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## 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

## References

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**Sample Set II–30: Techniques for Teaching Reading to Beginning Literacy Learners****Pre-literacy Reading Readiness Skills Development: Pre-alphabets**

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 alphabets 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 <u>un</u> opened.
Irresponsible	It is <u>ir</u> responsible to cry "fire" in a crowded theater when there is no fire.
Impossible	It is <u>im</u> possible 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 underlined 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
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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<sup>1</sup> /spɛl/ *n* a condition caused by magical power. *I fell under the spell of his wonderful green eyes.*

spell<sup>2</sup> /spɛl/ *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<sup>3</sup> /spɛl/ *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<sup>1</sup> /kloʒ/ *v* to shut, make no longer open. *Close your mouth when you chew!*

close<sup>2</sup> /kloʒ/ *n* the end of an activity or period of time. *At the close of the day, the crickets start to chirp.*

close<sup>3</sup> /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 right 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:

<b>squander</b>	<b>derrochar</b>
<b>to waste, to spend foolishly</b>	<b>squander time</b>

**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, helpLife 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
- Women's Health at Thomas Jefferson
- General Medical at Arna Valley
- 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
- Lab tests and X-rays as ordered by physicians
- Education and treatment for persons with chronic illnesses
- Specialized screening services for women
- Medications

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 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays 6-9 PM  
 Appointments made anytime  
 Call 703-522-3733

**Chronic Care at Thomas Jefferson**

Open 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday 6-9 PM  
 By referral only

**Sample Transparency: Arlington Free Clinic (KWL)**

K	W	L
<b>What do you <i>know</i> about the Arlington Free Clinic?</b>	<b>What do you <i>want to know</i> about the Arlington Free Clinic?</b>	<b>What did you <i>learn</i> about the Arlington Free Clinic?</b>

**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?