Provide materials such as, alphabet pasta, cereals, labels, magazines, and newspapers. **"**Look at the different materials on your table. Each of these can be used in your home to help your child learn letters. Think about three ways you can use the materials in your home." (Encourage parents to share ideas. Remind parents the most important thing about this activity is exposing children to letters and the letter sounds, parents can use the letters in their native language as appropriate.)
4. ***Helping parents apply the new information*****. "**Now that you have finished, take turns and practice using your materials with a partner. Use these materials with your child at home this week. Next week we will discuss how it went."

Sample III–7: Types of Text (3-5, K-3)

1. ***Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.*** "Think about the different members of your family. What makes each one different? What makes you all the same? Now, think about a favorite story or book. Just like your family, books come in all shapes, sizes, and types. These types are called genres. Each genre or type of book has a specific purpose. For example, poetry and rhyming books use rhythmic language to express thoughts and feelings. Telephone books provide information."
2. ***Presenting new information.*** "There are many genres (types) of books. Throughout our time together we have worked with books from several of these genres. For example, we have worked with storybook fiction, folktales and legends, concept books, realistic fiction, non-fiction and information books, as well as poetry and rhyming books." (Show parents each type of book as you explain how they are different.) "It is important for children to experience different types of books to prepare them for reading."
3. ***Processing the information through activities.*** "Let's think about each genre and its purpose. (Review each genre mentioned above.) Now that we know about a few genres, let's list one book we have used under each one. (Provide an example of a book for each genre.) Now it's your turn. Please list at least one book under each genre that you have recently read to your child."
4. ***Helping parents apply the new information.*** "You will find that some books could possibly fit under several categories (genres). Dr. Seuss's *The Cat in the Hat* can be realistic fiction or a rhyming book. As you study your list, decide if there is one genre to which you'd like to pay more attention. Also, please visit a library and check out a book that fits under this genre for our next parent education session." **Note:** Remind parents that books in their native language should be a part of the reading experiences of their child. Encourage parents to bring in materials in their native language to share with other parents.

Sample III–8: Knowledge of Print (3-5, K-3)

1. ***Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.*** "Children learn to recognize labels, signs and other print materials from their environment. It is important to teach children that there are different uses for print. One way is to point out print in your surroundings—at home and in your community. Think about your child's favorite food, toy, or restaurant. How do they recognize this item when they are just learning to read? Yes, they "read" the label, sign or picture."
2. ***Presenting new information.*** "Take a look at the print materials on your table. (Provide examples such as newspaper and magazine ads, brochures, bus schedules, forms, books, newsletters, labels, etc…) How many of these materials do you have in your home? How many of these materials would your child recognize?" (Encourage parents to share their ideas.)
3. ***Processing the information through activities.*** **"**Using the samples and materials on your table we will create an environmental book for your child. First, choose a few samples your child would recognize and a few he/she would not. Next, paste one sample per page, and on the back of the page write a few words about the item. For example, if you choose a *Cheerios* label, on the back of the page write: My son's favorite cereal."
4. ***Helping parents apply the new information.*** **"**Now that you are done, share your book with a classmate. Why do you think this is an important activity you can replicate with your child?" (Discuss with the group.) "Try this activity at home and bring in your book to share during our next parent session."

Literacy Activities in the Home

There does seem to be a relation between young children's experiences with literacy at home and their engagement in independent reading" (Baker, Scher, & Mackler, 1997). Therefore, discussing and modeling learning opportunities in the home with parents can provide the foundational support children need for language and literacy development. Everyday experiences and interactions in the early years begin to define expectations about becoming literate.

Recall the *Learning to Read and Write Overview* explained on page III–10 (adapted from Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000).

A. The Power and Pleasure of Literacy

B. The Literate Environment

C. Language Development

D. Building Knowledge and Comprehension

E. Phonological Awareness

F. Letters and Words

G. Types of Text

H. Knowledge of Print

The list of activities in Figure III–7 on the following page incorporates the eight categories of the *Learning to Read and Write Overview*. The activities are designed for parents to use with their child at home. The corresponding letters of the categories are listed in parentheses after each activity. The activities emphasize literacy skills demonstrated in simple daily routines. While these activities provide opportunities for practicing literacy skills both children and parents need. The real joy, however, is in the closeness developed between parent and child whether activities are done in the parent's native language or in the English language they are learning.

Figure III–7: **Interactive Literacy Activities for Parents and Children**

Home Literacy Activities

1. Read your child's favorite story to him/her in a comfortable, quiet place. Ask your child to predict what will happen next. (A, B, C, D, F, H)
2. Start the day by reading the newspaper. Point out interesting pictures to your child and read the captions together. (A, B, C, G, H)
3. Read a story with your child, such as *Is Your Mama a Llama?* Pick a word from the book and make a rhyme with each consonant in the alphabet—"bat, cat, dat…" (A, E, F, G)
4. Boost your child's word power by taking a "naming walk" indoors or outdoors, naming each item you come to—dog, chair, car, tree, etc. (A, B, C, F, H)
5. Art day: Think of ways to expand vocabulary with description words—color names (as found on crayons) and words like "oozing" and "dripping." (A, B, C, F, G,H)
6. Make a photo album by pasting photos or magazine pictures on construction paper. Write captions or record your child's story about the pictures. (A, B, C, D, F, G, H)
7. Dance the ABCs! Sing through the alphabet and move about, clapping and making up dance steps. (A, E, F)
8. Visit the library together. Let your child pick out a book to read, and let her turn the pages for you. (A, B, C, D, G, H)
9. Ask your child to help you "cook" today by reading a recipe together or carefully cutting out coupons in the newspaper. (A, B, D, G, H)
10. With your child, look for things in your home that begin with the first letter of your child's name: "J is for Jack—what else starts with J? Jelly, jar, juice…" (A, B, E, F, G)
11. Teach your child a song or nursery rhyme you remember from your childhood. Sing it, chant it, and clap it! (A, C, E)
12. Ask your child about her day using open-ended questions: "What did you have for breakfast? What was your favorite part of the day?" (B, C, H)
13. Try a new book. Take a "picture walk" through the book, looking at and talking about the pictures with your child. (A, D, F, G, H)
14. Play with magnetic letters or big letters cut out from a magazine. Show your child how you can add or take away letters to make new words. (A, B, E, F)
15. Make up words that rhyme with your child's name—it's okay if they're silly! Make up rhymes for other family members' names. (A, C, E)

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Part IV: Topics in Adult ESL Education and Family Literacy

Part IV provides discussion papers for educators who want more in-depth information pertaining to adult ESL education and family literacy. The following topics are addressed:

- Research on second language acquisition and learning to read in a second language
- Assessment of adult English language learners, including a discussion of federal requirements for accountability reporting and the use of assessments for tracking learner progress
- Assessment instruments, including annotated charts showing published assessment instruments that are used in the field to assess English language and Spanish language proficiency
- Research-based strategies for working with adult learners with learning disabilities and other special needs
- Transition strategies used to help learners progress beyond adult ESL classes to other educational and work opportunities
- Permanent residency and citizenship attainment, including strategies for preparing students for the citizenship exam

English Language and Literacy Learning: Research to Practice

How do adults learn to speak and read English as a second language?

What are the best ways to develop speaking and reading skills with ESL learners?

Over the past 20 years, a growing number of adult ESL educators and researchers have sought answers to these questions as they grapple with the challenges posed by an increasingly large and diverse population of adults in the United States learning English as a second language. This paper summarizes the literature on second language acquisition (focusing on learning to speak in a second language) and on adults learning to read in English and gives implications for instructional practice.

What Does the Research Say About Second Language Acquisition?

Studies of second language acquisition (SLA) focus primarily on the learning of oral language. They provide valuable information about how second languages are learned and the factors that influence the language learning process. Little research has been conducted on second language acquisition with English language learners in adult education contexts, and no controlled intervention studies have been done. The complexities of adult English as a second language (ESL) instruction make research in this field challenging. Investigating issues of culture, language, and education as well as tracking learner progress over time are not easy when working with diverse and mobile learner populations in varied learning contexts (e.g., workplace classes, general ESL classes, family literacy classes). However, the SLA literature gives important insights into the language acquisition process that can guide adult ESL instruction.

SLA researchers examine the development of communicative competence in a language—the ability to interpret the underlying meaning of a message, understand cultural references, use strategies to keep communication from breaking down, and apply the rules of grammar of the language (Savignon, 1997). They also study nonlinguistic influences on SLA such as age, anxiety, and motivation. (See Ellis, 1997; Gass & Selinker, 2001; & Pica, 2003 for extensive discussions of SLA theory and research.)

The following sections summarize the three major areas that are covered in the second language acquisition literature and that are critical to acquiring a second language: learner motivation, opportunities for interaction, and vocabulary knowledge. (This summary is adapted from Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003; see also NCLE's Web resource collection, *Second Language Acquisition*, for an annotated list of the studies that form the basis for this summary: http://www.cal.org/caela/ResSLA.htm.)

Motivation

Dörnyei (2002a, p. 8) defines motivation as "why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, [and] how hard they are going to pursue it." Studies indicate that *integrative motivation* (wanting to learn a language in order to identify with the community that speaks it) promotes SLA regardless of the age of the learner or whether the language is being learned as a second or a foreign language (Gardner, 1985; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Learners may have *instrumental motivation*, the desire to learn the language to meet their needs and goals, such as getting a job or talking to their children's teachers (Morris, 2001; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Whether learners' motivation is integrative or instrumental, research indicates that teachers should learn about and respond to learners' needs and goals when planning instruction (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998; Weddel & Van Duzer, 1997).

Teachers can help learners identify their motivations for learning English and their short-term goals and reflect on their progress and achievements. One way to do this is by using tools like those described below:

- Self-evaluation tools such as checklists to identify their skills, strengths, and weaknesses;
- Weekly checklists to track their progress towards meeting a learning goal; and
- Reflection tools such as learning diaries to help them build autonomy and take charge of their learning (Marshall, 2002).

(See *Needs Assessment and Learner Self-Evaluation*, page II–5, for examples of these tools and descriptions of ways they can be used.)

Recent research looks at how instructional contexts affect motivation. A learner's motivation may vary from day to day and even from task to task, and social factors (e.g., group dynamics, learning environment, and a learning partner's motivation) may affect a learner's attitude, effort, classroom behavior, and achievement (Dörnyei, 2002b). Therefore, teachers should create an environment that is conducive to learning by encouraging group cohesion in the classroom and by using varied and challenging instructional activities to help learners stay focused and engaged with instructional content (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998). Activities that are done in pairs and small groups can provide learners with opportunities to share information and build a sense of community (Florez & Burt, 2001).

Research also suggests that teachers should create opportunities for learners to continue their language learning outside of class (Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994). Projects that are started in class and continued outside class are one way to do this. For example, a class might work together to create a book of information about community services for new families. In class they might brainstorm ideas and develop the outline for the book. Outside class, individual learners might collect information about different community agencies,

write it up, and bring it to class to be compiled in the book. Projects like this one give learners opportunities to work with others to accomplish tasks and to use English in real-life situations. (See Moss & Van Duzer, 1998, *Project-based Learning For Adult English Language Learners*, for discussion.)

New research on motivation and second language acquisition is examining specific factors that influence motivation and learning, such as personal goals, levels of self-confidence, and features of the learning environment (Dörnyei, 2003; Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 2003).

Opportunities for Interaction

Interaction refers to communication between individuals, particularly when they are negotiating meaning or working to prevent a breakdown in communication (Ellis, 1999). Interaction provides learners with opportunities to receive language input (through hearing the language) and feedback (when the conversational partner responds, corrects, or asks for clarification). It also allows them to make changes to their language as the conversation proceeds (Gass, 1997; Long, 1996; Pica, 1994; Swain, 1995). This allows learners to "notice the gap" between their use of the language and correct, native speaker use (Schmidt & Frota, 1986, p. 311).

Empirical research with second language learners indicates that participating in language interactions facilitates second language development. For example, a study of conversational interaction and learners' acquisition of question formation found that interaction increased their rate of acquisition (Mackey, 1999).

Research on interaction includes studies of task-based language learning and focus on form.

Task-based learning

- The goal of an interactive task is for learners to focus together on a topic or activity and exchange meaning about it (Ellis, 1999). Most tasks are done in pairs or small groups. SLA researchers have found that carefully designed tasks give learners opportunities to use the language (in this case English) in authentic situations and in meaningful ways. They have also found that learners tend to produce longer sentences and negotiate meaning more often in interactive tasks than they do in teacher-fronted instruction, where the teacher stands at the front of the room and leads the discussion (Doughty & Pica, 1986). When designing tasks, teachers should consider the learners' language proficiency, the goals of the lesson, the language to be practiced, the skills to be learned and content areas to be covered, opportunities to give feedback to learners, and classroom logistics.
- Interactive tasks seem to be most successful when they:
    - Center on a problem that is new or unfamiliar to the participants;
    - Require learners to exchange information;

  - Have a specific outcome;
  - Involve discussion of details; and
  - Involve the use of naturally occurring conversation and narratives (Ellis, 2000).

- In *problem-solving tasks*, learners have opportunities to share ideas, build consensus, and explain decisions about real-life issues that are important to them. For example, a group might have a hypothetical amount of money to spend and figure out a monthly budget for a family of four. (See Van Duzer & Burt, 1999, for discussion and examples of problem-solving tasks.)
- *Information gap tasks*, in which two people share information to complete the task, may be more structured than problem solving tasks and give learners opportunities to ask and answer questions. In *one-way information gap tasks*, one learner has all of the information (e.g., one learner describes a picture while the other draws it). In *two-way information gap tasks*, both learners have information that they must share with the other to complete the task (e.g., both have some information about directions to a location, but they have to share the information that they have to complete the directions). See McKay & Tom, 1999, for examples of one-way and two-way tasks.)

(See *Activities to Promote Interaction and Communication,* Information Gap Activities, page II–49 & 50, for examples of information gap activities.)

Focus on form

Instruction focused on grammatical forms and correct grammatical usage does not need to take place in isolation. Rather, learners' attention can be drawn to grammatical forms in the context of meaningful activities. The teacher's focus on the forms to be taught can be informed by the problems that learners are having with comprehension or production (Long, 2000). Research studies suggest that instruction that uses a focus-on-form approach and that incorporates form with meaning is as effective as more traditional approaches in which grammar is taught in isolation (Norris & Ortega, 2001). When lessons are based on authentic communication and there is a focus on form within that context, learners incorporate new and correct structures into their language use (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001).

When teaching about the forms of language, teachers need to consider learners' needs and goals and their readiness to understand the instruction. Teachers then need to decide how to draw learners' attention to a specific form and give them opportunities to practice it in meaningful activities (Doughty & Williams, 1998). For example, in a workplace class with intermediate- or advanced-level learners, the class might read and discuss a memo from an employer to an employee and focus on the use of the passive voice in the memo (e.g., "This report *must be finished* by 3:00 today).

Vocabulary Knowledge

Word knowledge is an essential component of communicative competence, and it is important for production and comprehension of a second language (Coady & Huckin, 1997). What does it mean to know a word? Vocabulary knowledge includes both the number of words one knows and the depth of knowledge about those words. Depth of knowledge refers to the pronunciation, spelling, and various meanings of the word; the contexts in which it can be used; the frequency with which it is used; its various parts of speech and forms; and how it combines (or collocates) with other words (e.g., vocabulary item "squander" is often combined with "time," "money," or "resources," as in "squander resources") (Folse, 2004; Qian, 1999).

Recent research has focused on *incidental vocabulary*, new words that are learned when one is focused on a meaningful task, such as hearing or reading a story, rather than specifically on learning new words. Learners figure out the meanings of words by paying attention to "clues" in the context; for example, learning that "picnic" means a meal outside when hearing about a family that has a picnic at the beach. (See Gass, 1999, for a summary of research on incidental vocabulary acquisition.) However, researchers argue that learners need to understand about 3,000 word families in order to pick up word meaning from context (Laufer, 1997). (For example, the family of "think" includes think, thinks, thought, thoughtful, thoughtfully.) Teachers then need to help learners build their vocabulary. One way to approach vocabulary instruction is to organize the words to be learned into thematically related units (e.g., vocabulary related to eating out with friends or taking a trip to the mall) (Folse, 2004).

Research also suggests that learners gain vocabulary knowledge through extensive reading, especially when reading is accompanied by vocabulary building activities (Paribakht & Wesche, 1997; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000). Teachers should include opportunities for reading to be done in class and assist learners in selecting texts that are of high interest to and at the appropriate level for them. Teachers should preview the important vocabulary in a reading passage before learners read it and teach words that are key to the meaning and that occur frequently. They also should show learners how to use dictionaries effectively.

Negotiation of meaning seems to have a positive effect on vocabulary acquisition (de la Fuente, 2002; Ellis & He, 1999; Ellis, Tanaka, & Yamazaki, 1994). Teachers can provide learners with multiple opportunities to use new vocabulary in interactive situations in the following ways:

- Tasks requiring information sharing and information-gap activities (described on pages II–49 & 50);
- Games such as Bingo, Password, and Concentration;
- Projects and tasks that learners carry out outside of class, such as keeping vocabulary journals with new words they encounter and the strategies they use to learn them).

(See *Activities to Promote Interaction and Communication*, page II–41, for examples of these activities and games.)

Giving learners opportunities to interact with the teacher and with each other, planning instruction to include tasks that promote these opportunities, and teaching language forms and vocabulary in the context of meaningful learning activities are all ways in which second language acquisition research may be applied in the classroom.

What Does the Research Say About Learning to Read in English?

The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) found that more than half of the U. S. population studied had low literacy skills and that compared to native English speakers, a higher percentage of non-native English speakers read English at the lowest levels (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993; Greenburg, Macías, Rhodes, & Chan, 2001). Adults performing at the lowest levels had difficulty with basic literacy tasks in English, such as reading documents (e.g., time tables, forms, and maps), reading prose (e.g., newspaper articles, instructions on medicine bottles), and performing numeracy tasks (e.g., computing hours, calculating interest rates). These outcomes have caused concern that many adults, both native and non-native English speakers, lack the reading, writing, and functional skills necessary for living in a literate society. However, there is very little research on the reading development of adults who are non-native English speakers.

The National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) synthesized the limited research on adults learning English that was published between 1980 and 2002 (Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003). This synthesis focused on the reading development of adults in adult education and college-based intensive English programs (IEPs). The adults in these studies were ages 16 years and older and not enrolled in secondary schools. The research reviewed was published in refereed (peer-reviewed) journals, dissertations, the ERIC database, the Modern Language Association database, the Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts database, and books. Studies were included if they reported (1) outcomes related to reading (and, where applicable, general literacy) development, (2) descriptions of the adults participating, (3) details on the intervention or study situation, and (4) information on the procedures and outcome measures. The studies included used experimental or quasi-experimental methodologies based on comparisons between groups (with statistical tests for significance), non-experimental methods, and qualitative methods (descriptive and practitioner research). Theoretical discussions of reading development also were included. Descriptions of the articles reviewed, along with an annotated bibliography of the research (Adams & Burt, 2002 http://www.cal.org/caela/readingbib/) and a synthesis of the research (Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003 http://www.cal.org/store), are available online.

In addition, Kruidenier (2002) has reviewed the research on reading instruction with native English speakers in adult basic education (ABE) programs. This and other resources are available online at http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading.

This discussion draws from the resources above to give a brief overview of the following questions and suggest implications for instruction:

- What factors influence the literacy development of adults learning English, and what challenges do they face when learning to read?
- What reading skills do adult English language learners need?
- What are the overall benefits of reading in a second language?

What Factors Influence the Literacy Development of Adults Learning English, and What Challenges Do They Face?

The factors discussed most frequently in the literature on learning to read in English as a second language are summarized here—learners' first-language literacy, educational background, second-language proficiency, and goals for learning English. Additional factors include learners' ages; motivations to read; instructional, living, and working environments; socio-cultural backgrounds; and learning abilities or disabilities.

First Language Literacy

Researchers have identified six different types of literacy learners according to their first-language literacy background: pre-literate, non-literate, semi-literate, non-alphabet literate, non-Roman alphabet literate, and Roman alphabet literate.

Pre-literate learners come from cultures where literacy is not common in everyday life. They might include those whose native language is not written or is being developed (e.g., the Bantu of Somalia and the Dinka of Sudan). They often have had little or no exposure to written text and may not be aware of the purposes of literacy in everyday life. They need to be taught how written language works. They generally progress slowly in literacy and other language instruction and may need frequent re-teaching of skills.

Non-literate learners come from cultures where literacy is more common, but they have not had sufficient access to literacy, often because of their socio-economic or political status. (For instance, adults from Central America may not know how to read or write in their native Spanish because of disrupted schooling due to war and poverty.) Although they have not learned to read, they have probably been exposed to written language and may have greater awareness of the value and uses of literacy than pre-literate learners. These adults may be reluctant to disclose their limited literacy background in class, and instruction with them may proceed slowly.

Semi-literate learners usually have had access to literacy in their native culture, but because of their socio-economic status or political or educational situation, they have not achieved a high level of literacy in their native language. These adults may have left school at a young age for economic or political reasons (e.g., as did many Southeast Asian refugees and

Central American immigrants in the 1970s and 1980s), or they may have lived in the United States and developed oral English proficiency but not literacy.

Written materials used in teaching may be of limited use with pre-literate, non-literate, and semi-literate learners, and their retention of class material may be limited because they cannot use educational texts or take notes for later review. Because of their limited educational experiences, they may feel intimidated about learning English. At the same time, they are often highly motivated to learn. They need opportunities to increase their self-confidence in educational situations and to develop positive images of themselves as readers and writers (Goldberg, 1997; Strucker, 1997). They also may have learning disabilities that have not been diagnosed or addressed (Schwarz & Terrill, 2000). Programs should have procedures to identify and meet the needs of English language learners with learning disabilities. (See Artiles & Ortiz, 2002; Schwarz & Terrill, 2000, and *Adult English Language Learners and Learning Disabilities*, page IV–59 for discussions of ways to identify and work with these learners.)

The following groups of learners are literate in their first language, have already developed reading skills, have formed reading behaviors, and know that written language can represent speech. Described below are characteristics and implications for teaching reading to individuals from these groups.

- Learners who are *literate in a language with a non-alphabetic script* (e.g., Chinese or Japanese) may focus on entire words rather than on letters or other word parts (as English readers do when using phonological decoding to identify words). This is because the symbols in non-alphabetic scripts often represent syllables or entire words. The written symbols in these languages do not represent sounds, as letters do in alphabetic languages. Therefore, like young readers, as described in the report of the National Reading Panel (2000), they must develop an "alphabetic strategy" (Birch, 2002, p. 33) to be able to read and write in an alphabetic script (Adams, 1990).
- Learners who are *literate in a language with a non-Roman alphabetic script* (e.g., Arabic, Greek, Korean, Russian, or Thai) know how to read with an alphabet, but they may struggle to find English words in the dictionary, and they need time to process written materials presented in class, because the writing system of their first language is different from that of English, both in the letters and, in some cases the directionality of the writing (e.g., Arabic, which is written from right to left).
- Learners who are *literate in a language with a Roman-alphabetic script (*e.g., French, German, or Spanish) know about sound/symbol correspondences. With regard to vocabulary, they may find many linguistic similarities between their native languages and English. They can study ESL texts and take notes in class to learn new vocabulary or structures, and they can read outside of class. They still need to

learn the sound-symbol correspondences of English before they are able to read well (Hilferty, 1996; Strucker & Davidson, 2003).

For a more detailed discussion of the role of the first-language in reading development see Burt & Peyton (2003) at http://www.cal.org/caela/digests/reading.htm. For more discussion of the types of first language backgrounds described here, see Birch (2002); Hilferty (1996); Huntley (1992); and Strucker & Davidson (2003).

In many adult ESL programs, decisions about learner placement and instructional approaches are based solely on learners' oral proficiency in English. However, learners' first-language literacy should be taken into consideration as well, because it can strongly influence the types of instruction they need and the rates of progress they are likely to make (Robson, 1982; Strucker & Davidson, 2003). First-language literacy is an important factor in the following decisions:

- *Assigning learners to classes.* Pre-literate, non-literate, and semi-literate learners may have difficulty using writing to reinforce what they learn orally and may learn less rapidly than other learners. They may benefit from being placed in both oral ESL *and* English literacy classes and in different classes from literate learners. This is not always easy to do, but it is sometimes possible in larger programs.
- *Designing and teaching ESL lessons.* Lessons that involve conveying a lot of information through writing (e.g., on the board or in written exercises) will be harder for pre-, non-, and semi-literate learners to understand. They may need much more conversational and visual support for content and skills covered than do literate learners.
- *Teaching literacy skills.* Non- and low-literate learners need to be taught basic literacy skills such as sound/symbol correspondence, the relationship between written symbols and oral speech, and the directionality of writing. Those who are literate in their first language need a different focus. According to some researchers, literate learners need to know 3,000 to 5,000 words in English before they can transfer their literacy skills from their first language to English (Laufer, 1997). This is a fairly high level of English; as a result, even literate learners probably need a heavy emphasis on vocabulary building. Furthermore, the transfer of reading skills from the native language to English will not be automatic. Learners need to be shown how to use the reading skills they have in their first language to help them read in English. They will also need direct instruction in English sound/symbol correspondences and other reading strategies.

Educational Background

Learners' language proficiency and literacy are often linked with their educational experiences in the following ways:

- *Learners with limited or no literacy in their first language* have probably had little or no experience with formal education. They may not be accustomed to sitting at desks for long periods of time, listening to a teacher, interacting with other adults as fellow learners, getting information from print, and studying outside of class. Their educational experience may have involved watching and learning from others. Therefore, their learning will be different from that of learners who have had more experience with formal education. Literacy instruction with these learners is more likely to be successful when they believe it is relevant to their lives and they feel comfortable in the instructional setting (Hardman, 1999; Klassen & Burnaby, 1993).
- *Learners who are highly literate in their first language* are more likely to have had formal education in that language, but their prior educational experiences may differ from those they have in the United States (Constantino, 1995; Tse, 1996a, 1996b). They may come to classes in the United States expecting a great deal of direct teaching and traditional approaches to learning, such as memorizing vocabulary lists and doing mechanical exercises. They may also tend to focus more on reading accuracy than on fluency. To improve their reading fluency and increase their exposure to English vocabulary, they may benefit from pleasure reading of texts appropriate to their reading proficiency level (texts in which they can read approximately 95 percent of the words) (Cho & Krashen, 1994; Coady, 1997; Laufer, 1997; Sökmen, 1997; Tse, 1996a, 1996b).

Second-Language Proficiency

Adult English language learners have varying levels of proficiency in English, which may influence their reading speed and comprehension (Tan, Moore, Dixon, & Nicholson, 1994). Studies suggest that learners need some level of proficiency in the second language to read effectively in the language (Alderson, 1984; Carrell, 1991; Tan, et al., 1994). It is as yet unclear how much of a grammar and discourse foundation is needed before one can read effectively. It seems, however, that the amount of foundation needed will vary, depending on the students themselves (Grabe & Stoller, 2002).

Goals for Learning English

Adults learning English have different needs for literacy. Some of the most common are to be successful at work, participate in their children's education, achieve U.S. citizenship, participate in community activities in English, and pursue further education (Marshall, 2002).

Some learners may focus on improving their functional literacy for *advancement in the workplace* (Mikulecky, 1992). Many cannot advance in their jobs or receive the job training they need until they have achieved a functional level of English literacy. In many cases, a General Educational Development (GED) certificate may be required for job promotion (Mikulecky, 1992; Strucker, 1997).

Others may want to improve their literacy skills to *help their children in school* (Shanahan, Mulhern, & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995). The belief that parents' literacy influences children's eventual literacy attainment is one of the reasons behind the support for family literacy in the U.S. Department of Education (National Center for ESL Literacy Education, 2002). Since much of school-related communication is conducted in written English, limited English literacy may limit parents' involvement in their children's education and their communication with teachers, administrators, and counselors. Furthermore, adults who are not literate in English will have difficulty reading in English with their children and helping them learn English vocabulary.

A common literacy goal of adult ESL students focuses on *community participation*. Effective community participation includes having the skills to handle financial transactions and keep informed about developments in the community (Klassen & Burnaby, 1993; Strucker, 1997). In addition to integrating into the English-speaking community, adults who speak languages other than English and also are literate in English can be valuable resources for other community members. Opportunities for involvement in community activities are usually announced in writing and in English, and most advocacy activities that reach decision makers are conducted in English.

Adult ESL students also may wish to *gain U. S. citizenship*. To do this, they need to pass a written test on U.S. government and history, and at every step in the residency and citizenship process, they need to have the literacy skills to fill out immigration and citizenship forms.

Finally, many learners want to improve their literacy skills to *increase their opportunities to continue their education*. Some need to obtain a high school equivalency degree. Others are seeking English certification of degrees and skills they have in their native language or their home country. Still others need English reading skills to pass tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in order to enroll in institutions of higher education.

Curricula and materials used in instruction (commercial textbooks and teacher-produced materials) should match the goals of the learners. That is, school-related instruction and materials should be used with parents in family literacy programs, workplace instruction and materials should be used with workers, and civics-focused instruction and materials should be used in citizenship classes. It is a challenge, of course, to address learners' interests when a variety of goals for developing literacy are represented in one class or program.

What Reading Skills Do Adult English Language Learners Need?

Researchers working with native English speakers have focused on the following component skills of reading development: alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. (See Kruidenier, 2002, for discussion of these reading component skills with adult native English speakers.) Researchers working with adults learning English as a second language have focused on similar skills, but they are labeled and grouped somewhat differently—phonological processing, vocabulary knowledge, syntactic processing, and background knowledge. Figure IV–1 shows the terms used in reading research and instruction with native English speakers and gives implications for instruction with these two groups. Following the figure is a discussion of findings from research on English reading with adults learning English and their implications for instruction.

Figure IV–1: **Reading Terms and Their Application**

Alphabetics. "Alphabetics includes both phonemic awareness, or knowledge of the sounds of spoken language; and word analysis, or knowledge of the connection between written letters and sounds (letter-sound correspondence)" (Kruidenier, 2002, p. 35).

> *Phonological awareness* is the "broad term that includes phonemic awareness. In addition to identifying and manipulating larger parts of spoken language, such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes, phonological awareness encompasses an awareness of other aspects of sound, such as rhyming, alliteration, and intonation" (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001, p. 3).
>
> *Phonemic awareness*. One type of phonological awareness, "phonemic awareness, is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds—phonemes—in spoken words" (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001, p. 4).
>
> *Phonics* "is the understanding that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes (the sounds of *spoken* language) and graphemes (the letters and spellings that represent those sounds in *written* language)" (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001, p. 4).
>
> *Word analysis* involves decoding words, sight word recognition, dictionary use, and structural analysis of words (e.g., knowledge of prefixes and suffixes) (Kruidenier, 2002).

- *Application to native English speakers*: Instruction in word analysis with native English speakers is usually done by having learners pronounce letters, word parts, or whole words. Nonsense words are often used to push learners to decode and not rely on sight words. The ability to read sight words is often assessed by having learners read lists of regularly and irregularly spelled words.
- *Application to non-native English speakers:* Alphabetics instruction often assumes high oral language skills and vocabulary knowledge, which adults learning English may not have. Using nonsense words is a questionable activity with these learners, who do not necessarily have proficiency in oral English.

Fluency is the ability to read easily and accurately with appropriate rhythm, intonation, and expression.

- *Application to native English speakers:* Instruction focuses on the accuracy and speed of oral or silent reading.

- *Application to non-native English speakers:* Oral reading accuracy and speed may be complicated by interference from the native language and may not indicate actual reading skill in the native language or in English.

Vocabulary refers to the words that a person understands and knows the meaning. Vocabulary knowledge is critical to the comprehension processes of a skilled reader.

- *Application to native English speakers:* Vocabulary building activities often build on themes such as family, the community, or the workplace. Learners are encouraged to determine the meanings of words from context. Learners often define words or choose the correct meanings of words among several choices.
- *Application to non-native English speakers*: Adults learning English may not have the background knowledge they need to work effectively with the themes usually used in U. S. classes. Teachers need to use themes that learners are familiar with or give them the background information they need. Learners need to have multiple exposures to specific words in different contexts and know how to use English and bilingual dictionaries (Folse, 2004). They need explicit instruction in defining words and doing multiple choice exercises

Reading comprehension is the ability to derive meaning from a written text. Skilled readers are purposeful and active in applying comprehension strategies to texts.

- *Application to native English speakers:* Native English speakers have oral English and culture-specific knowledge that guides their understanding of reading texts used in U. S. classes, and they can often describe orally the strategies they use to comprehend what they read.
- *Application to non-native English speakers:* English language skill and cultural knowledge may impede English language learners' comprehension and ability to talk about texts. Some researchers argue that readers need to understand more than 95 percent of the words in a passage before they can effectively determine meaning from context (e.g., Qian, 1999). Non-native English speakers may use comprehension strategies in their native language that they need to be taught to use when reading English, and they may not be able to talk about the strategies that they use. Teachers need to tie readings to learners' native languages and cultures whenever possible and teach specific strategies for comprehending a passage. Teachers should preview unfamiliar ideas, vocabulary, and formats (titles, pictures, graphics, and text structure) of texts before learners read them.

Research on Adults Learning to Read in English

The following discussion is organized around the categories that researchers studying English language learners typically focus on phonological processing, vocabulary knowledge, syntactic processing, and background knowledge.

Phonological Processing

Phonological processing (or decoding) involves interpreting written letters as sounds (*phonological awareness*) and combining letters into syllables and words (*word analysis*) (Adams, 1990; Kruidenier, 2002; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Some researchers argue that phonological processing skills are among the primary reading skill components that differentiate native and non-native English speakers learning to read (Koda, 1999). Researchers also argue that teaching adult ESL literacy students the letter-sound

correspondences in the English writing system through phonics instruction will improve their reading (Jones, 1996; Koda, 1999; Strucker & Davidson, 2003). Even advanced English learners whose native language is written with the Roman alphabet need instruction in decoding and in matching letters to sounds in English (Hilferty, 1996; Strucker & Davidson, 2003).

Some ways that teachers can develop students' phonological processing skills are to provide opportunities for them to do the following:

- Match letters to sounds (*phonics*).
- Listen to words related to a specific topic that begin with similar sounds (e.g., food – cheese, chicken, cherries) (*phonemic awareness*).
- Attach morphemes to words (e.g., past tense markers on verbs, plural and possessive markers on nouns) and observe pronunciation changes (*word analysis*).
- Participate in oral readings and choral readings (*phonemic awareness*).

(See *Activities to Promote Reading Development*, page II–57, for descriptions of specific activities.)

Note: Beginning literacy learners may need structured, systematic instruction in decoding (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001). Kruidenier (2002) cites research on children that may apply to adult learners. This research shows that systematic phonics instruction is more effective with beginning readers than incidental instruction. Although the research cited was not done on English language learners, teachers working with groups of very low readers may find a structured program useful. "A program of systematic phonics instruction clearly identifies a carefully selected and useful set of letter-sound relationships and then organizes the introduction of these relationships into a logical instructional sequence" (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001, p. 16). Some examples of systematic language programs include *The Wilson Reading System, Lindamood-Bell,* and *Orton-Gillingham.*

Vocabulary knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge has been found to have a strong effect on reading comprehension (Brown, 1993; Sökmen, 1997; Coady, 1997; Coady, Mgoto, Hubbard, Graney, & Mokhtari, 1994; Folse, 2004; Zimmerman, 1997). Reading specialists argue that readers need to know 3,000- 5000 words in the language they are reading in order to read independently (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Laufer, 1997). Vocabulary knowledge includes both breadth (the number of words a reader knows or the number of content areas in which a reader is familiar with the vocabulary) and depth (the amount of knowledge a reader knows about individual words including their pronunciation, spelling, the parts of speech they may be used for, prefixes and suffixes that can be used with them and how those change word meaning and use, how the words are used in sentences, and various meanings of the words).

The following strategies to increase learners' vocabulary knowledge have been suggested in the literature:

- Teach vocabulary that learners will need to use often (high-frequency vocabulary).
- Teach key sight words that learners will need, such as *emergency, 911, last name, first name*, especially when learners are at beginning literacy levels. (Sight word knowledge is the ability to recognize words without having to sound them out.)
- Provide multiple opportunities for learners to read and use specific words in different texts and activities that are thematically related, such as the following:
    - Brainstorm vocabulary on a specific topic, such as food shopping.
    - Practice food vocabulary with flash cards.
    - Practice dialogues in which food vocabulary is used (e.g. "I am going shopping." "What do you need?" "I need bread, beans, and chicken.").
    - Complete cloze exercises (worksheets with sentences or paragraphs about food; key vocabulary words related to food are left out, with a blank for the learners to fill in).
    - Make a shopping list of items they need to buy.
    - For homework, copy food words from packages.
- Preview key vocabulary that will be used in a text or activity.
- Give the meanings of vocabulary words that may be difficult.
- Have learners write their own sentences with words they have read in a text.
- Teach learners how to use dictionaries.
- Use computer programs to provide more interactive vocabulary learning opportunities.

(See *Activities to Promote Reading Development*, page II–57, for descriptions of specific activities.)

Syntactic processing

Syntactic processing (related to reading comprehension in the literature on native English speakers) involves understanding the structures of the language and making connections among words in a sentence or among sentences and paragraphs in a text. For example, learners should be taught language forms that change the meanings of words, such as prefixes and suffixes. Learners should know common prefixes, such as non-, in-, im-, and un- that make words negative (as in *possible/impossible*, *happy/unhappy*), and suffixes, such

as the -ed verb ending used to form the past tense and the passive voice. They should also understand words that bring cohesion to a text (e.g., *however, therefore, nevertheless*).

Grammar instruction should be integrated with reading instruction, with learners' attention directed to syntactic structures in reading texts. Teachers can point out certain grammatical structures in a passage (e.g., all of the past tense verbs), choose reading passages that highlight the grammatical structures that students are learning, and have students find and mark specific grammatical structures.

Teachers also can help build learners' knowledge of grammar and syntax by having them do the following:

- Learners complete a cloze exercise, in which specific words left out of a text with blanks that they fill in. Some exercises might focus on nouns, others on verbs or adjectives, and so on. To provide support for students, these exercises may be done initially as a whole class, then in small groups, and then individually.
- Learners identify the parts of speech of certain words in a text (nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, etc.).
- Learners write their own sentences or longer texts, using specific grammatical forms (e.g., past tense verbs) and cohesion words (e.g., *however, therefore*).

(See *Activities to Promote Reading Development*, page II–57, for descriptions of specific activities.)

Background knowledge

Background knowledge is also related to reading comprehension in the literature on native English speakers. Readers generally understand texts more easily if they are familiar with and have information about the topics covered and the genres and text structures involved (Adams & Collins, 1985; Carrell, 1991; Goldberg, 1997; Hudson, 1982). If learners have low reading proficiency, readings about culturally familiar topics should be selected (Eskey, 1997). Even if readers are more advanced, the topics and structures of reading texts should be reviewed before learners begin reading, so that they are familiar (Goldberg, 1997).

To build on learners' background knowledge, teachers can do the following:

- Relate reading texts to ideas, concepts, and events from learners' cultures and personal experiences whenever possible.
- Use visual aids and physical objects to support understanding of unfamiliar ideas and themes.
- Preview unfamiliar ideas, actions, and settings.
- Preview titles, pictures, graphics, grammatical structures, and cohesion words used.

- Create language experience texts. In the language experience approach, learners have an experience together or share knowledge about an experience, such as taking a class trip, shopping for food, or coming to the United States. They discuss or answer questions about the experience and the teacher writes a text. They then copy the text and read it themselves. (See Holt, 1995, and *Activities to Promote Reading Development,* page II–57, for details about developing language experience stories.)

What Are the Benefits of Reading in a Second Language?

We have described above how second language proficiency facilitates reading development, but reading in English also can help develop language proficiency. The act of reading itself exposes us to language that we process as we seek to gain information that is important and meaningful. Therefore, at the same time that students learn from their reading about gardening, parenting in the United States, U.S. citizenship, or workplace benefits, they also are learning English.

Some of the benefits of reading for language development are the following:

- Reading texts provides one source of language input.
- Extensive or sustained reading can promote knowledge of the vocabulary and structures of English.
- Learners engaged in extensive reading tend to be more likely to enjoy reading and feel comfortable reading new texts.
- Extensive reading seems to develop writing ability in some learners, especially those with greater English proficiency and literacy skills.

(See Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, & Kuehn, 1990; Cho & Krashen, 1994; Constantino, 1995; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Tse, 1996a, 1996b for discussion of these benefits.)

In summary, reading can build second language vocabulary, conversational proficiency, and writing ability as well as reading proficiency. Teachers need to carefully select texts for learners or assist them in choosing their own texts at appropriate levels of reading difficulty. They need to focus on the level of decoding, vocabulary knowledge, and cultural or background knowledge needed to handle the texts. They also need to create classroom activities that will help learners understand and work with the texts and develop the key reading component skills.

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Assessing Adult English Language Learners

Learner assessments are used in adult basic education (ABE), adult English as a Second Language (ESL), and family literacy programs for many different purposes: to place learners in appropriate instructional levels and classes, to measure their progress and motivate them to advance to higher levels, to qualify them to enroll in academic or job training programs, to document program effectiveness, and to demonstrate learner gains in order to meet accountability requirements. They also are used throughout a program to determine learners' goals and needs and to help learners to assess their own progress.

Because of these different purposes, programs use a variety of assessment instruments and procedures. This paper first explains federal accountability requirements and the assessments used to meet those requirements. It then describes measures used for other purposes, including learner needs assessment and assessment to inform teachers and learners about learners' progress.

Program Accountability

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998) requires that each state report learner outcomes in the following areas:

- Improvements in English language proficiency and literacy, numeracy, and problem solving
- Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (GED)
- Placement in postsecondary education and training
- Entry into employment or retention in employment (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

Improvements in English language proficiency and literacy are reported in terms of level descriptors defined by the National Reporting System (NRS). The six levels for ESL apply to speaking and listening, reading and writing, and functional and workplace skills ranging from beginning ESL literacy to high advanced ESL. (See http://www.nrsweb.org for a description of the purposes and structure of the NRS and the ESL functioning level descriptors.)

A standardized assessment procedure (a test or performance assessment) must be used to measure level gains, but the choice of assessment tool is left up to each state. Some states have chosen one standardized test. Several states allow choices from a list of approved tests. Most states currently use *BEST Oral Interview*, *BEST Literacy*, *BEST Plus, or CASAS*. (For information about these tests, see *English Language Assessment Instruments for Adults Learning English*, page IV–31.) Adult education and family literacy program staff must follow the assessment procedures in place in their states if the program receives federal funding.

Assessment Validity, Reliability, and Appropriateness

The assessments used for program accountability must be valid, reliable, and appropriate. This has raised important questions for the field. What are features of assessments that make them valid, reliable, and appropriate? (For more detailed discussion of these issues, see American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 1999).

What makes an assessment valid?

Assessment is valid when the test, or other instrument, assesses what it is intended to measure, and when uses of the assessment results are only those for which the instrument was designed (Messick, 1989). This view takes into account both the validity of the test itself and the use of the test scores; a test's validity depends on what it is used for, in what contexts, and for what purposes. In terms of assessments used to fulfill NRS requirements, the answers to the questions shown below are important.

- Does learner performance match the NRS descriptors?
- How well does the test demonstrate learner progress?
- How indicative of program quality are learner performances on the assessment?

Any assessment used for NRS purposes is valid only if the inferences made about the learners on the basis of the test scores can be related to the NRS descriptors, or what the learners can do (proficiency). The assessment also must be sensitive enough to learner gains to be able to show progress, since the quality of programs is to be judged by learner performance on the assessment.

What makes an assessment reliable?

An assessment is reliable if scores are consistent when the test is repeated on a population of individuals or groups. For example, if a learner takes a test once, then takes it again an hour later and maybe another hour after that, the learner should get about the same score each time, provided nothing else has changed.

Test reliability can be affected by a number of factors: the test itself, the test administrator, the person who does the scoring, the testing procedures, the conditions under which the test is administered, or even the examinee. For example, an examinee might be feeling great the day of the pre-test but facing a family crisis on the day of the post-test.

Who has responsibility for ensuring that an assessment is reliable? The developers of the assessment must demonstrate that reliability *can* be achieved. Program staff using the assessment must administer it in the ways it is designed to be administered. Programs need to train the individuals who will administer the test so that it will be administered appropriately each time it is used, and they need to monitor its administration and scoring.

Programs also must ensure that enough time (or hours of instruction) has passed for learners to show gains.

What makes an assessment appropriate?

A good language proficiency test is made up of language tasks that replicate what goes on in the real world (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Thus *performance assessments*, which require test takers to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in ways that closely resemble real-life situations or settings (National Research Council, 2002), are most appropriate. Performance assessments generally reflect language used in the real world better than selected-response tests (e.g., true-false or multiple choice).

Performance assessments require learners to accomplish tasks that demonstrate what they know and can do. Examples of performance assessment tasks include oral interviews, oral or written reports (e.g., how to become a citizen), projects (e.g., researching, producing, and distributing a booklet on recreational opportunities available in the community), or demonstrations (e.g., filling out forms, writing a note in response to a memo from a child's teacher). Information from a variety of performance assessments provides a more complete picture of learners' abilities than can be gathered from performance on one standardized test alone (Van Duzer, 2002).

For performance assessments to be used for accountability purposes, they need to be standardized. Programs should check with their state representatives to see what assessments can be used for accountability reporting. (See *English Language Assessment Instruments for Adults Learning English*, page IV–31, for a list of some of the performance assessments used for NRS reporting. For more detailed discussion of test appropriateness, see Kenyon & Van Duzer, 2003.)

Other Uses of Assessments

Not all assessments are used for program accountability. They also may be used to determine learners' goals and needs, to place learners in appropriate instructional levels and classes, to measure learners' progress and help them move to more advanced levels, to qualify them to enroll in academic or job training programs, and to document program effectiveness. To accomplish these purposes, programs often use a variety of different assessments, including both standardized and alternative measures.

Alternative assessments include surveys, interviews, checklists, observations, teacher-developed tests, learner self-assessment, portfolios, and performance-based tests (Van Duzer, 2002). These assessments allow program administrators and teachers to learn what adults need and want to learn (in a needs assessment) and monitor their learning from classroom-based activities (in ongoing assessment). Alternative assessments may be conducted in learners' native languages if that is reasonable. For example, *surveys and interviews* are often used soon after enrollment to find out about adults' and their children's

language and literacy use at home and at work, what they believe they do well, and what they want to learn. These kinds of assessments also are used to place learners in classes. *Portfolios,* or collections of individuals' work, can include such items as book reports, notes from interviews, learners' reflections on their progress, writing samples, data from performance-based assessments, and scores on standardized tests. From *program-developed performance-based tests,* instructors, administrators, and learners can get information about how the learners use English to accomplish different tasks. Skills such as reading a chart or locating information on a schedule can be related to actual situations that learners might encounter. Authentic materials such as job schedules, pay stubs, and union contracts are often used to assess learner knowledge and skills in workplace programs (Holt & Van Duzer, 2000).

Both standardized and alternative assessments have disadvantages. Standardized tests may not capture the incremental changes in learning that occur over short periods of instructional time. This is particularly a problem in adult education programs where learners may have only a few hours per week to devote to attending classes or where instruction is focused on a limited number of learner goals. Because it takes a long time to learn a language, learners may not have enough instructional time to demonstrate gain on a standardized test.

Alternative assessments may be time consuming for both learners and teachers. In addition, data from alternative assessments do not meet federal accountability requirements, and they may not meet eligibility requirements for job training programs, higher level classes, or certification. Because of these limitations, ESL programs often use a combination of standardized and alternative assessments to assess literacy and language proficiency.

Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Assessments

The time it takes for learners to show a gain on an assessment equivalent to at least one level —as defined by the NRS—depends on both program and learner factors.

Program factors:

- Intensity of the classes (how long and how many times per week)
- Training and experience of the instructors
- Adequacy of facilities (comfortable, well-lit)
- Resources available to instructors and learners

Learner factors:

- Educational background (including literacy in the native language)
- Age
- Experiences with trauma
- Opportunities to use the language outside of instructional time
- Time and ability to attend class

Principles of Effective Assessment

For both standardized and alternative assessments, application of the following principles will produce effective assessment procedures:

1. Clearly identify the purpose of the assessment (why the learners are being assessed) and what learning is to be assessed (e.g., increased speaking proficiency).
2. Select assessment instruments and procedures that match the learning goals of the program (e.g., an oral interview to show progress in speaking skills, writing samples to show progress in writing) and that engage learners so they are interested and will strive to do their best.
3. Whenever possible, use multiple measures to present a more complete picture of what has been learned.
4. Ensure that adequate resources are available to carry out the assessments (e.g., enough materials, comfortable environment, adequately trained administrators and scorers).
5. Be aware of the limitations of the assessments selected.
6. Remember that assessment is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Share assessment results with learners and instructors, as well as with administrative staff and funders.

Conclusion

Over the past decade, the United States has made progress in creating a cohesive adult education system through legislation such as the Workforce Investment Act and through efforts to standardize learner assessment and program reporting. The areas described above represent positive steps in addressing the complexities of demonstrating learner progress.

Additional Resources for Assessing Adult English Language Learners

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English Language Assessment Instruments for Adults Learning English

This section provides names, descriptions, and availability information for English language proficiency tests that are designed for adults, including native speakers of Spanish, who are learning English as a second language. The section includes only tests that are currently in use in programs in the United States. Tests that have fallen out of common use and that are used at the university level are not listed.

The information is divided into two sections. In the first section, Figure IV–1 lists tests that assess oral English proficiency. Figure IV–2 in the second section lists those used to assess reading, writing, and grammar skills.

If a program receives federal funding, a standardized assessment procedure (a test or performance assessment) must be used to measure level gains, but the choice of assessment tool is left up to each state. Adult education and family literacy programs must follow the assessment procedures in place in their states. Some states have chosen one standardized test, but several states allow choices from among a list of approved tests. Most states currently use *BEST Oral Interview*, *BEST Literacy*, *BEST Plus, or CASAS*. These tests are listed first in each section.

If test scores are aligned with student performance levels (SPLs) or the U.S. Department of Education's National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning levels, that information is provided. Charts with the Student Performance Level (SPL) descriptors for English listening comprehension and oral communication and with the NRS ESL functioning level descriptors begin on page IV–47. (See *Assessing Adult English Language Learners*, page IV–25, for discussion of the assessment requirements of the National Reporting System. See http://www.nrsweb.org for a description of the purposes and structure of the NRS and the ESL functioning level descriptors.)

If the test is performance-based, that information is provided as well. The following definitions are used to describe performance-based assessments:

- "….language performance in terms of the ability to use the language effectively and appropriately in real-life situations" (Buck, Byrnes, & Thompson, 1989).
- Language is used in social interactions to accomplish purposeful tasks (e.g., interacting with another individual in a conversation, writing a text, finding information in a chart or a schedule). Performance is assessed by documenting the successful completion of the task or by using a rubric to assess various dimensions of carrying out the task (e.g., listening comprehension and language complexity in responses to questions in an oral interview) (Alamprese & Kay, 1993; Van Duzer and Berdán, 1999).

References

Alamprese, J.A., & Kay, A. (1993). *Literacy on the cafeteria line: Evaluation of skills enhancement training program.* Washington, DC: COSMOS Corporation and Ruttenberg, Kilgallon & Associates.

Buck, K., Byrnes, H., & Thompson, I. (Eds.). (1989). *The ACTFL oral proficiency interview tester training manual.* Yonkers, NY: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Van Duzer, C., & Berdán, R. (1999). Perspectives on assessment in adult ESOL instruction. In J. Comings, B. Garner, & C. Smith (Eds.), *The annual review of adult learning and literacy,* pp. 200-242. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Figure IV–1: Tests That Assess Oral English Proficiency

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
Basic English Skills Test—BEST Oral Interview **Purpose:** To assess the survival listening and speaking ability of non-native speakers of English. **Target:** Adult English language learners at the survival- and pre-employment-skills levels. **Method and format:** Individually administered face-to-face interview with simulated real-life listening and speaking tasks, including personal questions and directions **Content:** Tasks include telling time, asking for and following directions, counting money to buy items, verifying correct change, and conversing socially. Skill areas tested include communication, fluency, pronunciation, and listening comprehension. **Administration time:** 15 minutes per student. **Levels and scoring:** Scores are reported as student performance levels (SPLs) 1-7; and National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning levels, from Beginning ESL Literacy to High Advanced ESL (into but not out of this level). Individual scores are given for each skill area. **Reliability/validity:** BEST validity and reliability procedures meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) (1999). The *BEST Test Manual* contains detailed information about test validity and reliability.	**Number of forms:** Two **Materials available:** Interviewer's booklets, scoring sheets, training video **Center for Applied Linguistics** 4646 40th Street NW Washington, DC 20016 202-362-0700 http://www.cal.org/BEST/
BEST Plus **Purpose:** To assess the listening and speaking ability of non-native speakers of English.	**Number of forms:** The computer-adaptive version delivers different

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
Target: Adult English language learners from beginning to advanced levels. **Method and format:** Performance-based; individual face-to-face interviews. In the computer-adaptive version, the computer delivers the appropriate sequence of items based on the examinee's responses as entered by the administrator. In the print-based version, the administrator uses a locator to determine appropriate text level, administers the test, and marks scores in the test booklet. **Content:** Language used in everyday communication at home, at work, in the community; communicative language functions such as providing information, giving opinions. **Administration time:** 5-20 minutes per student for computer adaptive version; 10-20 minutes per student for print-based version. **Levels and scoring:** Test scores are reported in terms of a *BEST Plus* score; student performance levels (SPLs) 0-10; and National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning levels, from Beginning ESL Literacy to High Advanced ESL. **Reliability/validity:** *BEST Plus* has undergone rigorous test development and validation procedures that meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) (1999). The *BEST Plus Technical Report* contains detailed information about test validity and reliability.	versions of the test depending on the level of learner responses. The print-based version has three forms. **Materials available:** Training for test administrators, practice and computer-adaptive test on CD-ROM, semi-adaptive printed test booklet with picture cue book, scoring rubric, administrator's guide technical manual **Center for Applied Linguistics** 4646 40th Street NW Washington, DC 20016 866-845-BEST (2378) http://www.cal.org/bestplus
CASAS ESL Appraisal—Listening **Purpose:** To assess the English listening comprehension of non-native speakers of English for placement and to identify the appropriate pre-test for progress testing. **Target:** Adult English language learners in basic skills programs; must be literate in English. **Method and format:** The Appraisal is a group-administered 23-item multiple choice test; students listen to a cassette tape and choose from three options for each item. **Content:** Content includes life skills vocabulary and language functions. Test items are aligned with more than 300 learner competencies related to basic communication, employability and workplace skills, and computer literacy. **Administration time:** 25 minutes. **Levels and scoring:** Scores are reported on a numerical scale. CASAS skill descriptors provide information on how	**Number of forms:** One **Materials available:** Training is required for all test administrators. Materials are available only after training has been completed. **CASAS** 51551 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123 858-292-2900 http://www.casas.org

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
the numerical score corresponds to the ability to accomplish life skills and job-related tasks and correspondence of scaled scores to student performance levels (SPLs). Scores indicate appropriate placement levels. **Reliability/validity:** "All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) and the American Psychological Association (APA). The *CASAS Technical Manual* contains detailed information about test validity and reliability" (publisher's statement).	
CASAS Life Skills Pre - and Post-tests—ESL Listening **Purpose:** To assess the development of adult English language learners' functional listening skills within an instructional level. **Target:** Adult English language learners in basic skills programs. **Method and format:** This assessment is a group-administered 23-item multiple choice test; students listen to a cassette tape and choose from three options for each item. After 80-100 hours of instruction, learners' progress may be measured with the appropriate post-test. **Content:** Content includes lifeskills vocabulary and language functions. Test items are aligned with more than 300 learner competencies related to basic communication, employability and workplace skills, and computer literacy. **Administration time:** 28-40 minutes. **Levels and scoring:** Scores are reported on a numerical scale; CASAS skill descriptors provide information on how the numerical score corresponds to the ability to accomplish life skills and job-related tasks and correspondence of scaled scores to student performance levels (SPLs). The post-test gives measurable results after 80-100 hours of instruction. **Reliability/validity:** "All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) and the American Psychological Association (APA). The *CASAS Technical Manual* contains detailed information about test validity and reliability" (publisher's statement).	**Number of forms:** Pre- and post-test at each level **Materials available:** Training is required for all test administrators. Materials are available only after training has been completed. **CASAS** 51551 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123 858-292-2900 http://www.casas.org

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
CASAS Workplace Speaking (Available in late 2004) **Purpose:** To assess the oral proficiency of adult English language learners in workplace contexts. **Target:** Adult English language learners in the workplace and in job readiness programs; best for students at intermediate and advanced levels. **Method and format:** Performance-based; an individually administered face-to-face interview. **Content:** Content includes workplace vocabulary and language functions. Test items are aligned with learner competencies related to job skills and job information, social language, and workplace security and customer service. **Administration time:** 10-15 minutes. **Levels and scoring:** The interviewer scores responses using a 0-1-2 scoring system. **Reliability/validity:** "All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) and the American Psychological Association (APA). The *CASAS Technical Manual* contains detailed information about test validity and reliability" (publisher's statement).	**Number of forms:** One **Materials available:** This test is currently being field tested and will be available later in 2004. Training is required for all test administrators. Training is available in the Workplace Speaking Assessment Manual. **CASAS** 51551 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123 858-292-2900 http://www.casas.org
ACT COMPASS-ESL Listening Test **Purpose:** To assess English listening proficiency of non-native English-speaking postsecondary students for placement in higher education courses or intensive English programs. **Target:** Adult English language learners. **Method and format:** Multiple-choice format questions delivered through ACT's computer-adaptive COMPASS system, running in a Windows environment. **Content:** The test focuses on language used in everyday situations and in academia. Listening tasks increase in difficulty across multiple proficiency levels with the rate of speech, vocabulary, diction, and use of idiomatic and metaphorical language all increasing at higher levels. As listening stimuli increase in length at the highest levels, students are allowed to take notes as they would in a lecture setting. The intent of the test is to measure listening skills	**Number of forms:** One **Materials available:** Package includes test materials, proficiency descriptors, reporting/data management material **ACT** 500 ACT Drive P.O. Box 168 Iowa City, Iowa 52243-0168 319/337-1053 http://www.act.org

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
rather than short-term memory. **Administration time:** Depends on how the administering institution sets up the test. **Levels and scoring:** The test is designed to assess skills from word-picture correlation to academic inferential listening. It is effective for placement but not comprehensive enough to assess achievement. **Reliability/validity:** No information available from publisher.	
Adult Language Assessment Scales—Oral (A-LAS Oral) **Purpose:** To assess English listening and speaking proficiency of non-native English speakers. **Target:** Adult English language learners. **Method and format:** Performance-based; individual face-to-face interviews. **Content:** The test focuses on language used in everyday situations and on the job. The short form tests vocabulary, conversations, making sentences, newscast story retelling; the long form adds pronunciation, and sounds in words. **Administration time:** 20-25 minutes for short form; additional 5-10 minutes for long form. **Levels and scoring:** The test is designed to assess skills from no English to entry-level workforce. Skill areas are individually scored to identify areas for targeted instruction; combined scores indicate overall proficiency. It is effective for placement but not comprehensive enough to assess achievement. **Reliability/validity:** "Developers normed and validated Adult LAS by testing both native English speakers and ESL adults in various employment and educational environments. By measuring proficiency with a 90% accuracy level, Adult LAS has proven to be a valid, reliable adult language assessment" (publisher's statement).	**Number of forms:** Two **Materials available:** Administration manual, scoring and interpretation manual, picture cue book, audio cassette, individual student answer books, and profile sheets **CTB/McGraw-Hill** 20 Ryan Ranch Road Monterey, CA 93940 800-538-9547 http://www.ctb.com/
Adult Rating of Oral English (AROE) **Purpose:** To assess the workplace listening and speaking proficiency of non-native speakers of English. **Target:** Non-native-English-speaking adults in vocational/life skills programs. **Method and format:** Performance-based. A rater assesses a student based on in-class interaction or on-the-job performance, and completes a matrix based on observations. **Content:** Items test pronunciation, grammar, general and	**Number of forms:** One **Materials available:** Rater's handbook, technical manual, training video, individual student response matrices

Tests of Oral English Proficiency	Availability
vocational vocabulary, conversation, instructions, explanations, and clarification. **Administration time:** Observation over 15-30 contact hours. **Levels and scoring:** The matrix divides skills into six levels of proficiency; brief descriptions for each level are provided in the matrix. **Reliability/validity:** Information on reliability and validity is available in the AROE Technical Manual.	**Development Associates** 1730 North Lynn Street Arlington, VA 22209 703-276-0677 http://www.devassoc.com/devassoc/index.html
English as a Second Language Oral Assessment (ESLOA) **Purpose:** To measure the ability of non-native English speakers to understand and speak English. **Target:** Adult non-native speakers of English. **Method and format:** Performance-based; individual face-to-face interviews. The test was originally designed to be used in tutor-student situations. It moves through four progressively more difficult levels. At the first level, the administrator asks simple questions and students may respond orally or by pointing; at the fourth level students are asked to respond to hypothetical questions, describe events, and change verb tenses. **Content:** Level 1: comprehension of specific vocabulary and basic grammatical structures; Level 2: ability to create language using basic vocabulary and grammar; Level 3: ability to use more complex structures and engage in meaningful communication; Level 4: comprehension, fluency, pronunciation. The language used is general and does not reflect specifically work-related topics or vocabulary. **Administration time:** 10-20 minutes per student. **Levels and scoring:** The test assesses oral communication skills from no English to intermediate level and provides numerical scores correlated to BEST, CASAS, and SPLs. **Reliability/validity:** No information available from publisher.	**Number of forms:** One **Materials available:** Trainer's guide, trainer's audio cassette, student answer sheets **ProLiteracy Worldwide** New Readers Press 800-448-8878 http://www.newreaderspress.com/

Figure I–2: **Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency Tests**

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
Basic English Skills Test—Literacy BEST **Purpose:** To test the basic literacy skills of adult non-native speakers of English. **Target:** Low-literacy-level adult English language learners in survival English programs. **Method and format:** Performance-based; group or individual administration. **Content:** Reading tasks include dates on a calendar, labels on food and clothing, bulletin announcements, and newspaper want ads. Writing tasks include addressing an envelope, writing a rent check, filling out an application form, and writing a short biographical passage. **Administration time:** 1 hour. **Levels and scoring:** There is one test level. Test scores are reported in terms of student performance levels (SPLs) 0-7; and National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning levels, from Beginning ESL Literacy to Low Advanced ESL (into but not out of this level). **Reliability/validity:** BEST validity and reliability procedures meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) (1999). The BEST Test Manual contains detailed information about test validity and reliability.	**Number of forms:** Two **Materials available:** Non-reusable test booklets, scoring sheets **Center for Applied Linguistics** 4646 40th Street NW Washington, DC 20016 202-362-0700 http://www.cal.org/BEST/
CASAS Life Skills Pre - and Post-tests—Reading **Purpose:** To assess the development of adult learners' functional reading skills within an instructional level. **Target:** Adult learners in basic skills programs. **Method and format:** Group administration; multiple choice questions. **Content:** Life skills vocabulary and language functions. Test items are aligned with more than 300 learner competencies related to basic communication, employability and workplace skills, and computer literacy.	**Number of forms:** Pre- and post-test at each level **Materials available:** Training is required for all test administrators. Materials are available only after training has been completed. **CASAS** 51551 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123 858-292-2900 http://www.casas.org

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
Administration time: Information not available. **Levels and scoring:** Scores are reported on a numerical scale; CASAS skill descriptors provide information on how the numerical score corresponds to the ability to accomplish life skills and job-related tasks. Scaled scores correspond to student performance levels (SPLs) and NRS ESL functioning levels Beginning ESL Literacy to High Advanced ESL. The post-test gives measurable results after 80-100 hours of instruction. **Reliability/validity:** "All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) and the American Psychological Association (APA). The *CASAS Technical Manual* contains detailed information about test validity and reliability" (publisher's statement).	
CASAS ESL Appraisal—Reading **Purpose:** To assess adult English language learners' ability to apply reading skills to everyday situations. **Target:** Adult English language learners in adult education programs. **Method and format:** Group administration; 20 multiple choice questions. **Content:** Material reflects everyday topics and is lifeskills oriented. Test items are aligned with more than 300 learner competencies related to basic communication, employability and workplace skills, and computer literacy. **Administration time:** There is no time limit, but allow about 25 minutes. **Levels and scoring:** Scores are reported on a numerical scale. CASAS skill descriptors provide information on how the numerical score corresponds to the ability to accomplish life skills and job-related tasks and correspondence of scaled scores to student performance levels (SPLs). Scores indicate appropriate placement levels.	**Number of forms:** One **Materials available:** Training is required for all test administrators. Materials are available only after training has been completed. **CASAS** 51551 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123 858-292-2900 http://www.casas.org

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
Reliability/validity: "All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) and the American Psychological Association (APA). The *CASAS Technical Manual* contains detailed information about test validity and reliability" (publisher's statement).	
Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE) **Purpose:** To measure the basic reading skills of adult native speakers of English. **Target:** Low-literacy adult native speakers of English in adult basic education programs. **Method and format:** Group-administered multiple choice test. **Content:** The ABLE has separate sections on vocabulary, reading comprehension, spelling, and language use. The language is appropriate for adults and reflects everyday situations, but the test is not designed specifically for non-native speakers of English. **Administration time:** Approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes. **Levels and scoring:** The test has three levels, corresponding to skills taught in grades 1-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Scores can be reported as scale scores, percentiles, stanines, and grade equivalents. **Reliability/validity:** No information available from publisher.	**Number of forms:** Two at each level, so may be used for pre- and post-testing **Materials available:** Screening battery, reusable test booklets, answer sheets, administration instructions, group record **The Psychological Corporation** A division of Harcourt Assessment, Inc. 19500 Bulverde Road San Antonio, TX 78259 800-211-8378
ACT COMPASS-ESL Grammar/Usage and Reading Tests **Purpose:** To assess English language and reading proficiency of non-native English-speaking postsecondary students for placement in higher education courses or intensive English programs. **Target:** Adult English language learners. **Method and format:** Multiple-choice format questions delivered through ACT's computer-adaptive COMPASS system, running in a Windows environment.	**Number of forms:** One **Materials available:** Package includes test materials, proficiency descriptors, reporting/data management material **ACT** 500 ACT Drive P.O. Box 168 Iowa City, Iowa 52243-0168 319/337-1053 http://www.act.org

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
Content: • **Grammar/Usage:** The test assesses ability in two main areas: sentence elements, and sentence structure and syntax. The *sentence elements* addressed include verbs, subjects and objects, modifiers, function words, conventions (punctuation, capitalization, spelling), and word formation. The *sentence structure and syntax* abilities include word order, relationships between and among clauses, and agreement, as well as how grammar relates to communication beyond the sentence level. Some items use a modified cloze format, with blanks in sentences and choices to fill in the blanks. When students click on an answer, the program places their selection into the blank so it can be read in context. Other items offer a question with four options, based on a reading passage. These items test students' understanding of how words function within a text. • **Reading:** The test assesses ability in referring (reading explicitly stated material) and reasoning (inferential reading). The content of each area varies on the test according to levels of English proficiency, with more emphasis on referring at the lower levels and more on reasoning at the higher levels. Most materials are passages, ranging in length from several sentences to many paragraphs. Most passages are authentic, although they may be edited, especially at the lower proficiency levels. Students also may be asked to interpret photographs, tables, charts, or graphs, or to follow directions using a map or other diagram. **Administration time:** Depends on how the administering institution sets up the test. **Levels and scoring:** The test was designed to assess skills from word-picture correlation to academic inferential listening. It is effective for placement but not comprehensive enough to assess achievement. **Reliability/validity:** No information available from publisher.	

<table>
<tr><th>Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency</th><th>Availability</th></tr>
<tr><td>
Adult Language Assessment Scales—Reading, Writing (A-LAS Reading, Writing)

Purpose: To assess the reading and writing skills of adult English language learners.

Target: Adult English language learners in adult education and workforce development programs.

Method and format: Group-administered written tests.
• Reading: reusable test booklets, student answer sheets
• Writing: performance-based, student writing books

Content: Daily life and on-the-job situations and language, understanding instructions and concepts, writing instructions
• Reading: Four sections - vocabulary, fluency, reading for information, grammar, and mechanics
• Writing: Two sections- sentences, longer narrative

Administration time:
• Reading: 8-10 minutes for sections 1 & 2; 10-15 minutes for sections 3 & 4
• Writing: 10-15 minutes for section 1; 20-30 minutes for section 2

Levels and scoring: The reading test is available in two levels. Skill areas are individually scored to identify areas for targeted instruction; combined scores indicate overall proficiency.

Reliability/validity: “Developers normed and validated Adult LAS by testing both native English speakers and ESL adults in various employment and educational environments. By measuring proficiency with a 90% accuracy level, Adult LAS has proven to be a valid, reliable adult language assessment” (publisher’s statement).
</td><td>
Number of forms: Two per level

Materials available: Administration and scoring manual, reusable test books, answer sheets, student writing books

CTB/McGraw-Hill
20 Ryan Ranch Road
Monterey, CA 93940
800-538-9547
http://www.ctb.com/
</td></tr>
<tr><td>
Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA)

Purpose: To assess high school, college, and adult non-native speakers of English for program placement.

Target: Non-native speakers of English at levels from low beginning through advanced.
</td><td>
Number of forms: Two

Materials available: Site license required to use materials
</td></tr>
</table>

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
Method and format: Group administration; multiple choice test, 75 items with 4 choices per item. Items include rational, fixed ratio, and multiple choice forms of cloze. **Content:** The test has one beginning, one intermediate, and one advanced passage. **Administration time:** 45 minutes **Levels and scoring:** Test scores place students into seven levels of proficiency, from low beginning to advanced. Raw scores are converted to percentages and levels. Studies to correlate scores with scores on other tests are underway. **Reliability/validity:** "Researched for reliability (.93), validity, freedom from bias. Reliabilities for C.E.L.S.A. 1 and C.E.L.S.A. 2 are .93, .94 and the forms correlate .90" (publisher's statement).	**Association of Classroom Teacher Testers (ACTT)** 1187 Coast Village Road, Suite 378 Montecito, CA 93108 805-569-0734 http://www.cappassoc.com/actt/actt.htm
Arlington Education & Employment Program (REEP) Writing Assessment **Purpose:** To measure adult English language learners' educational gains in writing. **Target:** Adult English language learners at low beginning to advanced levels in adult education and workplace skills programs. **Method and format:** Performance-based; group administration. The protocol includes a warm-up activity and a 30-minute written response to a writing task. Warm-up activities may be group brainstorm, group discussion, or pair work. **Content:** The assessment measures writing facility across five areas: content and vocabulary, organization and development, structure, mechanics, and voice. **Administration time:** 40-45 minutes. **Levels and scoring:** Two scorers score each test; the final score is the average of the two. Separate scores on a 0-6 scale are provided for each area. **Reliability/validity:** No information available from publisher.	**Number of forms:** Two **Materials available:** REEP writing rubric, guide book, activity sheets, test forms, scoring sheets Certification is required for test scorers; materials are supplied at formal trainings. **REEP** 2801 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 218 Arlington, VA 22201 703-228-4200 http://www.sabes.org/assessment/reep.htm

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) **Purpose:** To assess reading and language (grammar, mechanics, usage) skills in low-literate adult native speakers of English. **Target:** Adult native speakers of English in adult basic education programs (ABE) and adult secondary education (ASE) programs; sometimes used with high-level ESL students. **Method and format:** Group administration; multiple choice questions. **Content:** The TABE assesses skills taught in grades 1-12. The reading sub-test tests reading ability in life skills and academic contexts, including reading maps, tables, and forms. The language sub-test measures the ability to use language in communication on the job and in daily life. The spelling sub-test separates spelling from reading and vocabulary. **Administration time:** Reading, 50 minutes; language, 40 minutes; spelling, 10 minutes. The survey form of the test is half the length and takes half the time; it is used for placement. **Levels and scoring:** Tests are available at five levels corresponding to grade levels: L (limited literacy), E (easy), M (medium), D (difficult), A (advanced). A Locator test is used to determine which test to give each student. Scores are correlated with grade levels. Scale scores are also available. **Reliability/validity:** "Validity refers to how well a test measures what it is designed to measure. When creating TABE, the CTB/McGraw-Hill developers conducted a comprehensive review of adult curricula and met with experts to determine common educational goals, plus the knowledge and skills emphasized in these curricula. TABE items were then designed to measure this instructional content. TABE has been statistically correlated to the GED tests, and its content has been mapped to the NALS literacy categories and the SCANS competencies. Reliability refers to the consistency of test results. A reliable test produces scores that are similar when the test is administered repeatedly under the same conditions, i.e., standardization conditions.	**Number of forms:** Two (forms 7 & 8) at each level; newer forms 9 & 10 also available Grade level correspondences on these forms differ from those on the earlier forms, 5 & 6. **Materials available:** Examiner's manual, test coordinator's handbook, technical report, norms book. **CTB/McGraw-Hill** 20 Ryan Ranch Road Monterey, CA 93940 800-538-9547 http://www.ctb.com/

Tests of English Reading, Writing, and Grammar Proficiency	Availability
The TABE Survey yields a reliable estimate of an individual's overall achievement. CTB recommends the TABE Complete Battery be used when accurate scores for individual sub-tests (subject areas) are required, or when it is necessary to demonstrate that an individual has mastered specific objectives. Data related to the standardization, norming, and reliability of TABE can be found in the TABE Technical Report" (publisher's statement).	

Student Performance Levels (SPLs) and National Reporting System (NRS) ESL Functioning Level Descriptors

The two charts that follow give the descriptors for the seven Student Performance Levels (SPLs) for listening comprehension and oral communication and for the six functioning levels for English language learners in speaking and listening, reading and writing, and functional workplace skills. These descriptors show what adult English learners will be able to do if they receive a given score on tests that are used for federal accountability reporting. The tests included in the charts are the *Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Oral*, *BEST Literacy*, *BEST Plus*, and *CASAS Life Skills – Reading*. For example, if a learner is taking *BEST Plus* as a measure of oral English proficiency and scores 340, that learner is at SPL 1 for speaking and, in the NRS scale, at Beginning ESL Literacy for speaking and listening.

Click on
http://www.famlit.org/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=15650
for

- Student Performance Level (SPL) descriptors for listening and oral communication
- National Reporting System (NRS) ESL functioning level descriptors

Spanish Language Assessment Instruments for Adult Spanish Speakers Learning English

This section provides names, descriptions, and availability information for language proficiency tests that are designed for adult Spanish speakers who are learning English as a second language. It describes tests of Spanish language proficiency. Adult education programs use these tests to identify students' literacy levels in their native language and the consequent possibility for skills transfer. The section includes only tests that are currently in use in programs in the United States. Tests that have fallen out of common use are not listed.

This section has two parts. Figure IV–3 in the first part lists tests of Spanish language proficiency that are used with adult learners; it does not include tests used at the university level. If test scores are aligned with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines (http://www.actfl.org/), that information is provided. Figure IV–4 in the second part lists tests used in high school and postsecondary programs.

These tests are not used for accountability reporting for the U.S. Department of Education's National Reporting System (NRS). (See *Assessing Adult English Language Learners*, beginning on page IV–25, for discussion of the assessment requirements of the National Reporting System.)

If the test is performance-based, that information is provided. The following definitions are used to describe performance-based assessments:

- "….language performance in terms of the ability to use the language effectively and appropriately in real-life situations" (Buck, Byrnes, & Thompson, 1989).
- Language is used in social interactions to accomplish purposeful tasks (e.g., interacting with another individual in a conversation, writing a text, finding information in a chart or a schedule). Performance is assessed by documenting the successful completion of the task or by using a rubric to assess various dimensions of carrying out the task (e.g., listening comprehension and language complexity in responses to questions in an oral interview) (Alamprese & Kay, 1993; Van Duzer and Berdán, 1999).

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Alamprese, J. A., & Kay, A. (1993). *Literacy on the cafeteria line: Evaluation of skills enhancement training program.* Washington, DC: COSMOS Corporation and Ruttenberg, Kilgallon & Associates.

Buck, K., Byrnes, H., & Thompson, I. (Eds.). (1989). *The ACTFL oral proficiency interview tester training manual.* Yonkers, NY: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Van Duzer, C., & Berdán, R. (1999). Perspectives on assessment in adult ESOL instruction. In J. Comings, B. Garner, & C. Smith, (Eds.). *The annual review of adult learning and literacy,* pp. 200-242. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Figure IV–3: **Tests of Spanish Language Proficiency Used With Adult Learners**

Spanish Language Tests Used with Adult Learners	Availability
Batería Woodcock-Muñoz: Pruebas de aprovechamiento—Revisada (Batería-R) **Purpose:** To measure the cognitive abilities and academic achievement of native Spanish speakers of all ages Adult education programs typically use the written language subtests as a measure of literacy skills. **Target:** Native Spanish speakers ages 2-90 **Method and format:** The standard battery has 7 subtests; the supplemental battery includes subtests 8-21. **Content:** The test battery is a parallel Spanish version of the Woodcock-Johnson. The cognitive battery measures eight cognitive abilities: memory for names, memory for sentences, visual matching, incomplete words, visual closure, picture vocabulary, and analysis-synthesis. The achievement battery measures four areas of achievement: reading, mathematics, written language, and knowledge (science, social studies, humanities). Three subtests are used in some programs to assess literacy: Analisis de palabras (word analysis using pseudo words); Identificación de letras y palabras (word recognition); Comprensión de textos (reading comprehension using a cloze test) **Administration time:** Approximately 5 minutes per subtest **Levels and scoring:** The tests battery yields scores on individual test areas and cluster scores. A comparative language index is available when part of the test has been administered in both Spanish and English. **Reliability/validity:** No information available from publisher	**Number of forms:** One **Materials available:** Examiner's manual, norm tables, test books, audio cassettes **Riverside Publishing** (a division of Houghton-Mifflin) 425 Spring Lake Drive Itasca, IL 60143 800-323-9540 http://www.riverpub.com/products

<table>
<tr><th>Spanish Language Tests Used with Adult Learners</th><th>Availability</th></tr>
<tr><td>Los exámenes del GED en Español

Purpose: To assess the educational achievement of native-Spanish-speaking adults

Target: Native-Spanish-speaking adults who are seeking a high school equivalency certificate

Method and format: Group administered, multiple choice; writing skills Part 2 is essay

Content: The assessment is composed of five tests: interpreting literature and the arts (reading), writing skills part 1 (grammar, usage, mechanics), writing skills part 2 (expository essay), social studies, science, and mathematics. Questions are classified by cognitive level: comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Administration time: 45 minutes per test

Levels and scoring: Standard scores range from 200 to 800 for each test.

Reliability/validity: Information is available in the Technical Manual, but this manual has not been updated since 1993 (American Council on Education).</td><td>Number of forms: One

Materials available: Current materials are available only through GED testing centers. Sample questions from the 1988 Series: International, French, Spanish are available at http://www.acenet.edu/clll/ged/sampleQ-TT.cfm (the sample questions are in English). Spanish practice tests are available from Steck-Vaughn (now HarcourtAchieve), 800-531-5015, http://www.steck-vaughn.com

GED Testing Service
One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20036
202-939-9490
http://www.gedtest.org</td></tr>
<tr><td>Native Language Literacy Screening Device—Spanish

Purpose: To assess the native language literacy levels of native speakers of Spanish

This screening device is also available for 26 other primary languages.

Target: Native-Spanish-speaking adults in adult basic education programs

Method and format: Performance-based

A loose-leaf notebook contains the introduction, protocol for administration, and six pages of assessment assignments in each language. Learners are asked to complete the first three pages without assistance. If they do so, they do the silent reading portion and write a short essay.

Content: First three pages address date and place of birth, number of members in the immediate family, number of years of school attendance in the country of</td><td>Number of forms: One

Materials available: This screening device was developed for use by the New York State Department of Education, and is primarily used in that state. Training workshops are available.

Hudson River Center for Program Development
102 Mosher Road
Glenmont, NY 12077
http://www.hudrivctr.org/products_el.htm</td></tr>
</table>

Spanish Language Tests Used with Adult Learners	Availability
origin, current job and interests, and previous exposure to English classes. The reading section is four short stories. In the essay, the examinee writes about him/herself. **Administration time:** (not provided) **Levels and scoring:** The administrator scores on the basis of observation: whether the student needs help with first three pages, how long the student takes to complete the reading, how long the student takes to write the essay, the quality of handwriting, and the amount of text produced. This device provides a general indication of literacy skills, but is not precise or detailed enough to gauge achievement. **Reliability and validity:** No information available from publisher.	
Test of Adult Basic Education—Español (TABE Español) **Purpose:** To assess native-Spanish-speaking adults' basic reading and language skills in Spanish. According to the publisher, the one form may be used as a pre-test and post-test, if the two tests are administered more than 6 months apart. **Target:** Native speakers of Spanish in adult basic education programs **Method and format:** This is a written, multiple-choice test. Examiners must read and speak both English and Spanish to administer the test. **Content:** The language in the tests is standard Spanish common to all dialects. It measures the same skills as the TABE 7 & 8. Tasks include linking sentences with pictures, word meaning in context, constructing meaning, evaluating meaning, and knowledge of sentence formation, paragraph structure, and writing conventions. **Administration time:** Information not available. **Levels and scoring:** The test has two levels (easy: grades 1.6-3.9, and medium: grades 3.6-6.9). Scores are correlated with grade levels and also with a scale based on the ways adults use language. **Reliability/validity:** No information available from publisher.	**Number of forms:** One form; Two levels **Materials available:** Locator test, examiner's manual, norms book, word list, test booklets, answer sheets, technical report **CTB/McGraw-Hill** 20 Ryan Ranch Road Monterey, CA 93940 800-538-9547 http://www.ctb.com/

Figure IV–4: **Tests Used In High School and Postsecondary Programs**

Spanish Language Tests Used in High School and Postsecondary Programs	Availability
Minnesota Language Proficiency Assessments (MLPA)—Spanish **Purpose:** To assess the Spanish language skills of students completing high school foreign language study **Target:** Students graduating from U.S. high schools **Method and format:** Performance-based; group or individual administration The reading test is multiple choice. Writing is a situationally based contextualized task. Speaking and listening are tape-mediated contextualized tasks. **Content:** Test content is based on general interest topics. The tests assess proficiency in reading (Contextualized Reading Assessment [CoRA], 35 items); writing (Contextualized Writing Assessment [CoWA], 50 minutes); speaking (Contextualized Speaking Assessment [CoSA], 20 minutes); and listening (Contextualized Listening Assessment [CoLA], 35 items). Contextualized tasks ask students to use language in authentic contexts. Advance organizers or warm-up tasks precede each test section. **Administration time:** Approximately 2 hours total time **Levels and scoring:** The MLPA assesses language proficiency at the Intermediate-Low level on the language proficiency scales of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CACTFL) http://www.actfl.org Reading is scored on text content, organizational characteristics, and cultural content scales; writing is rated pass/fail using a holistic rubric. **Reliability/validity:** "Reliability coefficients from data collected to date are all in the acceptable range; items and tasks have been extensively field tested and refined; tasks are authentic and varied" (publisher's statement).	**Number of forms:** One **Materials available:** Pencil-and-paper and computer-adaptive versions of test; manual for rater training **Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA)** University of Minnesota 619 Heller Hall 271 19th Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55455 612-626-8600 http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/

<table>
<tr><th>Spanish Language Tests Used in High School and Postsecondary Programs</th><th>Availability</th></tr>
<tr><td>Spanish Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI)

Purpose: To assess the speaking proficiency of high school and college Spanish learners

Target: Students enrolled in traditional high school (grades 11 and above) and college language courses.

(Note: The SOPI is designed for native speakers of English studying Spanish. All the directions, both audio and print, are in English.)

Method and format: Performance-based; simulated oral proficiency interview

The student listens to directions on a master tape, following along in a test booklet, and then responds on a separate tape.

Content: An introductory warm up is followed by picture-based tasks, topic-based tasks, and situation-based tasks.

Administration time: 25 to 50 minutes

Levels and scoring: Responses are scored holistically by trained raters, according to the language proficiency scales of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) http://www.actfl.org.

Reliability/validity: Correlation with ACTFL's Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) has been determined for a number of languages, including Chinese, Hebrew, Hausa, and Indonesian. The correlation between the SOPI and the ACTFL OPI was >.89 in all cases. In addition, inter-rater reliability studies were conducted to determine the consistency of scores among SOPI raters. Inter-rater reliability has ranged from .91 (Hausa) to .97 (Indonesian).</td><td>Number of forms: Three

Materials available: Master test tape, examinee response tape, test manual, examinee handbook

Center for Applied Linguistics
4646 40th Street NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-362-0700
http://www.cal.org</td></tr>
</table>

Adult English Language Learners and Learning Disabilities

Some adult English language learners experience difficulty in making expected progress in English as a second language (ESL) classes, in showing progress on assessment measures, and in sustaining employment. In some cases, this difficulty may be due, in part, to learning disabilities. According to the federal Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities, learning disabilities are disorders that "create difficulty in acquiring and using skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and reasoning. These disorders can also inhibit mathematical abilities and social interactions" (Brown & Ganzglass, 1998, p. 2). Learning disabilities are generally thought to be caused by a dysfunction in the central nervous system. People who have learning disabilities are considered to possess average or above-average intelligence. Learning disabilities often appear related only to specific skills, rather than affecting skills overall. For example, an individual may have problems processing spoken language but can read, write, and perform math without problems; a person with a reading disability may have difficulty decoding but is able to process well what is heard.

Questions about the Education of Adult English Language Learners with Learning Disabilities

Little is known about how learning disabilities affect adult English language learners. However, with the limited instructional time and resources available in most programs, teachers need to know methods and materials that may help learners who are not making expected progress in class, regardless of whether they have been identified as having learning disabilities. To address these issues, this section discusses the following questions:

- What are the issues involved in identifying English language learners with learning disabilities?
- When and how should adult learners be assessed regarding possible learning disabilities?
- What instructional methods and materials are likely to be effective in assisting learners who may have learning disabilities?
- What do learners say about their instructional needs?

What are the issues involved in identifying English language learners with learning disabilities?

It is thought that the percentage of adults with learning disabilities in adult education classes may exceed the percentage in the population as a whole, with some estimates being as high as 50-80% (National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center, 1995, 1996). However, there is a general sense in the field that the incidence of learning disabilities in

adult ESL programs may be much lower. Unlike native English speakers in adult education programs, many adult English language learners were successful in their previous educational experiences. They are enrolled in programs to learn to speak, read, and write in a new language.

Being identified as learning disabled can be stigmatizing for anyone. It is important to weigh the advantages of identifying learning disabilities (planning instruction to help learners, making them eligible for services, and so forth) against the possible stigma of the label (Almanza, Singleton, & Terrill, 1995/96). It is also important to use the term "has a learning disability," as a description of a learning factor, and "is learning disabled," when referring to a person with learning difficulties.

Before an adult learner is tested and labeled as having a learning disability, other reasons for lack of expected progress should be considered. The following reasons for slow progress in learning English have been noted:

- Limited academic skills in a learner's native language due to limited previous education.
- Lack of effective study habits.
- Interference from the native language, particularly if the learner's written language is a non-alphabetic language or uses a non-Roman alphabet.
- Mismatch between the instructor's teaching style and the learner's expectations of how the class will be conducted.
- Stress or trauma the learner has experienced that may cause difficulty concentrating and memory dysfunction.
- Sociocultural factors such as age, physical health, social identity, and even diet.
- Vision and hearing problems.
- External problems with work, health, and family.
- Sporadic attendance.
- Lack of opportunities to use English outside the classroom.

These factors most likely affect all learning, whereas a learning disability usually affects only one area of learning (Adkins, Sample, & Birman, 1999; Almanza, Singleton, & Terrill, 1995/96; Isserlis, 2000).

When and how should adult learners be assessed regarding possible learning disabilities?

The use of standardized testing to identify learning disabilities presents problems. First, instruments designed to diagnose learning disabilities are usually normed on native English speakers, so the results cannot be reliably used with learners whose first language is not English. Second, since the concepts and language tested may have no direct translation, the validity of tests translated into the native language is questionable. Third, most tests are

primarily designed for and normed on younger students and may not be suitable for adults. No single assessment technique is sufficient to diagnose a learning disability; multiple assessment measures are necessary. Even before an interview or other assessments are administered, instructors should answer the following questions about a learner:

1. Has the problem persisted over time?
2. Has the problem resisted normal instruction?
3. Does the learner show a clear pattern of strengths and weaknesses in class?
4. Does the learner show a clear pattern of strengths and weaknesses outside of class?
5. Does the problem interfere with learning or another life activity to a significant degree?

If the responses to these questions are affirmative, the situation should be looked into more closely. Following are suggestions on how to do this.

- *Interview the learner*. An interview may provide a variety of useful information, such as educational and language history and social background, the learner's strengths, and the learner’s perception of the nature of the suspected problem.
- *Collect information about the learner’s work*. Portfolios that include measurements of learner progress in reading and writing, attendance data, writing samples, autobiographical information, and work on class assignments may provide documentation of persistent problems and of teaching strategies that have or have not worked.
- *Use vision screening and routine hearing tests.* What appears to be a learning disability may be due in part to correctable vision or hearing problems.
- *Consult a licensed psychologist to obtain a learning disability diagnosis.* The program could provide some referrals for psychologists in the community, but the learner would have to cover the cost.

What instructional methods and materials are effective?

Educators of children and adults with learning disabilities give the following suggestions for providing instruction for this population.

- Be highly structured and predictable.
- Teach small amounts of material in sequential steps.
- Include opportunities for learners to use several senses and learning strategies.
- Recognize and build on learners’ strengths and prior knowledge.
- Simplify language but not content.
- Emphasize content words and make concepts accessible through the use of pictures, charts, and maps.
- Reinforce main ideas and concepts by rephrasing rather than repeating.
- Be aware that learners often can take in information but may have difficulty retrieving and using it.
- Provide a clean, uncluttered, quiet, and well-lit learning environment.

- Use technology if possible. Learners often feel more comfortable and productive working alone and in front of a computer, where they receive positive feedback, than in a crowded classroom.

(Almanza, Singleton, & Terrill, 1995/96; Ganschow & Sparks, 1993; Riviere, 1996)

Regardless of whether learners have learning disabilities or other needs, they can provide insight into their own learning. Teachers need to have this information so to assist the adults they work with. Figure IV–5 below, provides an example of how one ESL teacher was able to assist an adult English learner based on his input.

***Figure IV–5:* Teacher Example**

Over the course of several months, I observed a student, Ismael, a former refugee. Ismael had studied for nine months in our General ESL classes. He was one of the students who never seemed to advance at the same pace as the others. He had remained at our l00 level (literacy) class for 2 three-month cycles and had just advanced to the 150 level class. My class was an intensive 8 hours a week, 5-week course open free of charge to refugees with low literacy skills. Ismael was in a multi-level class of 6 students. Attendance was very sporadic, as many of the refugees were busy in the afternoons with doctor's appointments, finding housing, and other immediate concerns. Because of the class size, I was able to give him the attention he needed and to learn more about his personal background and how it applied to the educational challenges he was facing.

Ismael is a 68-year-old man from Somalia with no formal education. His oral skills were much higher than his literacy skills. He was a clan leader and successful farmer in Somalia, but he lost everything to the war. During the war, he had been shot five times and was a victim of a bomb blast. As a result, he suffered traumatic brain injury and injury to his eyes from the shrapnel. He also had trouble walking, because his legs had been severely broken. In spite of all this, Ismael attended class every day and demonstrated a great eagerness to learn.

In a large-class situation, Ismael had trouble filtering the background noise. He could not focus on one voice. He said it was sometimes like "cars on the road. Too loud." He liked working one-on-one with a teacher or in small groups. Because of his eye injuries, he was very sensitive to light. He preferred to have the lights low in the room. He also said that he often got headaches when writing and reading from the whiteboard in the classroom. Reading from a blackboard did not produce this effect.

I often had one or two students in the class, and I was able to take them to the Adult Learning Center, a computer lab then housed at Wilson Adult Center. Ismael enjoyed the intense focus that computer learning provided. I was able to control the noise and light in the lab to better suit Ismael's needs. We used a program called *Eye Relief* with great success. *Eye Relief* is a word processor with adjustable sizing and screen color. We were able to work with the background and lettering colors until we came up with a combination that was most comfortable for him. I used the Language Experience Approach, where we carried out activities, discussed them, and read about them, to utilize Ismael's oral skills in aid of his reading. I also typed stories from our reading text into *Eye Relief,* which enabled him to read with greater ease and to keep up with his fellow students.

We also used *English Express* on CD for vocabulary building. With the program, Ismael could hear a word, see a picture of it, repeat the word, and compare his speech to the computer's and to mine.

Ismael studied with me for three five-week cycles. During that time we were able to explore many learning alternatives. He was willing to try anything new and was never discouraged. The other students looked to him for inspiration in their studies, even though his skills were somewhat lower than theirs. This attitude, combined with a class situation that allowed flexibility and adjustment, allowed Ismael to continue to make progress at his own pace. (Almanza,, Singleton, & Terrill, 1995-1996, pp. 2-3)

Conclusion

Adult learners in ESL classes learn skills at different times and in different ways. Rather than quickly labeling students, teachers need to watch, listen, and speak with students over time to gauge how they are learning. While there are some situations where a formal diagnosis of a learning disability might be useful to adult English language learners (to be eligible for accommodations on the GED or other tests and at work), there may be no advantage in the adult ESL class to having such a label. What is more important for these learners is that teachers use a variety of methods and strategies and build on learners' strengths to help them reach their language learning goals. This strategy holds promise for all adult learners, including those who may have learning disabilities.

This section is based on a paper by Robin Schwarz and Lynda Terrill, *ESL Instruction and Adults with Learning Disabilities* (2000). Available from http://www.cal.org/caela/digests/LD2.htm

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Addressing the Needs of Specific Groups of Learners

The previous section of this Toolkit, Adult English Language Learners and Learning Disabilities (see page IV–59), discusses strategies for working with adult English language learners with disabilities. Adult English language learners may, however, face other barriers to program participation and learning as well. Learners with the following characteristics may need special attention and may take longer than others to learn English:

- They may be elderly.
- They may be deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, or they may have other physical challenges.
- They may have no schooling or limited formal education (less than seven years).
- They may be incarcerated.
- They may be suffering effects of political torture and trauma.
- They may have a disrupted education due to war or other political crises.
- They may come from a culture where the native language is not yet written, is in the process of being written, or is written in a non-roman script or alphabet.
- They may have cultural backgrounds and educational perspectives different from those of the dominant U.S. culture.

This section presents the challenges and strategies related to meeting the needs of learners with these characteristics. Any one learner may fit into several of these groups. For example, an elderly Kurdish learner may be hard of hearing, have limited formal education and limited literacy in a language that does not use the Roman script, and suffer from the effects of political torture. A younger learner from El Salvador may have limited education due to disruption caused by war, relocation, or may be incarcerated.

Elderly Language Learners

Elderly immigrants and refugees learning english may experience memory loss and have difficulty concentrating. An appropriate learning environment can compensate for factors that can affect performance and progress, such as perceptual acuity, psychomotor coordination, and memory. English classes can decrease the older person's isolation and increase their access to services and community activities. The learning environment should be physically comfortable (e.g., with sufficient lighting and size-appropriate desks and tables). Instruction should include topics and activities that are relevant to the learners' experiences, concrete tasks that make use of many different senses (e.g., hearing a text read aloud and carrying out activities related to it in addition to reading it), and reviews of content presented with increasing complexity of ideas and language. Learners' anxiety can be reduced by helping to create supportive relationships within the class. Slowing the pace of instruction and putting the emphasis on receptive rather than productive skills (i.e.,

allowing them to just listen at times rather than always having to respond orally) will assist all elderly learners. (for more information, see allender, 1998).

Learners Who Are Deaf Or Hard Of Hearing, Visually Impaired, Or Who Have Other Physical Challenges

Because deaf and hard of hearing learners do not hear spoken english or only hear it in limited ways, their challenges in developing english literacy may be much greater than those faced by non-native english speakers without hearing impairment. (see discussion of a student, ismael, on page iv-62.) Oral (speaking and listening) activities and phonics-based approaches (that focus on english sounds) are usually not effective, since printed words are not connected clearly with sounds for these learners. Effective approaches to english literacy development with deaf learners include uses of technology that makes language visible in print. For example, teachers and learners can interact with each other in writing on computer networks, discuss topic ideas in writing and then write texts about those topics, and give feedback to each other on their texts in writing. Teachers of deaf adults need to focus on the writing and problem-solving skills needed in the workplace and avoid a preoccupation with correcting errors. Errors with english are often prevalent in deaf learners' writing, and learners need strategies for finding and addressing errors themselves rather than being continually corrected. For discussion of working with learners who are deaf and hard of hearing, see Bruce, Peyton, & Batson, 1993; Holcomb & Peyton, 1992, and resources available online at http://www.cal.org/resources/faqs/RGOs/asl.html.

Some learners may be visually impaired or have other physical challenges and limitations that have an impact on program participation and learning. Adult ESL programs seek to assist these learners as well as they can, depending on specific situations and resources. For example, if a program is directly related to a public school, there may be resources that can be provided to help learners. In a workforce training program helping unemployed adults find jobs, there may be institutional connections with local rehabilitation agencies that can provide assessment, assistive devices, and expertise to help learners as they learn English. Technology exists to enlarge text on the computer screen (Aladdin Gene) and translate text into Braille and send it to a Braille embosser (Duxbury Braille Translation Software). Other software takes text from paper, scans it into a computer, processes it, and then reads it aloud by computer using a software speech synthesizer. Students in college programs (e.g., in the graduate school of education at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA) have access to these assistive devices. (for more information, see Assistive Technology Lab, Helen A. Keller Institute for Disabilities, http://kihd.gse.gmu.edu/) in many adult education programs teachers must use their own time and ingenuity to help learners who are blind or visually impaired or who have other physical challenges. For example, a volunteer or another student may read a text aloud to a learner while other learners work silently. Programs may provide tutoring at home to students who cannot leave their residences due to physical

challenges. There are no easy solutions to making English language learning available for all adult immigrants, but many programs work hard to serve all learners.

Learners with Minimal First Language Literacy

Learners with limited literacy in their first language benefit from instruction that builds on their backgrounds and immediate personal experiences, focuses on familiar topics, and uses concrete materials. A study of instructional practices with this population revealed that many activities assume too much shared cultural knowledge (Achren, 1991). For example, even simple line drawings of such things as body parts (in a health unit) may not be as transparent as teachers think for learners who do not have the same cultural frames and life experiences. Such materials may be confusing, upsetting, or offensive and create barriers to learning. Educators recommend using real objects to set an immediate and meaningful context, gradually replacing those with photos or realistic pictures and moving to more abstract diagrams or graphics (Hiffeldt, 1985; Ramm, 1994). When possible, meanings can be clarified in learners' native languages (Allender, 1998).

Incarcerated Learners

Because correctional facilities are responsible for inmates' safety as well as for providing work and education programs, security issues take precedence over access to educational programs. Students may have limited access to technology. Books and notebooks may only be available inside the classroom. Limited time is another issue, as classes can be cancelled at the discretion of the correctional facility. Movement within the facility, court dates, probation, and attorney and family visits can also restrict participation in programs. Instruction should combine basic skills (reading and writing words, letters, and sentences) with functional uses of literacy such as reading labels, letters from friends and family, magazines, and newspapers. Use of computers should be included if possible, because computer use can extend learning outside class time (Dellicarpini, 2003).

Survivors Of Trauma

Immigrants and refugees are generally affected by stress that occurs when they move from one country and culture to another. Additionally, many of these learners also are coping with stress from extreme events that occurred prior to or during their migration to the united states such as assaults, war-related injuries, and torture. It is generally believed that traumatic stress caused by the deliberate actions of other humans is the worst kind of stress to live with. Survivors of traumatic stress may have difficulty paying attention and participating in class. These learners may be absent frequently. They also may appear to be uncomfortable with ambiguity and tend to see things as "all or nothing" (Horsman, 1998, p. 2).

Suggestions For Teachers Include The Following:

- Discuss with learners what it means to be present in the class and give them some control over their amount of participation. Give them a "quiet corner" to retreat to when they feel unable to participate in a classroom activity. Be aware that certain topics often discussed in adult ESL classes, e.g., family and health, can cause discomfort. Give them options, such as allowing them to talk or write about another family (e.g., one pictured in a magazine) rather than their own.
- Find out about community resources to help students. If appropriate, create classroom activities to help them access these services (e.g., role playing activities in which they use the communication skills necessary to call a hotline to ask for assistance).
- Discuss health and cultural content relevant to learners, including accessing medical services, going to the doctor, using available recreational facilities, and interacting with school staff.
- Conduct goal-setting exercises. Learners feel valued and can chart their success as they achieve their goals. Teachers will find out what students need and what to learn. (For more suggestions see Adkins, Sample, & Birman, 1999; Isserlis, 2000.)

Different Cultural Backgrounds

Many adult English language learners come from cultures that are markedly different from that of the mainstream united states. For example, the roles of women and men may be vastly different from those in the united states (e.g., men work outside the home and women inside the home, education may be viewed as only for males or only for the elite). Learning may be seen differently (e.g., as something passed down from teacher to student). Age and family status may be revered above financial success, and so on. Learners from these cultures may be especially resistant to activities such as group and pair work. This may especially be the case when older students are grouped with younger ones and men are grouped with women.

In some ways cultural issues are the most difficult ones for teachers to address. Teachers must negotiate a fine line between being responsive to students' expectations and making the classroom a comfortable place, and using practices that promote active learning and prepare students for success in United States cultural environments. In matters of culture, the teacher should tell students why they are engaged in specific activities in class and the value of such activities.

Conclusion

Ideally, students with special needs would be served in classes of approximately ten students, in a quiet and pleasant environment. Bilingual assistance and on-site childcare would be provided, and classes would be conducted on weekends or at times that suit the participants. These classes would integrate community, work, and health information with language and literacy skill development. Students' needs would be assessed regularly, and there would be adequate time for students to learn the language and skills they need to be successful in the United States. While striving for these ideal situations, teachers of all English language learners—whether they have special needs or not—can better meet students' needs by following the suggestions outlined in this paper.

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Helping Adult English Language Learners Transition into Other Educational Programs

Background

Adult immigrants come to the United States with widely divergent educational backgrounds. Some learners come with graduate degrees—an engineer from the former Soviet Union, a Somali law professor from Egypt, or a pediatrician from Guatemala. Many immigrants come having had little or no access to education—young men from Bolivia hoping to do something better than farming and processing coca, young women hoping for education that will empower them and their families, or elder refugees from countries torn apart by war. Other immigrants come here with significant levels of education—a mechanic with a high school degree from Iraq, an elderly bureaucrat from China, or a high school graduate from Mexico.

These immigrants face many challenges and have differing expectations and goals. For example, the Somali law professor expected that he would be able to teach law at an American college; he was shocked to find that his credentials did not automatically allow him to be an attorney in this country. The Guatemalan pediatrician was aware of the process to become a credentialed doctor. She began by having her transcripts formally interpreted to see what university courses she would have to take, preparing for academic tests, and volunteering in healthcare settings.

Young men and women who have had limited access to education often initially work at low-paying, entry-level jobs. They often work two or more jobs, and when they have time, they take English classes. For these immigrants, *survival* English is an apt term; they need enough English to work and survive in their new lives. If learners are young enough (often 22 years old or younger), they can study all academic subjects in public high school. Often, however, teenagers and young adults have to work to help support themselves and their families. After gaining sufficient English literacy skills, they may participate in specific training or certification programs through their work or community, or they may pursue a GED (General Educational Development) credential and eventually pursue postsecondary education. Some older immigrants, especially those who may be financially supported by other members of their family, may stay in English classes for several years as they learn English and build a social network.

Among those immigrants who pursue postsecondary education in the United States are those who finished (or almost finished) high school in their native countries. For example, in his community English classes, the Iraqi mechanic had learned to be a fluent speaker and reader of English. He then attended classes to help him learn to write well enough to pursue a mechanics certificate at the local community college. Similarly, a high school graduate from Mexico City already had sufficient content knowledge in science, social science, and

mathematics. She only needed classes focused on development of vocabulary and standardized test-taking skills before she was able to study at a university level.

However, all ESL students, not just the above mentioned examples, can and should aspire to post-secondary education in the economy of the 21st century. Raising the consciousness of all adult learners to the American possibilities of a college education is part of the transition services from ESL to post-secondary education provided by adult ESL and family literacy programs.

Various programs—from family literacy and workplace programs to community colleges and universities—serve the needs and goals of adult immigrants. The following section focuses specifically on assisting English language learners to meet their academic goals in post-secondary education.

Helping Facilitate the Transition to Postsecondary Education

Unlike in years past, a high school diploma or its equivalent does not necessarily always guarantee an income above the poverty level. Through the late 1980s and 1990s, employment opportunities have decreased for those workers with less than some years of college education. GED (General Educational Development) credential holders and those with high school diplomas who fail to continue on to postsecondary education may experience a lower earning capacity ("Why Go Beyond the GED?," 2004).

As adults attain higher levels of education, they are more likely to earn higher wages and hold greater personal and civic responsibility than those who do not (Dann-Messier & Kampits, 2004). Therefore, it is important that teachers are prepared to help English language learners who wish to pursue education beyond the basic English classroom. Teachers can do this by keeping up with requirements and programs at local public schools and colleges. Another way to help these learners is to give them a sense of what is required in taking various academic steps. For example, many students hear about the GED or the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) long before they have the English, academic, or test-taking skills to successfully master these examinations. Explaining the process and possible timelines for reaching specific levels helps learners set realistic short- and long-term goals.

Figure IV–6 provides a checklist of possible strategies for administrators and staff to consider when working with learners who wish to pursue postsecondary education.

Figure IV–6: **Transition Checklist**

1. ___ Have we established exit criteria to help us consider whether adults or families are ready to exit our program?
2. ___ Have we coordinated our efforts with outside agencies to help with non-academic needs of adult learners or families leaving our program?
3. ___ Have we coordinated our efforts with local businesses and industries to invite guest speakers, set up tours of companies, and establish job shadowing opportunities to help students select a program of study?
4. ___ Have we prepared a transition plan for each adult learner or family, including timelines for anticipated changes and outcomes?
5. ___ Have we encouraged adult learners to explore outside resources and community offerings?
6. ___ Do we help adult learners participate in internships?
7. ___ Have we incorporated world of work themes throughout our educational program?
8. ___ Do we encourage adult learners to develop personal action plans that include timetables and resources needed to obtain goals?

(Adapted from RMC Research Corporation, 2001.)

Challenges to Effective Transitions

While adults attaining advanced English proficiency levels in ESL classes may be considered ready to make the transition to college, they may face many academic challenges. In particular, they may need special assistance in strengthening their reading, grammar, and writing skills so they can successfully complete their college courses (Lombardo, 2004; Tacelli, 2004). They may have difficulty understanding college texts and writing college-level papers (Santos, 2004). While native English speakers have a written vocabulary of 10,000-100,000 words, English language learners will probably know only 2,000-7,000 words when they begin academic studies (Rance-Roney, 1995). Thus, specialized academic vocabulary instruction needs to be provided.

Language challenges are not the only ones that these students face. Some learners may be the first in their families to enter college and may have little understanding of college costs or how to pay for their education. They may need focused help with study skills and time management skills. They may be frustrated by institutional bureaucracy and class scheduling. Some may feel that they do not belong in college. Without assistance, these students may soon drop out (Johnson, Haas, Harrell, & Alameida, 2004).

Features of Transition Programs

Several successful college transition programs are featured in the February 2004, issue of *Focus on Basics*, an online publication of the National Center for the Study of Adult

Learning and Literacy (NCSALL). The main NCSALL Web site address is http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~ncsall/. The transition programs are highlighted here as encouragement for all ESL and family literacy programs to initiate steps to develop their own transition program. The major activities of transition programs fall into three categories – awareness and orientation activities, counseling and referral services, and comprehensive programs (Alamprese, 2004).

Awareness and Orientation Activities. Adult education/ESL programs often invite guest speakers to bring awareness of higher education to students. A college recruiter might make a presentation stressing the long-term financial benefits of a postsecondary education and explain matters such as costs, financial aid, and programs of study (Lombardo, 2004). The adult education practitioner might keep a supply of transition program fliers and brochures on hand and distribute them to students who have recently arrived in their classes. (See Figure IV–7). Former students might return to speak to classes, urging students to continue in postsecondary education (Dann-Messier & Kampits, 2004).

Raising awareness is often followed by a motivational field trip to a college campus for an official guided tour. Such tours serve two purposes. First, they expose students to the college culture and raise their goals to include postsecondary study (Johnson, Haas, Harrell, & Alameida, 2004). Second, they help students find their way on campus and meet with individuals they will need to consult with before and upon entering a college program. Many family literacy programs include the children of the adult students on campus tours. This helps set the expectation for the children that someday, they too will enter college (Dann-Messier & Kampits, 2004). It is important to include other family members, because they will be a major influence on whether or not adult learners persist in their program (Lieshoff, 1995).

College Counseling and Referral Services. Once potential students have been oriented to college procedures and have taken tours of one or more college campuses, counseling and referral services are important to keep students' interest up and anxiety down. While still enrolled in the ESL program, students begin a one-on-one advisement process the semester before they enroll in the college. The first meeting includes a discussion of the student's goals and the development of personal action plans that include setting timelines and allocating resources needed (RMC, 2001). The student and advisor complete the initial enrollment paperwork together, and then the student takes the college entrance exam. The transition advisor in the ESL program helps with class selection and guides the student through the college registration process (Lombardo, 2004).

Comprehensive Transitional Programs. In addition to providing awareness and orientation activities and offering counseling and referral services, comprehensive transition-to-college programs offer academic preparation, often with a specific focus on developing students' academic vocabularies. Programs may also offer study guides for entrance exams, writing workshops, and materials for independent study with reading and writing assignments

(Lombardo, 2004). One program adds a conversation club as a means for students to improve their oral and aural fluency (Tacelli, 2004). Upgrading math skills to include algebra may be important if it is not covered in GED preparation classes (Transitions and Math, 2004). Finally, computer skills courses are made available to ESL students through Learning Resource Centers.

Entry into college is only a beginning step for students. The ultimate goal of transition programs is to help adult learners reach a professional level of employment. Therefore, ESL programs have established contact management systems to track students who have moved on to college. Some ESL programs begin the transitioning process two and a half years before students go on to college, and some follow students throughout their college programs (Rao, 2004).

Maintaining Transition Services

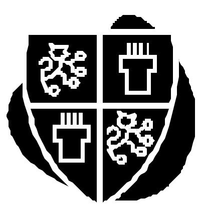
In order for ESL transition-to-college programs to survive, strong cooperation and support of ESL teachers is essential. Equally important is a strong collaboration between the ESL program (either community-based or within the college) and the college. ESL programs and their college partners communicate in many ways, such as:

- Exchanging program newsletters
- Presenting sessions at each other's in-service trainings for instructors
- Holding one-on-one conversations during site visits with various department officers
- Becoming familiar with the content of each other's courses
- Tracking changes in personnel
- Keeping each other informed about program activities and concerns (Lombardo, 2004).

Conclusion

Establishing and maintaining successful transitions from ESL to college programs is hard work and can be time consuming. Relationships with collaborators must be initiated and sustained, and students' progress must be monitored. A system of evaluation and assessment of the transition program is necessary for improvement and sustainability (Dann-Messier & Kampits, 2004). However, the rewards are promising. As English language learners enter college better prepared to handle the social and academic challenges, fewer will drop out or withdraw, and more will succeed.

Figure IV-7: **Sample Recruitment Flyer**



University of Altaday
and
Canexi Adult Education Programs
Present a joint program

College 101 – Introduction to College

Prepare for your college career with confidence while still participating in your adult education/ESL program

- Tour the campus
- Meet and be advised by key staff
  - ⇨ Financial Aid
  - ⇨ Registration & Admissions
  - ⇨ Library & Computer Labs
  - ⇨ Career Counseling Center

College 101 is designed specifically for adult English language learners. You will receive services designed for your particular needs. Learn:

- How college courses are structured
- How to apply for financial aid
- How to take care of personal needs

"I had so many reasons not to attend. This program helped me figure out solutions to many of my problems."

"I never dreamed I would attend college. Now I feel like I belong here, and I will succeed!"

College 101 Program includes

- Workshops on study skills
- Flexible advising
- Assignment of a student mentor
- Access to one-on-one tutoring
- Special courses to prepare you for college entry

Who is eligible?

- Placement in advanced level ESL
- Near attainment or completed GED
- Evidence of successful achievement on TABE

For more information

- Visit www.ual.edu/college 101
- Call Amy Tan at (502) 123-1234
- E-mail amy.tan @ual.edu

(Adapted from University of Wisconsin—River Falls, 2004)

Resources for Transition to College

- America Connects Web site offers a quick overview of transition to college programs. Go to http://www.americaconnects.net/research/
- Beyond the GED: Making Conscious Choices about the GED and Your Future is a NCSALL publication providing lesson plans and materials for the GED classroom. Go to http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/teach/beyond_ged.pdf
- Massachusetts' Curriculum Frameworks on page 81 provides a section on math needed for postsecondary education. Go to http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/mathnum.pdf
- LINCS Health and Literacy Special Collection provides information for students interested in transitioning into a health career. Go to http://www.worlded.org/us/health/lincs
- LINCS Science & Numeracy Special Collection provides drill and practice on math skills. Go to http://literacynet.org/sciencelincs and click on A+Math. For science related links, click on Explore Science.
- "Getting Through College: Voices of Low-Income and Minority Students in New England" offers information on financial aid. Go to http://www.ihep.com/Pubs/PDF/Nelliemae.pdf
- Join the National ABE-to-College Transition Network beginning in June, 2004. This network will support ABE staff, programs, and states in establishing and strengthening ABE-to-college transition services through technical assistance, professional development, collegial sharing, and advocacy. Join the network by going to http://www.collegetransition.org/

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Preparing for Permanent Residency and Citizenship

Some participants in adult ESL and family literacy programs are working to become permanent U.S. residents or citizens. This section gives information about these processes and resources for teachers to consult.

Lawful Permanent Residency (Green Card)

In order to be able to legally live and work permanently in the United States, individuals must go through a multi-step process to become legal immigrants. Teachers should become acquainted with the immigration and citizenship processes themselves, so they can help the adult English language learners in their programs understand when, where, and how they may begin this process in their own communities. In order to keep up to date on information concerning the process and to obtain the current information and forms, teachers can periodically check the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Web site at http://uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm and the U.S. Immigration Information Web site at http://www.rapidimmigration.com/usa/1_eng_immigration_info.html. Details on who is eligible to apply for permanent residence in the United States may be found on the eligibility information page on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Web site http://uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/LPReligibility.htm. However, it is important to distinguish between the educational and legal aspects of citizenship preparation (Nixon & Keenan, 1997). *The teacher's role is to direct learners to information (print, Web, phone, etc.) and local sources of assistance, not to assist the learners in the naturalization process itself. This is particularly true in dealing with immigration issues, but also with other legal issues.*

U.S. Citizenship

The process of obtaining U.S. citizenship is called naturalization. Teachers can help students understand the responsibilities that naturalization brings, along with the many rights and privileges they will receive as a result of becoming citizens. In becoming U.S. citizens, individuals promise to support and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States, swear allegiance to the United States, and promise to serve the country when required. In most cases, they must give up prior allegiances to other countries. U.S. citizenship brings the right to vote and hold public office, work for the federal government, and help family members immigrate to the United States.

Although the citizenship process and exam are being revised, three resources on the Internet will help teachers and students understand the application process for citizenship. These resources help explain to teachers and applicants how to prepare for the exam. The first source, USCIS, within the Department of Homeland Security, is the government agency that administers the naturalization process. Information about USCIS is available on their Web site at http://uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm. The second Internet resource is for literacy staff and volunteers. The free online course, *Citizenship: What Volunteers Need to Know*

(Proliteracy Worldwide & National Center for Family Literacy, 2004) at Verizon Literacy Campus, http://www.literacycampus.org/, offers a 45-minute step-by-step tour through the naturalization process, using the USCIS Web site as its base. The third resource is the National Center for ESL Literacy Education's (NCLE) two-page brief, *Citizenship Preparation for Adult ESL Learners,* available at http://www.cal.org/caela/digests/Citizen.htm (Nixon & Keenan, 1997). This document provides the basis for the activities that follow this summary. Teachers may use these activities to help students prepare for the citizenship exam, but they should be aware that adult immigrants need skills beyond basic English proficiency to successfully complete the process.

The first step in the naturalization process is to determine if an individual is eligible for citizenship. (See eligibility requirements on the USCIS Web site, http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/index.htm.) Students will need to gather their documents, have two photographs taken, and be prepared to pay the appropriate fees. They may download the Forms and Fees document from the USCIS Web site. They will need to gather the following documents-- their Social Security card; their U.S. Residency card and a list of their residences for the past 5 years; their work or school history; a list of trips outside the United States of 24 hours or more; information on their spouse, including their spouse's Social Security number, date of birth, and date of citizenship; date of marriage to their spouse and information on prior marriages; information on their children, including the dates and countries of their birth, their current address, school and work affiliations, and arrest history.

If the individuals are determined eligible, they can apply for citizenship. When applicants have sent in their completed application and fees, they will receive an appointment letter from USCIS. They will need to get their fingerprints taken, wait for their scheduled interview and go to the local office at the specified time, and take the English and civics tests. After passing the tests, they are ready for the final step.

The final step to receiving citizenship is to take the oath of allegiance. Applicants will check in at their assigned location for the naturalization ceremony. There, they turn in their Permanent Resident Card, answer any further questions, take the oath, and receive their Certificate of Naturalization.

Please note that the USCIS is in the process of redesigning the citizenship test. The new test should be implemented in late 2006.

Conclusion

In order to have access to the full range of U.S. government sponsored services, adult English language learners need to consider becoming U.S. citizens. Keeping in mind that they are *not* immigration specialists or legal advisors, ESL instructors can play an important

role by helping learners achieve the English language competency and obtain the content knowledge they need to pass the citizenship exam.

Activities for Teaching Citizenship

Using a variety of materials in the citizenship class provides relevant content and practice with English for learners, especially those with minimal English literacy skills (Holt, 1995). Textbooks do exist; however, most citizenship preparation texts on the market are not written at a level suitable for beginning-level learners (Silliman, 1997). Instructors will need to adapt materials for these learners (Nixon & Keenan, 1997). Both learners and teachers need to understand that if learners have very limited English proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking, they may have difficulty successfully completing the English and civics tests.

Regardless of the learner's English proficiency and literacy level, classroom instruction must not be limited to textbook work. The use of authentic materials is recommended for all learners. An American flag; historical or civics posters; and images of the White House, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and Martin Luther King are examples of visual aids that can help literacy-level learners better understand the content.

Following are some activities that can be done in class. Most are based on the USCIS list of 100 questions, from which the majority of USCIS interview questions are currently drawn. Some examples for extending the activities to the other components of family literacy are provided for each. See Part III, beginning on page III–1 for a review of the four family literacy components:

- Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children (PACT Time)
- Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children (Parent Education)
- Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency (Adult Education)
- An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences (Children's Education)

Figure IV–8: **Citizenship Preparation Activities**

Question by Theme. To prepare for this activity, the teacher needs to arrange the 100 USCIS questions according to theme. Although most of the questions fit neatly into such themes as the presidency, the Congress, or the Constitution, some questions will fit into more than one theme. By breaking up the questions in this manner, the teacher is able to discuss questions in clear thematic units. In family literacy programs, these themes may be carried through to the other components. For example, the children's classroom may use activities from children's books that address the same themes; a parent education session activity with parents and children might include a field trip to local government agencies, such as the courthouse, post office, and library; and during parent time, discussions might include laws on child abuse and domestic violence in this country.

Contests. Many learners enjoy competition. This is particularly true for those whose home country educational system emphasizes memorization, speed, and individual achievement. To set up a contest, the teacher divides the class into teams. The teacher may ask the questions, have a learner ask the

questions, or have the teams choose and ask the questions. One individual answers questions until a mistake is made, at which time a person from the other team begins answering questions. The winner is the one who answers the most questions before making a mistake.

Tape Recording. Since it is unlikely that the USCIS interviewer will sound exactly the same as the teacher, learners should have opportunities to hear the questions asked by other native speakers of English, for example, the teacher's friends or family members. It is important to provide opportunities to hear a variety of accents and intonations. Alternatively, learners may collect their own samples from friends, neighbors, or coworkers who speak English. This gives learners the opportunity to speak to native speakers of English. A third option is to ask the learners themselves to read and record the questions. Although this takes a great deal of time, it fosters test familiarity.

Flash Cards. Learners can make a set of 100 question flashcards for themselves and write the answers on the back. Although this takes a lot of class time, it allows learners to study the questions outside of class. In family literacy programs, parents can also create a small set of flash cards (5-10 cards) for their children, created from digital photos taken of their childrens' favorite places they have visited on the field trip (see *Question Division* above). At home, parents can discuss what they see in the photo with their children, thus expanding their children's vocabulary.

Dictation. Since the test requires that learners listen to and write down one or two sentences, practicing dictation is vital. Many learners are more afraid of this particular part of the test than of any other part of the interview. Following are possible practice formats: a) The teacher dictates questions or answers for the learners to write. b) The teacher dictates the questions, and the learners write down the answers. c) The teacher dictates the answers, and the learners write the corresponding questions. d) In family literacy programs, parents can write down what their children say as the children describe their artwork or short stories.

Role Play. The class pretends that the teacher is the USCIS examiner. The teacher creates an environment in the classroom that is similar to the testing situation, including such props as the American flag and photographs of the President. Then the teacher and individual students perform practice interviews. Learners can also take both sides of the role play: One student is the examiner, and one student is the examinee. This is particularly effective in multilevel classes, where a more proficient learner can practice language skills while helping a learner with less language proficiency or content knowledge.

Drill Patterns. Drill and practice can be a valuable technique for memorizing answers for the exam. Following are some possible drills: a) The teacher recites a question, and the learners repeat it. b) The teacher recites a question, and the learners give the answer. c) The teacher recites the answer, and the learners recite the question. If necessary, the teacher can break down the sentences into meaningful chunks that can be used for further practice. Pronunciation drills may be added as well. A drill that provides practice with rephrasing the question is also useful, as the USCIS examiner may do so during the interview.

Cloze Exercises. The teacher develops worksheets with some text deleted. Possible high-level texts are the *Star-Spangled Banner*, the *Pledge of Allegiance*, or the Preamble to the Constitution. The teacher may also ask learners to read a passage from a history book aloud or recite one from memory. Then the teacher writes the passage on the board and erases every fifth word. The class then reads the passage, filling in the missing words. In family literacy programs, parents and children can learn to recite the *Pledge of Allegiance* and sing the *Star-Spangled Banner*, *This Land is Your Land*, or *America, the Beautiful* for President's Day or the Fourth of July.

Testing Practice. Learners may need instruction in the process of signing up for the test and taking the written test. This could include a field trip to the local USCIS office. Teachers should provide opportunities for learners to practice test-taking skills, making sure that learners know how to take multiple choice tests (Silliman 1997). Practice versions of the standardized tests are available from several publishers.

(Adapted from Nixon & Keenan, 1997. Used with permission.)

Additional Resources

Cultural Orientation Resource Center. The *Culture Profiles* series, developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics, is available at http://www.culturalorientation.net/fact.html. *Culture Profiles* provide concise, informative introductions to the cultural background of refugee populations. Profiles available online include *Muslim Refugees, Somali Bantu, The Afghans, The Iraqis, The Haitians, and The Bosnians.*

EL Civics "How to" Manual. Bronx Community College English Literacy and Civic Understanding Demonstration Grant (funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education). http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/ELCivics/index.cfm

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Office of Vocational and Adult Education published a guidebook called ***Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants*** to facilitate the adjustment of new immigrants to life in America. A lawful permanent resident can use the guide to find out about their rights and responsibilities as a new immigrant; understand how our federal, state, and local governments work; and learn about important historical events that have shaped the United States. The guide includes basic information on civic principles, as well as practical information, such as how to obtain a Social Security Number, how to get help in preparing your taxes, and how to enroll your child in school. It also provides resources that are available to help immigrants get the essential services they need. http://www.uscis.gov

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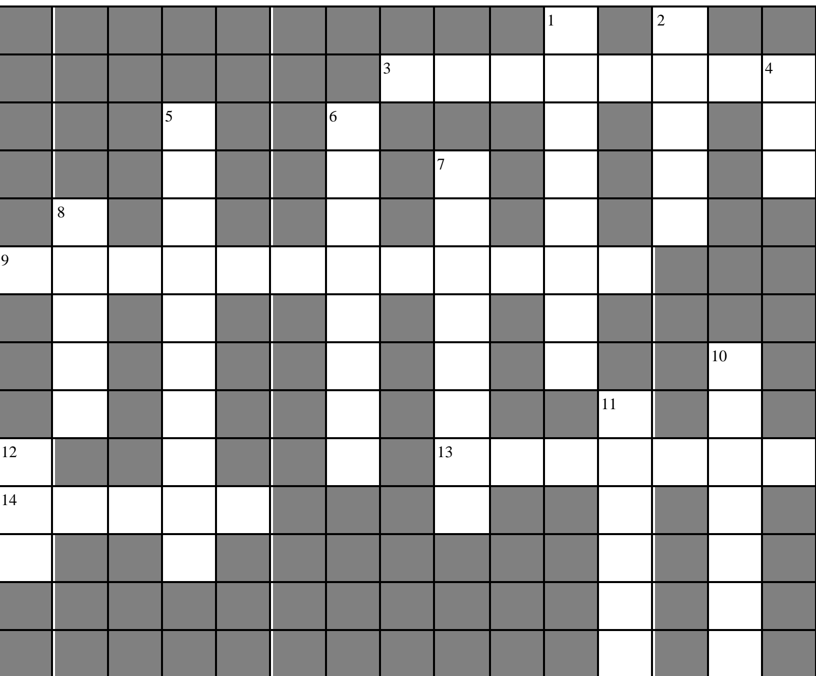
Citizenship Crossword Puzzle

The following puzzle questions are taken directly from the Sample Civics Questions from *A Guide to Naturalization* (USCIS, 2004). These are examples of questions a USCIS officer may ask during a citizenship interview. The sentences are also examples of the types of sentences a USCIS officer may ask an applicant to read aloud or write during the interview. These are examples only.



Puzzle Clues

Across

3. What were the 13 original states of the United States called before they were states?
9. What holiday was celebrated for the first time by American colonists?
13. Independence Day celebrates independence from whom?
14. What color are the stars on our flag?

Down

1. What is the head executive of a state government called?
2. How many stars are there on our flag?
4. How many years is a Senator's term?
5. What do we call changes to the Constitution?
6. What is the legislative branch of our government?
7. In what month is the new President elected?
8. How many branches are there in the United States government?
10. In what month is the new President inaugurated?
11. What was the 49th state added to our Union (the United States)?
12. For how many years is one term for a member of the House of Representatives?

Citizenship Crossword Puzzle Answers

										[1]G		[2]F		
							[3]C	O	L	O	N	I	E	[4]S
			[5]A			[6]C				V		F		I
			M			O		[7]N		E		T		X
	[8]T		E			N		O		R		Y		
[9]T	H	A	N	K	S	G	I	V	I	N	G			
	R		D			R		E		O				
	E		M			E		M		R			[10]J	
	E		E			S		B			[11]A		A	
[12]T			N			S		[13]E	N	G	L	A	N	D
[14]W	H	I	T	E				R			A		U	
O			S								S		A	
											K		R	
											A		Y	

Sample Vocabulary List for Residency and Citizenship

affidavit
allegiance
amendments
applicant
asylee
authorization
Bill of Rights
biographic data
cabinet member
citizenship
civics
Civil War
colonists
Commander-in-Chief
Congress
Constitution
continuous residence
criminal prosecution
Declaration of Independence

downloadable
eligible
Emancipation Proclamation
employment petition
evidence
executive
federal
fiancé
governor
House of Representatives
immigrant
immediate relative
inaugurate
independence
interpret
jeopardize
judicial
juvenile
legislative

mayor
moral character
national anthem
naturalization
parentheses
parole
permanent residency
petition
Pilgrims
Preamble
refugee
republic
requirements
Revolutionary War
Senate
status
Supreme Court
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service

Part V: Resources

Part V provides information for practitioners working in adult ESL and family literacy programs on where to find additional resources.

Parent Education Resources

Free Resources from Ed Pubs

The following resources are a few of the many publications that may be ordered free of charge from the Internet. As indicated, these are available in both English and Spanish. (Retrieved May 22, 2004, from http://www.ed.gov/about/pubs/intro/index.html.)

[English/Spanish] ***Guide For Parents: How Do I Know A Good Early Reading Program When I See One?*** and ***Una guia para los padres: Como puedo reconocer un buen programa de lectura para la primera ensenanza?*** Provides guidelines for parents to help recognize the characteristics of a good early reading program.

[English/Spanish] ***Guide for Reading: How Parents Can Help Their Children Be Ready To Read and Ready To Learn*** and ***Guia para leer.*** Provides tips to parents of young children regarding how to prepare them for reading and learning. This brochure lets parents know how important it is to be involved with their children by reading to them and preparing them for reading and learning on their own.

[English/Spanish] ***Helping Your Child Become A Reader*** and ***Ayudando a su hijo a ser un buen lector.*** Offers pointers on how to build the language skills of young children, from infancy to age six. This booklet provides numerous activities parents can do to boost their children's love of reading.

[English/Spanish] ***Helping Your Child Become A Responsible Citizen*** and ***Como ayudar a su hijo a ser un ciudadano responsible.*** Provides information about the values and skills that make up good character and good citizenship, and what parents can do to help their child develop strong character. The booklet also suggests activities that parents and school-age children can do to put those values to work in their daily lives.

[English/Spanish] ***Helping Your Child With Homework: For Parents Of Children In Elementary Through Middle School*** and ***Como ayudar a su hijo con la tarea escolar.*** Helps parents of elementary and junior high school students understand the purpose and nature of homework and makes suggestions for helping their children complete homework assignments successfully.

[English/Spanish] ***Helping Your Preschool Child*** and ***Como ayudar a su hijo durante la edad preescolar.*** Highlights techniques parents can use to encourage their children to study, learn, and stay in school by focusing on activities that make learning fun. The booklet has information applicable to infants through children age five.

[English/Spanish] ***Questions Parents Ask About Schools*** and ***Preguntas que hacen los padres sobre las escuelas.*** Answers questions frequently asked by parents of elementary and middle-school-aged children who want to help their children learn and succeed. The

research-based tips in this publication provide both practical guidance and valuable information about a range of topics.

[English/Spanish] ***Reading Tips For Parents*** and ***Consejos practicos para los padres sobre la lectura*** [Revised-2003]. Provides tips for parents to help children be ready to read and ready to learn. This brochure gives advice to parents about how to know a good early reading program, how to put simple strategies for creating strong readers into action, and how to practice the five essential components of good reading.

[English/Spanish] ***Ten Facts Every Parent Should Know About The No Child Left Behind Act*** and ***Diez datos que cada padre debe saber sobre la ley que ningún niño se quede atrás.*** Provides ten facts that every parent should know about how this historic law helps their children. This multi-fold brochure is printed in English on one side and Spanish on the other. It also provides resources for obtaining more information and publications.

[English/Spanish] ***Tips For Parents On Keeping Children Drug Free*** and ***Consejos para los padres sobre como mantener a los hijos libres de la droga.*** While not available in hard copy, this publication is available and downloadable from the Ed Pubs Web site, http://www.ed.gov/about/pubs/intro/index.html.

Popular Web Sites for Parents & Practitioners

Family Literacy Special Collection of the National Institute for Literacy offers an annotated list of Web sites that teachers can use to help parents develop positive parenting skills. http://literacy.kent.edu/Midwest/FamilyLit/pract_parented.html

FirstGov.gov for Parents. Here you'll find lots of parenting tip sheets for parents with children of all ages. http://www.firstgov.gov/Topics/Parents.shtml

About.com has several sections worthy of visiting. Parenting & Family offers links to pages of information on children's books, family Internet, baby products, day care and preschool, fatherhood and frugal living. http://home.about.com/parenting/

Connect for Kids provides the latest information on supporting children's language and literacy development. It contains age-appropriate activities for children, the latest information for parents and teachers, and news articles parents and teachers can use to support learning. http://www.connectforkids.org/

Education Trust offers new Web resources for Latino parents, community leaders and advocates. The Education Trust has launched its Spanish-language Web site featuring reports and resources for Spanish-speaking parents, community leaders and advocates. http://www2.edtrust.org/EdTrust/spanish.htm

Family Education is an interactive site with information on health, child development, behavior, and family issues. The site is divided into age groups: Pre-K – 2, 3 – 5, and 6 – 12; and addresses school, entertainment and life issues. http://fen.com/

FunBrain.com encourages parental participation. Click on the *Parents* tab for educational children's games. Topics include numbers, words, universe, and culture. http://www.funbrain.com/

Motheread is a private, non-profit literacy development organization, working to integrate literature-based curriculum and training into literacy, early childhood education, and family support programs. http://www.motheread.com/

National PTA offers a host of information for parents in English and Spanish. Click on the Parent Involvement tab for parenting tip sheets, newsletters, and videos. http://www.pta.org/

National Parenting Center is dedicated to providing parents with comprehensive and responsible guidance from the world's most renowned child-rearing authorities. http://www.tnpc.com/test/index.asp

Parent Soup.com is a place where parents can discuss and learn about parenting. The site contains a wealth of information including tips on children's different ages and stages, discipline, and planning family activities. http://www.parentsoup.com/

Parenthood.com provides information for parents such as parenting tips, nutrition, family finance, and consumer topics that may be used for parent education topics of discussion. http://www.parenthood.com/links.html

Parenting.com invites parents to read articles, read expert questions and answers, and explore other parenting tips and resources. The site is divided into information on pregnancy, baby, preschooler, and mom. http://www.parenting.com/parenting/

Parenting.org provides common sense answers to parenting questions. The site is organized to provide easy access to content based on the child's age. This is good information for research and discussion during parent education time. http://www.parenting.org/

Parents as Teachers offers a variety of educational handouts in Spanish and English. Click on the *For Parents* tab for topics such as *Helping Children Cope with War and Trauma* and *Preparing Children for Separations.* http://www.patnc.org/

ParentsPlace.com was created by two stay-at-home parents to provide broad content depth with an emphasis on newborns and pregnancy. Topics include pregnancy, breastfeeding, and children's illnesses. http://www.parentsplace.com/

PBS Kids is an interactive Web site for children, parents and teachers. It contains fun activities, games and parent resources. Parents and children can even customize stories to include the child's name and favorite character. http://pbskids.org/

Positive Parenting.com is dedicated to providing resources and information to make parenting rewarding, effective, and fun! Current and archived issues of the newsletter are

available, as are multimedia resources and links to other pertinent sites.
http://www.positiveparenting.com/

Reading Rockets.org offers information about teaching children to read. The site includes what to look for in a preschool program, a list of recommended children's books, and a link to the companion Spanish Web site, ¡Colorín, Colorado! http://www.readingrockets.org/

Sofweb is an Australian educational site with materials for parents translated into 15 languages. The booklets in *The Early Years* section provide information suitable for parent education discussion. The literacy level is high, so staff will need to have a high reading level in the parents' language. http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/transmat.htm

[Spanish] **Univision.com** offers a wide variety of topics for parents to read and discuss during parent education. Click on Vida, then on Educación for topics such as summer learning opportunities, scholarships, and reading tips.
http://www.univision.com/portal.jhtml

Zero to Three offers a wide variety of research based articles that can provide teachers with background information for parent education discussions in the Parenting A-Z section. Articles are too advanced for beginning ELL parents to read. http://www.zerotothree.org/

Adult ESL Resources

A variety of resources are available to teachers and programs working with adult English language learners in print, multimedia, and online formats. Resources are also available for learners themselves. Although the following list is not exhaustive, it highlights some of the most useful resources for teachers and learners. For more in-depth information about adult ESL resources, see the Web site for the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA) http://www.cal.org/caela.

Resources for Teachers

Print Resources

Arlington Education and Employment Program. (1994). *The REEP Curriculum: A Learner-Centered ESL Curriculum for Adults* (Third Edition). This curriculum includes information any serious ESL teacher—whether just beginning to teach, or a veteran of many years in the classroom—needs know about providing instruction to adult English language learners. The curriculum is composed of the following units: learner needs assessment, learner evaluation, needs assessment, instructional units from levels 100 (pre-literate, no English ability) through 550 (high advanced English), and a transitional self-study unit to prepare learners for college level ESL. The appendices contain information on cross-cultural issues; using computers with language instruction; sample lessons, activities, and assessments; and a bibliography of resources. If you could have just one document to help you plan and deliver ESL instruction, this would be the one. The newest version of the *REEP Curriculum*–ESL Curriculum for Adults is available online at http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/instruct/ctae/adult_ed/REEP/reepcurriculum/.

Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP). (1997). *Project based learning and assessment: A resource manual for teachers.* Arlington, VA: Author. This resource manual helps practitioners understand how project-based learning can be a practical and meaningful way for adults to acquire and demonstrate progress in English. Several of the projects described in the manual reflect the goals of the U.S. Department of Education's EL/Civics initiative, which include learning about citizenship, civic participation, and U.S. history and government. http://www.cal.org/caela/REEPproj.pdf

Auerbach, E. (1992). *Making meaning, making change: Participatory curriculum development for adult ESL literacy.* McHenry, IL and Washington, DC: Delta Systems and Center for Applied Linguistics. This book describes the University of Massachusetts Family Literacy Project, a participatory adult ESL civics project, and offers insights for teachers who want to undertake a similar project. Examples are given of how the project sought to use literacy to make changes in the community. http://calstore.cal.org/

Bell, J. (2004). *Teaching multilevel classes in ESL (2nd edition).* Toronto, Ontario: Pippin Publishing. The author describes a variety of features that make a class multilevel including differences in language proficiency, education experience, and situational factors. This book discusses the challenges of planning curriculum and teaching multilevel classes and offers strategies for classroom management and practical activities to use. http://www.pippinpub.com/index.asp

Bell, J. & Burnaby, B. (1984). *A handbook for ESL literacy*. Toronto, Ontario: Pippin Publishing. This book was written for both novice and experienced teachers who are teaching initial reading and writing skills to adult English language learners. It provides background information about literacy theory and offers practical suggestions for lesson planning. It is a classic adult ESL education guide. http://www.pippinpub.com/index.asp

Brod, S. (1999). *What non-readers or beginning readers need to know: Performance-based ESL adult literacy*. Denver, CO: Spring Institute for International Studies. This short publication provides teachers with communicative activities to use in the beginning level classroom to help learners get started learning to read. http://www.spring-institute.org/

Brown, H.D. (2001). *Teaching by principles (2nd ed.).* White Plains, NY: Pearson Education. This book discusses teaching practices that are grounded in principles of language learning. The book is written for new teachers and covers topics such as the history of language teaching; cognitive, affective, and linguistic principles of language learning; designing and implementing classroom lessons; and assessing language skills. http://www.longman.com/

McKay, H. & Tom, A. (1999). *Teaching adult second language learners*. New York: Cambridge University Press. The authors focus specifically on adults learning English. The book provides a summary of the principles of teaching adults and a variety of activities organized by life skill. http://publishing.cambridge.org/ge/elt/

Nash, A. (1999). *Civic participation and community action sourcebook: A resource for adult educators.* Boston: New England Literacy Resource Center. These stories discuss a wide range of issues from finding a class project and goal-setting to meeting with legislators and advocating for adult education funding. The sourcebook also contains an extensive bibliography of Web-based resources and an appendix of human rights and civics documents. While many of the articles deal with ABE/GED learners and teachers, the themes and activities can be adapted for ESL classes. http://tech.worlded.org/docs/vera/index1.htm

Weinstein, G. (ED.) (1999). *Learners' lives as curriculum: Six journeys to immigrant literacy.* McHenry, IL and Washington, DC: Delta Systems and Center for Applied Linguistics. This book describes the philosophical background and the actual process of using learners' needs and concerns to develop curricula and materials to assist them to meet language-learning and life goals while they participate actively in their communities. This

volume describes six projects that were undertaken in the late 1990s by community-based organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. http://calstore.cal.org/store/

World Wide Web Resources

Adult ESL Fact Sheets These four concise fact sheets provide an overview of current issues in the field of adult ESL and discuss the trends and best practices. They also suggest pertinent additional resources. The fact sheets are: *Assessment with Adult English Language Learners*, *Family Literacy and Adult English Language Learners*, *Professional Development and Adult English Language Instruction*, and *Uses of Technology in Adult ESL Instruction*. Available at http://www.cal.org/caela/factsheets/index.htm or by contacting CAELA at caela@cal.org or 202-362-0700.

Assessment and Accountability in Programs for Adult English Language Learners: What Do We Know? What Do We Have in Place? What Do We Need? National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE). This online compilation summarizes a symposium held on May 16, 2003 on Issues and Challenges in Assessment and Accountability for Adult English Language Learners. This symposium addressed issues of assessment from many perspectives and featured presentations from Cheryl L. Keenan, Director of the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) in the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. She described the Department's vision for assessment and accountability. Proceedings are available from http://www.cal.org/caela/accountability/.

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
Bilingual (English/French) site supporting the development of the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), a set of national performance standards for adult ESL instruction. In addition to the contents of the benchmarks themselves, descriptions of the Centre's programs and services, links to related sites, and an overview of the CLB process, the publications section contains numerous ESL and CLB-related materials (many online in full-text). http://www.language.ca

Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Center for Applied Linguistics. The *Culture Profiles* series provide concise, informative introductions to the cultural background of refugee populations. Profiles available online include *Muslim Refugees, Somali Bantu, The Afghans, The Iraqis, The Haitians, and The Bosnians.* http://www.culturalorientation.net/fact.html

EL Civics "How to" Manual. Bronx Community College English Literacy and Civic Understanding Demonstration Grant (funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education). http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/ELCivics/index.cfm

Health Literacy Resources for Adult ESL. Health literacy has been gaining increasing attention in the adult literacy, English as a Second Language (ESL), and healthcare fields in recent years. To help professionals working with adult English language learners understand and address health literacy issues, the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) has put together the following resources developed by Kate Singleton of

Fairfax, Virginia: *Health Literacy and Adult English Language Learners, Annotated Bibliography of Health Literacy Resources & Programs For Adult ESL*, and *Using Picture Stories for Adult ESL Health Literacy.* http://www.cal.org/caela/healthlit.htm

LINCS/National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)
The national LINCS (Literacy Information and Communication System) site is a project of the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). It includes policy updates, grant and funding announcements, a calendar of events, and information about NIFL-sponsored literacy discussion lists including lists discussing family literacy and adult ESL. *America's Literacy Directory*, a searchable database that can be used to find adult education and adult ESL programs around the nation, can also be accessed here. Finally, the Special Collections of LINCS have excellent resources for working with English language learners.
http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/index.html

- English as a Second Language http://literacynet.org/esl/
- Family Literacy http://literacy.kent.edu/Midwest/FamilyLit/
- Health and Literacy http://www.worlded.org/us/health/lincs/
- Literacy and Learning Disabilities http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/

Massachusetts Adult ESOL Curriculum Framework This is a draft document of the framework for a statewide adult ESOL curriculum. It outlines the core concepts and seven guiding principles behind the framework, as well as the five principle strands for instruction and learning, and the specific learning standards (skills and knowledge) related to each.
http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks

National Reporting System for Adult Education This is the primary Web site for information on the National Reporting System, an outcome-based reporting system for state-administered, federally funded adult education programs. The site includes background on the NRS' outcome measures and uniform data collection system; current developments in the system; publications; and access to training on the system (software, online modules, print materials, etc.) including the NRS Online Training System
http://www.oei-tech.com/nrs/. Available at http://www.nrsweb.org/default.asp

Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN) Provides a gateway to electronic resources and information on all aspects of adult education, including adult ESL. Full-text documents, opportunities for online networking and training, and links to other Web-based resources are available. You can also register to be notified regularly of new materials related to your area(s) of interest. (While the site has been specifically designed to support practitioners and others in California, the resources are of wide interest.
http://www.otan.dni.us/

Tennessee Adult ESOL Curriculum Resource Book
This online document defines the language, EL/Civics, and workplace competencies for six adult ESOL levels recognized by the state of Tennessee. It provides descriptions of student learning plans, as well as appendices on materials and resources, samples of student

portfolio sheets, and general information and guidelines for new teachers. http://aeonline.coe.utk.edu/esolcrg.pdf. Other locally produced materials for adult ESOL are available at http://cls.coe.utk.edu/lpm/lpm.html#esol.

Other Resources

Crossroads Café. Video series. This video series of 26 episodes -- produced by INTELCOM in collaboration with Heinle & Heinle publishers and several states -- is supported by integrated print materials at several levels and a "wraparound version" for adult English language learners at lower proficiency levels. Without the wraparound video, the videos and materials are most appropriate for intermediate levels. Many public libraries own sets of the series, so adults can learn with the materials at home. http://www.intelecom.org

Hands-on English. Published six times a year, this publication provides classroom activities (often reproducible) for teacher and tutors of adult ESL. Available from Hands-On English, PO Box 256, Crete, NE 68333 or contact http://www.handsonenglish.com.

The New Americans. Video Miniseries. These videos were produced by ITVS. Also available is a series guide and activity book for use with adult learners. This series describes the lives of immigrants and refugees by following them from their native countries and refugee camps (Nigeria, the West Bank, and the Dominican Republic) to their new lives in the United States. http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/

On Common Ground. This 15-episode video series by INTELECOM (1999) aims to engage learners' interest in a variety of civics-oriented themes such as the separation of powers, freedom of speech, and equality. Each half-hour drama deals with one such theme and is followed by a short historical documentary. Because of the level of language used and the depth of cultural knowledge required, the videos are suitable for high-intermediate or advanced learners only. Workbooks are available for classroom work. http://www.intelecom.org

ESOL Starter Kit. The online version of this kit, produced by the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center, provides an overview of the information most often needed for those beginning to teach adult ESL. Sections provide information on such topics as intake, adult ESL resources, adult learning principles, second language teaching, the four language modes, and curriculum development. Links to online resources and sample lesson plans for reading, writing, listening, and speaking are included. http://www.aelweb.vcu.edu/publications/

Verizon Literacy Campus offers free, short, self-paced online courses on adult literacy and family literacy. Click on online courses. http://www.literacycampus.org/

Program and Content Standards

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), the Canadian government, and several states have developed program and/or content standards, which can aid program improvement. Both content and program standards are included here; they are not always easily separated. These resources may be useful for states and programs that want to develop standards to meet state goals. (See also the standards warehouse in development, hosted by the U. S. Department of Education. In the future, check the OVAE Web site at http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html for an update to this document.

Arizona Department of Education. *Arizona Adult Education Standards*
http://www.ade.az.gov/adult-ed/aestandards.asp

California Department of Education. (1992). *English-as-a-second-language model standards for adult education programs.* Sacramento, CA: Author. Available from California Department of Education, Bureau of Publications, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95812-0271, 916-445-1260, or at http://www.otan.us/webfarm/emailproject/standard.pdf.

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks includes profiles, competencies, and tasks for twelve English language proficiency levels plus literacy level.
http://www.language.ca/home.html

Florida Department of Education. *English for limited English proficient adults curriculum frameworks.* http://www.firn.edu/doe/dwdframe/ad/pdf/3201030a.pdf

Maryland State Department of Education. *Maryland adult ESL program standards.*
http://www.research.umbc.edu/~ira/ESLstand.html

Massachusetts Department of Education. (2000). *Massachusetts adult education curriculum frameworks.* http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/esol.pdf

New York State Education Department. *Adult education resource guide and learning standards.* http://www.hudrivctr.org/products_ae.htm

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). (2000). *Program standards for adult education ESOL programs.* Alexandria, VA: Author. This document describes program quality indicators in eight areas: program structure, administration, and planning; curriculum; instruction; recruitment, intake, and orientation; retention and transition; assessment and learner gains; staffing, professional development, and staff evaluation; and support services. Available from TESOL Publications, PO Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20604-0753; http://www.tesol.org/ Click on Publications.

Resources for Adult English Language Learners

Print Resources

There are many commercially produced materials for adult English language learners that students can use in class or at home. Learners and teachers often like these materials because they offer a way to structure classes and learning. However, some of the most effective resources are materials that learners find and need to use in real life from safety signs, telephone books and brochures for lower level learners to newspaper articles and non-simplified literature for the higher level learners. From these sources, teachers can find authentic print material that is relevant to their classes' level, needs, and goals.

Developing activities around such materials may be time-consuming, but teachers should consider developing such materials to at least supplement the use of commercial texts (if accessible to learners).

Textbooks are available for learners at all levels, from literacy to advanced. Some books are core texts (e.g., they include content and activities in the four skill areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening); others concentrate on one or more skills or specific content—such as parenting or workplace. The list below is not exhaustive, but serves to show the breadth of the offerings. For reviews of many adult ESL materials, consult Silliman, A., & Tom, A. (2000). *Practical resources for adult ESL*. Burlingame, CA: ALTA Book Centers. http://www.altaesl.com/index.cfm

Boyd, F., & Numrich, C. (series editors). (1998). *NorthStar*. White Plains, NY: Pearson. http://www.longman.com/

Gramer, M. F. (1994). *Basic Oxford picture dictionary*. New York: Oxford University Press http://www.oup.com/us/?view=usa

Moss, D., Shank, C., & Terrill, L. (1997). *Collaborations: English in our lives: Literacy.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle. http://www.heinle.com/

Newman, C. M. (1998). *LifePrints: ESL for adults* (series). Syracuse: New Readers Press. http://www.newreaderspress.com/index_h.html

Nishio, Y. W. (1998). *Longman ESL Literacy* (2nd Ed.) White Plains, NY: Pearson Education. http://www.longman.com/

Shapiro, N., & Adelson-Goldstein, J. (1998). *Oxford picture dictionary.* New York: Oxford University Press. http://www.oup.com/us/?view=usa

Van Duzer, C., & Burt, M. (1999). *A day in the life of the González family*. Video and text for high beginning through intermediate adult English language learners, present experiences of the González family in situations that all immigrants may face, regardless of their language and cultural background (e.g., at work, with children's teachers, looking for work). http://www.cal.org/store

World Wide Web Resources

There are now many Web sites devoted to English language learning, although many of them are appropriate for learners at intermediate and higher levels. However, as more and more adult English language learners have access to computers in their homes or schools, using the Internet for real-life learning and problem solving may be more useful than just "ESL" Web sites. With or without the assistance of a teacher, tutor, or volunteer, learners can quite easily search for information about the community, work, health, or other topics of interest. Learners can work in pairs or small groups to search for information that is relevant to them (e.g., finding a good deal on a used car, looking for information about a health issue, learning about a holiday celebration, etc). As teachers look for Web sites that may be useful for the learners in their classes, they should remember the power of the Internet for project-based learning.

About.com's Guide to English as a Second Language http://esl.about.com/
Hosted by an English teacher in Tuscany, the site includes quizzes, vocabulary study pages, interactive polls, chat rooms, pen pal information, and a weekly e-mail newsletter. It also has pages of resources for Spanish speakers learning English and for teachers of English. Recommended for intermediate to advanced English language learners.

Activities for ESL Students http://a4esl.org/
Numerous quizzes and puzzles for learners to complete and check on their own. Learners can choose from a variety of activities dealing with vocabulary building, phrasal verbs, slang, idioms, homonyms, and specific grammar points, such as articles and prepositions. The site was developed by the *The Internet TESL Journal*.

City Family Magazine Online http://www.cityfamily.org
Originally a print publication targeting immigrants learning English, *City Family Magazine* is now online. Readers will find articles on a diversity of topics of interest to adults such as health, employment, money, fashion, travel, recipes, and relationships. There are links to translation tools and a dictionary available, as well as opportunities to post comments and engage in discussions with other readers. Most text tends to be at high beginning to intermediate reading levels.

Dave's ESL Cafe http://www.eslcafe.com
Has many resources for ESL learners (as well as for teachers). In addition to chat rooms, discussion forums, and message boards, there are pages devoted to idioms, phrasal verbs, and grammar and other hints for the day, English language programs worldwide, and quizzes on a variety of topics.

English For All http://www.myefa.org/login.cfm
Funded by the United States Department of Education, *English For All* is a free Web-based multimedia system for adults learning English as a second language. Adult learners may use this online or CD-based program in conjunction with a class or independently. Learners view videos and work with supplementary language learning materials available from the Web site. Some of the language used on the Web site may be challenging for beginning and low-intermediate learners.

English Listening Lounge http://www.englishListening.com/
Thirty recordings of ordinary English speakers, accompanied by questions, are available at no charge. For a monthly fee, learners can register and have access to many more files and an e-mail discussion feature. RealAudio Player® (a free download) is needed to use this site. Although the pages do not have graphics of speakers or topics, they do provide a good opportunity to hear short recorded passages.

eViews http://www.eviews.net
Provides recordings of 10-11 minute interviews with native English speakers (U.S., British, Irish, etc). Learners subscribe free of charge and can download interviews, transcripts, and comprehension questions and answers. (Uses RealAudio® and MP3 formats; recommended for intermediate and above learners.)

Frizzy University Network http://thecity.sfsu.edu/~funweb/
A collection of links for ESL learners interested in using World Wide Web resources to improve their writing skills. Improving grammar, finding online reference materials, creating Web pages, and connecting with others via e-mail are a few of the link categories.

The Great American Potluck Cookbook
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/immig/ckbk/index.html
This Library of Congress Web site offers a cookbook of recipes from immigrant Americans. Recipes include Indian fry bread, West African pepper soup, and Hungarian butter horns. ESL learners can submit their own favorite recipes, also. If they wish, they also can choose photos to accompany their recipes.

Holidays Around the World
http://www2.wgbh.org/mbcweis/ltc/jpalp/holidays/holidaymaster.htm
This Web site presents a collection of short writings about holiday customs around the world written by adult English language learners. Learners can read about Mother's Day in Ecuador, the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival, Ramadan in Somalia or Carnival in Honduras. They can also search for stories by month or by region.

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology's Language Centre
http://www.esc-lehavre.fr/elwg.html
Links to a variety of written and interactive exercises, online reference materials, guides, quizzes, and online lessons in the following categories: listening, speaking, reading, writing, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

Linguistic Funland TESL Activities for Students
http://www.linguistic-funland.com/teslact.html
A collection of links to activities that learners can access online, including word games, grammar exercises, writing activities, and idioms. Many links also may be of interest to teachers looking for ideas.

PEAKEnglish http://www.peakenglish.com/
An online interactive English school. The site offers limited free membership which includes a placement test and English language profile, as well as access to online lessons, exercises, and games. A more extensive program is available for a fee. Teachers will also find TeacherFeatures, a set of tools that enables them to communicate with and manage the experience of students while they study online.

Pronunciation Skills and Activities http://www.ohiou.edu/esl/english/PronunciationSkills
Compiled for English language learners at the University of Ohio, these pages offer a variety of activities and links to activities targeting basic pronunciation issues. Although highly decontextualized, the activities do provide targeted practice with production of specific sounds and with listening discrimination, as well as traditional exercises such as minimal pairs. Most of the activities require plug-ins that enable audio, but the plug-ins tend to be free downloads, and links for them are provided.

Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab http://www.esl-lab.com/
This site provides a vast collection of listening exercises and activities, including conversations and quizzes. The exercises target high-beginning to low-advanced learners. (RealAudio® Player is required to use this site; links for free downloads are provided.)

U.S. Citizenship Study Pages http://www.uscitizenship.org
This site offers a Web-based course to help immigrants prepare themselves to take the U.S. citizenship test. The course is free for residents of Minnesota and available for a small charge to others.

Wordsmyth http://www.wordsmyth.net/
Wordsmyth is an online American English dictionary with an integrated thesaurus. Users can type in a word (or in some cases, a two-word term such as "guide dog") and receive a definition, pronunciation key, related words, synonyms, cross-reference links to synonyms, usage examples, and derivatives of the word. This site will be most helpful to learners at intermediate level and above.

Resources in Development

Parenting for Academic Success: A Curriculum for Parents Learning English
In collaboration with the Center for Applied Linguistics and adult ELL consultant, Lynn Savage, the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) is developing a curriculum guide for parents who speak a language other than English and who have children in kindergarten through third grade. This project, funded by Verizon, will provide a research-based curriculum guide to help parents acquire English language skills so that they may better influence their child's English language and literacy development. Workshops will accompany the curriculum guide and will include a teacher's guide, lesson plans, teacher resource materials, and parent take-home activities. Information will be made available on the Hispanic Family Initiative page on the NCFL Web site http://www.famlit.org/ when the guide becomes available.

A Guide for Serving Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Seniors
M. Burt & L. Terrill. Senior Service America, Inc. and Center for Applied Linguistics. (in press, to be published in November 2004). This guide gives background information, instructional strategies, and practical tips for professionals who work with senior citizens from countries outside the United States and who are not native English speakers. The guide will be available at http://www.cal.org/store.

UPS Volunteer Academy
Supported by the UPS Foundation and developed by the National Center for Family Literacy, this initiative will offer programs the necessary tools to recruit and assess potential volunteers and incorporate them successfully into the family literacy environment. As part of this effort, a culturally sensitive instructional strategy will be designed for volunteers to use with parents. The strategy will assist parents in increasing their own English language skills as well as address parent support of their children's language and literacy development. A notice will appear on the NCFL Web site http://www.famlit.org/ when the guide becomes available.