A Handbook

for Tutors Working with Adult
ESOL Literacy Learners

Portland Community College

Developed by Margi Felix-Lund
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Bow Valley College. (2009). (pp. 4-6, 10-11, 29-34, 38)

Bow Valley College. (2011a). (pp. 10-11)

Bow Valley College. (2011b). (pp. 15-17)


Vinogradov, P. (2010). (pp. 23-27)

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A Handbook for Tutors Working with Adult ESOL Literacy Learners

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I. Introduction

This handbook has been developed to help support Portland-area immigrants and refugees in accomplishing their personal goals. The intent of this handbook is to provide volunteer tutors with access to current research-based and context-specific information that will help them be even better tutors. This handbook was based on an extensive needs analysis in which program tutors and administrators were interviewed to determine the necessary content for a tutoring handbook. Current resources were compiled, adapted, and created in order to develop a handbook that would help tutors know how to work with adult ESOL literacy students.

Who is this handbook for?

This handbook was designed specifically for tutors at the ESOL Literacy tutoring program at Portland Community College (PCC). This program serves English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students who have generally had limited or interrupted formal education and are developing alphabetic literacy for the first time while learning English. Throughout the handbook, these learners will be referred to as ESOL literacy learners, emergent readers, or LIFE (Learners with Interrupted Formal Education). This handbook was designed for volunteer tutors who have not only completed the Portland Metro Volunteer Literacy Tutor Training, but may also be studying Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). While tutors with training in TESOL will have a foundation for understanding the content, this handbook is meant to also be approachable for those who do not have extensive formal training in teaching TESOL. Ultimately, it is important that all volunteers realize that tutoring ESOL literacy is quite unique from tutoring ESL. The most important trait in a literacy tutor is that she or he be genuinely interested in working with this population and must have a sincere desire to support these learners.

How to use this handbook:

The intent of this handbook is to function as a practical resource for tutors. The content will introduce tutors to the purpose of the tutoring program and the uniqueness of ESOL literacy students. There is information on how to conduct an initial and ongoing needs analysis. You will read about the principles of effective literacy tutoring and be presented with practical applications of those principles. You will also be given tutoring tips, ideas for lesson planning, and links to additional resources. It is not necessary to read this handbook in one sitting. Familiarize yourself with the content and then return to the specific sections as the need arises. It is my hope that this handbook will be a valuable resource to you and that it will help you better serve the adult ESOL literacy students at Portland Community College.
II. Purpose of Tutoring Program

The intent of ESOL Literacy Tutoring at PCC is to support learners in achieving their personal and educational goals. Understanding the intent of the program allows you, the tutor, to ensure that classroom content and instruction are meeting the overarching goals of the program.

ESOL Literacy Learners’ goals for attending tutoring are varied. Some examples might include:

- Developing oral English and literacy skills
  - Learning how to meet transportation, medical, shopping, and other basic needs
- Knowing and feeling known in a foreign community
  - Developing cultural knowledge and communication skills
  - Developing a relationship of trust with a community member (i.e., tutor)
- Getting a job, or finding a different job
- Succeeding in ESOL courses
  - Developing school skills
- Supporting children and other family members
  - Assisting school-aged children with homework
  - Interacting with teachers and other parents
- Passing the citizenship exam

There are many reasons learners are at PCC for ESOL Literacy Tutoring. Some students are referred by their ESOL instructor, others are placed by the Volunteer Literacy Tutoring (VLT) coordinator. All students are highly motivated to learn English and develop literacy skills. There is no one focus that works for every class. For this reason, it is necessary for tutors to be equipped to conduct an effective needs analysis, in order to determine some of the learners’ goals (see page 8 for guidelines on how to conduct a needs analysis).

**Insight from an Administrator**
What is the purpose of literacy tutoring?
“...to provide effective instruction for students who do not have literacy skills, or do not have them using the Roman alphabet;... to allow them to move forward with their personal goals, which are varied. [Students’ goals] probably involve learning more English, developing the skills to improve their life here in the United States and their family’s quality of life, which is economic and includes all of these different pieces.”
III. Who are ESOL Literacy Learners?

It is imperative for tutors to understand that working with ESOL Literacy students is different from tutoring students who are only learning English. Literacy students bring unique strengths to the classroom and face unique challenges as well. The following section details the uniqueness of this population and is excerpted with permission from Bow Valley College (2009). This resource was written in the Canadian context, but ESOL Literacy students there face many of the same challenges as ESOL Literacy students here, and this resource accurately describes the population of literacy students at PCC.

Introduction: LIFE, ESL Literacy, and Formal Education

“The learners described and targeted in this handbook are in need of ESL literacy support. [Bow Valley College calls] them LIFE: Learners with Interrupted Formal Education. These literacy learners are a very diverse group, but they have two things in common: they are acquiring proficiency in English and, at the same time, they are developing literacy skills. Throughout this handbook, when we refer to LIFE, we mean the learners themselves.

The recommended place for this development is a separate, dedicated ESL literacy classroom. Learners with Interrupted Formal Education will not thrive in a mainstream ESL classroom, by which we mean an ESL class with no special consideration for the development of literacy. In [Bow Valley College, (2009)] we use “mainstream ESL” to refer to all non-literacy ESL classes. LIFE rarely thrive in mainstream ESL classes as they do not have the literacy skills and learning strategies necessary to handle the material. Nor is a mainstream ABE classroom (Adult Basic Education, generally intended for learners with a high degree of oral fluency) always the best place for them, as they are still learning spoken English, and they lack rich vocabulary and understanding of structure. It is important to note that in today’s society, many learners in an ABE are in fact ESL learners, but these learners speak English at a high level. ABE is a fine goal for LIFE, but not before they have had some time in ESL literacy.

LIFE come from a wide range of backgrounds — socially, culturally, linguistically, and in terms of their previous education — and it is a mistake to make any assumptions about what they have or have not experienced, or what they can or cannot do. However, it is still necessary to be able to recognize ESL literacy learners in order to provide them with the support they need to achieve their goals.

Generally speaking, LIFE have from zero to up to ten years of formal education, but this education itself can vary widely. As is indicated in the acronym LIFE, literacy learners almost always have an interrupted formal education. For some, their education was interrupted before it even began, and they have had no opportunity to go to school and study formally, while other learners have had to leave school after a few years. Some learners have continued in school, but have had their education interrupted by any number of factors, including conflict, war, poverty, lack of access, or a changing social, cultural, or political climate. The result is that LIFE, to a varying degree, find it difficult to cope with the literacy expectations of their new countries.
It is also important to understand that not all education is the same and not all schools have the same access to resources, educated instructors, or safe, well-equipped classrooms. This means that learners who have had some education have not necessarily received the same education as they would have received in a western school system. Approaches to education vary considerably in different places. Most western approaches encourage learners to question and to analyze: however, these skills might be unfamiliar to many learners in an ESL literacy classroom. Some of these learners may have been taught through memorization: other learners may have been taught in an entirely religious context, where questioning the text or the instructor is often considered inappropriate. Some learners may not have been taught in their first language at all, but may have received some instruction in a second language, as is the case with many learners who speak a range of African languages as their first language, but who have received some schooling in Arabic. On the other hand, other learners may have been taught using a very similar approach to the western system, in a school equipped with science laboratories and computers, but may have had to leave school for a variety of reasons. The point here is not that the western system is ideal — all systems of education have advantages and disadvantages — but rather that instructors of LIFE must leave all of their assumptions about their learners’ education at the door.

The Diversity of LIFE

We have already seen that Learners with Interrupted Formal Education come from a very broad range of formal educational experiences. It is therefore not surprising that they come from an equally broad range of cultures and languages, and that they have varying abilities in spoken English and in reading, writing, and numeracy.

Although instructors might notice the effect of immigration and refugee patterns on the demographics of their classrooms — they may have a high concentration of learners from one particular country at one particular point — no assumptions can be made about a learner’s cultural background or immigration or refugee status. Learners’ countries of origin should never be used as an indicator of their literacy or educational background. LIFE can come from any country in the world, and ESL literacy classes are often extremely diverse.

Similarly, the abilities of LIFE are diverse. This is most noticeable in their level of oral English. When beginning, some literacy learners do not speak any English at all while other learners might have fairly fluent spoken English. The level of oral English alone cannot be used to determine whether a learner has literacy needs.

How are LIFE Different from Mainstream ESL Learners?

The biggest difference between Learners with Interrupted Formal Education and mainstream ESL learners is the years of formal education. LIFE have between zero and about ten years of Education, but this education has almost always either been cut short or interrupted. What this means is that Learners with Interrupted Formal Education do not necessarily have the skills and strategies for coping with the literacy demands in a mainstream classroom or in their new communities.
This interrupted formal education has a variety of effects in the classroom. In reading, learners may have difficulty decoding unfamiliar words (using the sound-symbol relationship to figure out what a word says), or may have a very limited sight word bank (the words a person can automatically recognize without decoding: educated native speakers of English “read” almost entirely through recognizing sight words). In the higher [levels], learners are better able to decode and recognize sight words, but may have a good deal of difficulty in understanding the main idea of a text, in identifying the author’s purpose, and in a range of comprehension strategies such as distinguishing fact from opinion, identifying cause and effect, recognizing figurative language, and predicting. In writing, learners in the lower [levels] are learning to do everything from holding a pencil to writing on a line to copying accurately. They move from this level to the ability to fill in words, to compose a sentence, and then to compose a paragraph. All of this learning requires considerable support from the instructor.

The other key difference between LIFE and mainstream ESL learners is the use of learning strategies and the placement of reading and writing in the process of learning. Generally speaking, learners with a previous formal education have learning strategies in place: they know how to learn. First and foremost, they recognize that print has meaning and understand that there are many different kinds of texts, with many possible types of meaning. They can organize information, recognize patterns, generalize, and analyze. What is more, they can use their literacy skills — their ability to read and write at a higher level — to support their language learning. Mainstream ESL learners often have higher benchmarks in reading and writing than in listening and speaking. This gives them the ability to learn through reading and to make notes. LIFE, on the other hand, are learning to read and cannot rely on reading and writing skills in order to learn English. LIFE almost always have higher benchmarks in listening and speaking than in reading and writing; they learn English orally first and use their oral language to help learn to read and write English.”

**First Language Literacy**

LIFE have likely had diverse experiences with literacy in their first language (L1). Even a small tutoring group will likely represent a variety of different L1 literacy backgrounds. The following table offers information on the spectrum of L1 literacy. As Bow Valley College stressed, no assumptions should be made about students based on where they are from. The value of this table is to help you develop an awareness that LIFE are coming from varied L1 literacy backgrounds, that those backgrounds affect their experience in the classroom and special considerations should be made. It is important to think about the different ways that learners might be experiencing the literacy class. For example, an adult who is preliterate may not have ever been expected to be able to read and write, whereas someone who is nonliterate may have feelings of shame or embarrassment regarding the inability to read and write. It is important to note that not all of the learners described in the chart have had limited or interrupted formal education, yet they still may benefit from ESOL literacy tutoring.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L1 Literacy</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Special Considerations</th>
<th>Example Learner Profiles:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preliterate</strong></td>
<td>L1 has no written form (e.g., many American indigenous, African, Australian, and Pacific languages).</td>
<td>Learners need exposure to the purposes and uses of literacy.</td>
<td>Wanankhucha, a Bantu from Somalia, entered the class as a recent refugee. She knows her native Af-Maay only orally, as a written form of the language is just now being developed. Furthermore, as a refugee, Wanankhucha shows evidence of trauma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nonliterate</strong></td>
<td>Learners had no access to literacy instruction.</td>
<td>Learners may feel stigmatized.</td>
<td>Trang is a young, single mother from rural Vietnam who grew up without access to education. Here in the United States, she lacks many of the educational and cultural supports earlier Vietnamese refugees enjoyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semiliterate</strong></td>
<td>Learners had limited access to literacy instruction.</td>
<td>Learners may have had negative experiences with literacy learning.</td>
<td>Roberto attended a rural school in El Salvador for 3 years. Although he wanted to continue, his family needed him to work on the family farm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non alphabet literate</strong></td>
<td>Learners are fully literate in a language written in a nonalphabetic script such as Chinese.</td>
<td>Learners need instruction in reading an alphabetic script and in the sound-syllable correspondences of English.</td>
<td>Xian is a retired minor bureaucrat from China. He is highly literate in the Mandarin script, but he is unfamiliar with any alphabet, including Roman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Roman alphabet literate</strong></td>
<td>Learners are literate in a language written in a non-Roman alphabet (e.g., Arabic, Greek, Russian, Thai).</td>
<td>Learners need instruction in the Roman alphabet in order to transfer their L1 literacy skills to English. Some (e.g., readers of Arabic) will need to learn to read from left to right.</td>
<td>Khalil comes from Jordan. He completed 2 years of secondary school and is literate in Arabic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roman alphabet literate</strong></td>
<td>Learners are fully literate in a language written in a Roman alphabetic script (e.g., French, German, Croatian, Spanish). They know to read from left to right and recognize letter shapes and fonts.</td>
<td>Learners need instruction in the specific letter-to-sound and sound-syllable correspondences of English.</td>
<td>Alex is a senior from Russia. As a young man, he studied French. Even though he was a professional (engineer) in his own country, he does not want to move to a higher level class. Others who may benefit from a literacy-level class are individuals with learning disabilities or individuals who, because of age, physical or mental health issues, or family situations, find that the slow and repetitive pace of such a class better meets their needs and goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These columns were excerpted from Burt, Peyton, and Adams (2003). Used with permission.

This column was excerpted from Florez and Terrill (2003)
IV. Needs Analysis

To help ESOL literacy students achieve their goals, you must first try to figure out what learners’ goals are. This information will come from a variety of sources: talking with the learners, talking with program administrators, and observing your learners’ skills, abilities, and interests in the classroom. A needs analysis is a critical aspect of effective instruction. A thorough needs analysis is an ongoing, cyclical process where tutors identify and examine the context in which their program operates, the needs of the community, and the needs of the learners.

How do you identify what your learners want to learn?

- Ask the program coordinator why each student is in the group; the coordinator conducts an intake with every student and often has insight into each student’s background and needs
- Identify whether or not students are also enrolled in an ESOL class, if they have previously been enrolled in PCC’s ESOL program, or if they would like to take an ESOL class in the future
- Conduct an initial & ongoing analysis during class time
- Observe your students’ skills, abilities, and interests during class time

What do you need to know about your learners?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A needs analysis aims to understand:</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>• What contexts &amp; therefore content are relevant to learners? Daily activities, family life, living situation, job specifics, transportation, going to the doctor, ESOL class at PCC &amp; course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The contexts in which learners live and work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td>• What tasks can learners do independently? E.g., ride the bus, buy groceries, ask for assistance, tell a story, fill out a timecard, sign name, cook, garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The knowledge and skills learners bring in order to function in those contexts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needs</strong></td>
<td>• What tasks do the learners want to be able to do on their own? E.g., pay bills, read notes from child’s school, fill out medical forms, read ads from the grocery store, help children with homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The knowledge and skills learners need to develop for those contexts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Styles</strong></td>
<td>• In what ways have students learned in the past &amp; how do they prefer learning? E.g., Hands-on, experiential, visual, auditory, kinesthetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The learners’ preferred ways of learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
<td>• What goals are most pressing for learners? E.g., Pass citizenship exam, get a driver’s license, succeed in ESOL courses, support children in school, obtain employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The learners’ personal goals and wants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted with permission from Holmes, Kingwell, Pettis & Pidlaski, (2001, p.28).
**Initial and Ongoing Needs Analyses**

Adult learning theory explains that instruction that is relevant to learners’ lives is more effective for adults (Tusting and Barton, 2006). However, learning about your learners’ lives is a process. For this reason, an initial needs analysis and an ongoing needs analysis each offer valuable insights. An initial needs analysis will allow you to learn basic information regarding your students’ contexts, strengths, needs, learning styles, and goals. By identifying a few potential themes or topics that your learners are interested in at the beginning of the term, you will be able to establish a starting place.

An ongoing needs analysis is necessary for filling in the gaps and reevaluating your initial conclusions about your learners’ most pressing needs. Throughout the course of the term, observe your students. Watch to see how learners engage with print. Are they able to decode words on their own or are they repeating the words from memory? During break time, put out a variety of books, picture dictionaries, and manipulatives (e.g., hands-on clocks, paper clips, dice, buttons). Watch to see what learners gravitate towards and what they seem to be interested in. Listen. Listen to the stories your students tell one another in class. Take note of the issues that your students bring to your attention. Take advantage of the opportunity to use authentic texts in the classroom when a student brings in a text for you to help them read.

**How do you identify your learners’ abilities and accomplishments?**

Remember that an effective needs analysis focuses and builds on learners’ accomplishments and abilities, rather than deficits. It is important to not make assumptions about what your students do or do not know. You may want to request a copy of the placement test or literacy diagnostic that your students filled out prior to registering for tutoring. However, it will be most helpful to “identify the strengths learners bring and build upon these in program design and instruction. For example, if learners have strong oral skills, use this as a vehicle for developing literacy or metacognitive skills” (Bow Valley College, 2011a, p.23).

Learners may have varying literacy skills in their first language(s). “Consider including an assessment of learners’ first (or other) language literacy skills. Observing learners write in another language provides insight into their writing fluency, their approach to writing, their ability to form letters or characters, etc. In some cases, learners have more literacy skills than previously identified, which will influence placement and instruction” (Bow Valley College, 2011a, p.23). You may want to ask the program coordinator how many years of education your students reported having during the intake process. If you are interested in assessing your learners’ first language literacy skills, the Florida Department of Education houses the Native Language Literacy Screening Tool in 29 different languages. You do not need to know how to read your students’ languages in order to administer the assessment. Access the screening tool here: [http://www.fldoe.org/Workforce/AdultEd/nativelanguage.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/Workforce/AdultEd/nativelanguage.asp)

**Conduct a Classroom Needs Analysis**

The following section includes procedural recommendations and sample questions that were developed by Bow Valley College (2009; 2011a) and are useful in both one-on-one and small group contexts at PCC. Additional example questions and needs analysis tools are available at the end of this section.
What to Ask

In lower levels of ESL literacy, needs analyses can be conducted orally, with individual learners or as a group. Recognize the level of the learner when asking the questions. Questions will differ depending on the level of the learners. Make questions concrete and easy to understand.

Questions to consider in a learner needs analysis can include:

- Does anyone help you with reading and writing? Where do they help you?
- What do you want to read/write?
- Why do you want to improve your reading and writing? Why do you want to go to school?
- Did you go to school in your country? In another country? Tell me about when you went to school. (Try to gather as complete a picture as possible of the learner’s educational background.)
- Do you have a job right now? Do you like your job?
- Do you want a job in the future? What kind of job do you want?

It is important to recognize that learners may not be comfortable sharing information about their personal circumstances or barriers before they know you well. In some cases, learners prefer to keep this information entirely private. Aim to gather information that is useful for your planning and instruction, without pressuring learners and be open to receiving new information as the term progresses and learners become more comfortable with you. Many [tutors] find that if they share some of their own personal information and stories, learners are more comfortable in discussing their needs and background information.

How to Ask

How to ask questions is as important as what to ask. Recognize the level of the learner when asking the questions. Make the questions meaningful to the learner so the learner can express his/her needs. Avoid hypothetical situations, the conditional, or imagining the future.

A needs analysis can include all kinds of aids, such as:

- **Realia:** Use actual items that learners may see or need to manage in everyday life and find difficult, such as utility bills, bus schedules, applications or common government forms. Increase complexity by moving from concrete, everyday objects to photographs to illustrations. [To see an example of a realia based needs analysis, see this video: http://www.literacywork.com/readingdemonstration ]

- **Photographs or pictures:** Use large, easily understood photographs of situations learners might see, such as doctors’ offices, the supermarket, the apartment building, etc.

- **An interpreter or a first language analysis:** An interpreter can be very helpful in a needs analysis. In some situations, it may be possible to conduct a needs analysis in the learner’s first language. Ask learners to write their names in their first language and to write a story or description. Even if the assessor cannot read the learner’s first language, this will provide information on the learner’s writing fluency, the formation of the script and the extent of the writing. This will give the assessor an idea of the learners’ first language literacy level. [Native Language Literacy Screening Tool in 29 languages: http://www.fldoe.org/Workforce/AdultEd/nativelanguage.asp]
Identifying Students’ Needs Can Be Challenging!

Do not feel disheartened if you have difficulty quickly identifying your learners’ most pressing needs. Tutors have reported facing a variety of challenges when conducting needs analyses. For example, some students have cultural expectations that the tutor/teacher determines classroom content, while other learners might have a hard time determining the contexts in which they need English the most. These reasons explain why needs analyses are ongoing processes; they require time, continual inquiry, consistent observation, and comparison of information from a variety of sources.

Helpful Resources for Needs Analyses:

Florida Department of Education: Houses the Native Language Literacy Screening Tool in 29 languages: http://www.fldoe.org/Workforce/AdultEd/nativelanguage.asp


The LaRue Reading Skills Assessment for Pre-literate Students: http://www.mcedservices.com/ESL/Littest.html

This assessment was developed by Charles LaRue and was created to show which literacy skills and knowledge pre-literate ESL students have.

The Reading Demonstration: http://www.literacywork.com/readingdemonstration

This video represents an informal assessment to capture what low-literate learners can and cannot do with literacy.

Share Results with the Learners

Whether your needs analyses have been formal or informal, it is important to communicate with learners about the needs you will be addressing during tutoring sessions. Explain why you are doing what you’re doing in the class and how it relates to their goals. It can be challenging to communicate these with learners who have limited oral proficiency or a limited understanding of what is required to achieve their goals. Use simplified language, provide pictures and visual diagrams and regularly review the learning needs identified to help learners understand how what they are learning relates to their needs.

Insight from an Administrator

When discussing a needs analysis, a tutor explained how her students enthusiastically wanted to learn how to read each realia item brought into class. The administrator’s response to the tutor’s story was:

“There’s nothing that they don’t want to understand. And a certain level of student doesn’t understand enough to filter out, ‘teacher I want everything’. They’re not able to pick out what’s important sometimes. Some students can. Some students can’t even understand the question.”
Example Needs Analysis Tools:

This section provides descriptions of the variety of tools that follow that can be used for conducting an initial needs analysis during the first few tutoring sessions.

Images for Initial Needs Analysis

The first needs analysis tool (see pages 13-14 below) includes a variety of images that represent themes that tutors reported their ESOL literacy students were interested in. Depending on your students’ particular interests and level, you may want to use different images or picture dictionaries. The single sheet of images can work well with students who have high enough oral skills to understand the directions. The first version of the one-page needs analysis includes text and the second does not. The version with text might work for learners with some literacy. Otherwise, it might be best to use a sheet with no text. During the needs analysis that informed the development of this handbook, one tutor reported that the text on a sheet with pictures was distracting for his learners. This is an important reminder that literacy materials should never include extraneous text.

Another way of finding out what themes learners may be interested in is by hanging large images around the room and giving each student three sticky dots (see appendix for sample large images). Explain that they should place a dot on the three topics that they are most interested in learning about. In either format, large images or one sheet, be sure to explain each topic verbally or by acting out before having your students complete the needs analysis. Ask your students if there are additional topics they are interested in.

Guiding Questions Chart, Classroom Needs Analysis & Class Profile Templates

The second set of tools (see pages 15-17 below) include a table with topics and questions to ask your learners as well as tables for compiling the information about individual learners and the class as a whole. The questions in the chart are simply suggestions. Remember that it may take time for students to feel comfortable sharing personal information. It might work well to ask your students questions regarding the various topics over the first couple weeks of tutoring. Use lots of visual supports as you are asking your students questions (i.e., provide pictures of a variety of different types of schools, families, and living situations).

The Classroom Needs Analysis template (see page 16 below) gives you space to track information about each student. The Class Profile Template (see page 17 below) can help you take what you’ve learned from your students and translate it into implications for tutoring. For example, if the learners in your tutoring group are all pre-literate and non-literate in their first language, it will be necessary to cover basic literacy skills such as the fact that written text corresponds to spoken language, how to hold a pen, and how to draw shapes and then letters. If learners have different goals (e.g., pass ESOL class and get a job), then focus on the ways goals overlap, such as covering “jobs” as a theme and incorporating literacy skills and school-based activities that prepare a student for an ESOL class. If your students have absolutely no experience with formal education and they desire to attend ESOL classes, it can be very important to teach your students how to “do school” (e.g., completing class activities). Drawing implications from your needs analysis is very important. If you are unsure how to meet the varying needs of your students, be sure to talk and brainstorm with other tutors and your program coordinator.
Please circle 3
Guiding Questions for Classroom Needs Analysis: Lower Oral Skills
This guide provides information and suggestions for gathering information through a classroom needs analysis that will allow you to gain a fuller understanding of learners’ needs, interests, goals, existing supports and barriers to learning. Remember: use realia and share about yourself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Guiding Questions</th>
<th>Suggested prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Background** | Where are you from?  
(Ask about migration history) | How long have you been in Portland? How did you come here? Are you in an English class at PCC now? |
| **First language & first language literacy** | What is your first language? Can you write in your first language?  
Write your name in your language. | Give learners a pencil and paper and model in English.  
*My name is ______. I am from ______. I am a ______.*  
Now you show me in your language |
| **Educational background** | Did you go to school in your country? | Use simplified questions, mime or use pictures.  
*You...school in Sudan? Small girl? Yes? No? Maybe one year?  
School... in Arabic? In Dinka? What language?  
Draw or provide pictures of children learning in different kinds of schools (e.g., a classroom with books/whiteboard or an outside school with children learning under a tree, or in a refugee camp).  
*In ______, was school outside? Your school, your country, was school like this? Did you go to school in a refugee camp?  
Provide pictures of/bring a slate to show the learners.  
*In your school, you used this?* |
| **Goals** | In lower levels, it may be too abstract for learners to talk about their literacy goals. In many cases, the first step is to help learners become aware of the many ways that literacy skills can be used. The prompts provided here are aimed at gathering information about goals related to daily activities. | Gather information about the kinds of daily activities learners are having trouble with. Aim to identify immediate needs. Show large, realistic photographs of people engaged in daily activities (e.g., shopping, taking the bus, using an ATM or debit card, going to the doctor, using the computer, talking on the phone).  
Prompt with questions such as:  
*Do you do this? By yourself? Is it easy for you?  
In your house, who does this?* |
| **Supports** | What support do you have at home? What kind of educational background and literacy levels do your family members have? Or others in your household? | At home, can your husband/wife/children help you with school?  
At home, your kids, they help you read?  
Your husband/wife/kids went to school in your country?  
Same as you? Different? |
| **Barriers** | Is there anything that makes it difficult to come to class, do your homework, etc.? | Do you work at night? Do you take the bus to school or do you ride in a car? At home, do you have time for English homework? |
| **Other factors** | Who do you live with? Where do you live? Do you have children? How many? Do you have help? Do you have a job right now? | Provide photographs of people with a variety of family/household arrangements (e.g., a single mom with 3 children, a large family with grandparents, a single man with two roommates).  
*Which one is like your family? How many people in your house?* |

Adapted with permission from Bow Valley College (2011b, p.10-14)
Classroom Needs Analysis Template

This template has space to record information about three learners. Make enough copies so that you can record information about each learner in your class. Ensure that you protect learners’ privacy. Consider using first names only and do not allow other learners to see the information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors to Consider</th>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First language &amp; first language literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted with permission from Bow Valley College (2011b, p.10-14)
Use the information gathered in the classroom needs analysis to help you record general observations and formulate a class profile. Use this class profile to inform your unit and lesson planning. Think about how to best work with learner similarities and differences in each factor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>General Summary</th>
<th>How will this impact teaching &amp; learning?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First language &amp; first language literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational background</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted with permission from Bow Valley College (2011b, p.10-14)
V. What is ESOL Literacy Tutoring?

Definition of Literacy

Literacy is more than *just* reading and writing. Literacy includes understanding a calendar, reading a bus schedule, texting a friend, reading an ingredients label on an item of food, checking e-mail, and reading and signing a child’s permission slip, to name a few. Literacy is also more than an exercise in cognitive skills. Literacy is a social practice, which means that it is culturally and socially situated. Purcell-Gates defines literacy as social practice as being “historically situated, subject to power relations, and intricately bound up in the lives of people living and functioning within and across multiple and shifting social and cultural contexts” (2007, p.10). This means that it is important to view literacy tutoring as more than teaching students a set of neutral, decontextualized skills. Rather, literacy is complex, is intertwined with culture and society, and embedded in people’s social lives.

What is considered appropriate content for tutoring groups? Literacy, numeracy, categorization, map literacy, chart literacy, and digital literacy. Literacy tutoring could also focus on developing life skills, school skills, and critical thinking skills. Literacy skills help learners to be more independent in their everyday lives.

Remember that the intent of ESOL literacy tutoring at PCC is to help learners achieve their personal goals. Therefore, any content that helps learners work towards their goals is absolutely appropriate for literacy class.

Literacy is a social practice, which also requires the development of individual cognitive skills. Your task as a literacy tutor is to help learners develop the skills they need within the context of their personal goals. What cognitive skills are important as learners develop literacy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonological Processing</td>
<td>Phonological processing is the act of interpreting graphemes (letters) as sounds and combining letter strings correctly into pronounceable syllables and words. It includes <strong>phonemic awareness</strong> (awareness of individual speech sounds or phonemes and the ways they are represented in print), and <strong>phonological awareness</strong> (awareness of the way that language is represented in print that includes phonemes, words, syllables, and word breaks).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Recognition</td>
<td>When readers are able to comprehend vocabulary words quickly, they are better able to understand the meaning of a sentence or passage. When readers struggle with the meanings of individual vocabulary words, they will have difficulties connecting the meanings of words in a sentence or passage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic Processing</td>
<td>In order to comprehend a written text, learners must recognize the grammatical relationships between words. Syntactic processing involves using word order (e.g., subject followed by verb) and morphological cues (e.g., past tense) to understand the meaning of a phrase or sentence as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schema Activating</td>
<td>Part of reading comprehension involves filling in what is not stated explicitly in the text. This sort of reading between the lines often involves using schemata, background knowledge that the reader has of the world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted with permission from Burt, Peyton and Adams (2003, p. 25-28)
VI. Effective Tutoring: Principles and Practices

Once you have conducted an initial needs analysis and you have an idea of what learners need and want to learn, where do you begin? The purpose of this section is to offer some principles for working with ESOL literacy learners as well as strategies for concrete ways of putting the principles in action.

Principles for Working with ESOL Literacy Learners

1. Relevant to Learners’ Lives
   Adult ESOL literacy learners bring a wealth of life experience with them into the classroom. Be careful not to discredit this experience by selecting irrelevant topics that are not motivating for learners. A thorough needs analysis will help you learn more about the issues and literacy practices that are relevant to your students. Encourage your students to bring in items that they want or need to read in their everyday lives (e.g., grocery store ads, a note from a child’s school, a job application). Working towards reading authentic texts for authentic purposes can be particularly motivating and rewarding (Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson & Soler, 2002). It is not always easy to identify a pressing issue that is relevant to all learners in a tutoring group. However, there are always general topics that learners can connect to on a personal level. For more information, see Auerbach (1994), Weinstein (1999), Condelli and Wrigley (2006), and Vinogradov (2008).

2. Oral Language First
   ESOL literacy learners have spent the majority of their lives learning through spoken language. Tap into that strength and focus on developing oral skills prior to introducing print. When text is first brought into the literacy classroom, it is very important that learners are already familiar with the meaning of the words in the text. For this reason, a valuable technique that will be discussed below is the use of learner-generated texts. For more information see Bow Valley College (2009) and Vinogradov and Bigelow (2010).

3. Whole-Part-Whole
   Whole-Part-Whole is a balanced approach for teaching literacy. With this approach, you should start with a familiar topic that is relevant to learners’ lives. Discuss the topic and elicit vocabulary or phrases. Once students are very familiar with the oral language, move to print (this is the “Whole”). Top-down activities focus on meaning. After students are able to recognize and read the words, focus in on specific features. This is the “Part”, where you take words or phrases that are meaningful to the students, and use them as the basis for focusing on developing phonemic awareness and phonics skills. You might help students focus on vowel sounds, consonant clusters, syllables, and identifying rhyming words. Including these bottom-up activities in each class is very important, but they must be done in the context of familiar language. After focusing in on the parts of language, move back out to the “Whole” by continuing to discuss the topic. This approach can take time for tutors to master. All activities, Whole and Part, draw only from the language used in the learner-generated text. Below (pages 23-27) are a variety of example Whole and Part activities. For more information, see Trupke-Bastidas & Poulos (2007) and Vinogradov (2010).
4. **Routine**
Creating a daily routine helps adult learners know what to expect in the classroom and can encourage learner autonomy. If you choose to begin each class by writing the agenda on the board or passing out student name signs, adult learners will be able to pick up on the routine and they can take ownership in the classroom by volunteering to complete those routine tasks. These tasks can help learners with limited formal education to learn how to “do school” (Elson & Krygowski, 2012). Additionally, when learners become familiar with the routine of the class session, their attention is freed up to fully engage in the activities. For more information see Bow Valley College (2009).

5. **No more than one new piece of information at a time**
Remember that many literacy students have limited experience with formal education. Therefore, many activities that are commonly practiced in school settings will be new to them. If you attempt to try a new kind of activity while introducing new content, it will likely fail. When developing classroom activities, a general rule to follow is that an activity should only present one new aspect to ESOL literacy learners. For example, if new content (e.g., vocabulary) is going to be introduced, then the format of the activity should be familiar to the students (e.g., Total Physical Response). Similarly, if a new activity format is used in class (e.g., fill-in-the-blank) then the content should be familiar to the students (e.g., a learner-generated text).

6. **Recycle the same language in a variety of activities**
Repetition is necessary for all learners, especially so for ESOL literacy learners who are generally not familiar with learning language in an academic context and do not possess the language learning skills that come with that experience. Consistently introducing new content is not helpful for learners. Be sure to engage the same content in many different ways, probably longer than you expect to. For more information see Bow Valley College (2009).

7. **Focus on Learners’ Strengths**
Oftentimes tutors can get into the habit of focusing on what ESOL literacy learners lack: “formal schooling, L1 literacy print awareness, etc. This is a very ‘deficit’ way of approaching instruction” (Vinogradov, 2008, p.12). As adults, these students have spent their entire lives developing skills and abilities. It is important to identify what those strengths are and draw on them in the classroom. Many students may have developed strong oral English skills, which should be used as a vehicle for developing literacy. Also, students may be master gardeners, caring parents, skilled mechanics, talented soccer players, or seasoned cooks. Learning about your students’ strengths not only provides meaningful themes for classroom instruction but it also allows you to draw on your students’ expertise and build their self-confidence in the classroom context. For more information see Auerbach (1994), Weinstein (1999), Vinogradov (2008), and Bow Valley College (2009).
Strategies for Working with ESOL Literacy Learners

Developing Learner-Generated Material

It can be challenging to find age- and level-appropriate reading material that is relevant to adult literacy learners’ lives. Therefore, learner-generated reading material provides text that they can comprehend. It is based on the idea that students read their own spoken words. Using learner-generated texts avoids vocabulary and grammatical structures that students do not know. This approach upholds the principles of using oral language first and engaging material that is relevant to learners’ lives. Additionally, introducing text from oral language ensures that the text is the only new aspect of the activity and transitions well from Whole to Part and back to Whole. In this section, the Language Experience Approach and Problem-Posing methods are introduced, followed by additional example techniques for eliciting learner-generated material. For more information see Croydon (2005) and Vinogradov and Bigelow (2010).

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) is a technique or strategy that promotes literacy development through the use of personal experiences and oral language. This technique draws on learners’ experiences as the basis for text. Learners’ experiences are dictated and then written down by an instructor or by another student. LEA can be done with a small group or one-on-one. For ESOL literacy learners, LEA provides a valuable opportunity for learners to connect spoken language to written language. The text represents the learners’ own vocabulary and grammar. LEA begins with oral language first and is ideal for Whole-Part-Whole activities. Sources for LEA stories are endless. Tutors might use a real experience, picture, photo, video, student drawing, discussion topic, anecdote, or shared experience such as a field trip as possible prompts to generate LEA stories. For more information see Croydon (2005) and Bow Valley College (2009).

Resources for using LEA:

Online LEA training module from ProLiteracy: [www.proliteracyednet.org](http://www.proliteracyednet.org)

A short video on using LEA from Bow Valley College: [http://youtu.be/zAMdcyL1RRU](http://youtu.be/zAMdcyL1RRU)


The Participatory Approach, also known as Problem-Posing, comes from the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire who used it to develop native language literacy. This approach uses a code—a picture, object, or situation that represents a problem in the community—that has been identified by the tutor as a real life issue for the students. It can take time to identify a relevant issue, but a thorough and ongoing needs analysis will likely uncover difficulties that your students are willing to share with you. Sample topics could include: discussing families, home lives, culture, neighborhoods, immigration, health, work, and money. Using careful, structured questions, a facilitator can discuss an important issue with the students and use that discussion as the basis for developing learner-generated texts. A story developed using problem-posing supports the principles of using oral language first, content that is relevant to learners’ lives, and creates the possibility for Whole-Part-Whole activities.
In a typical activity, a tutor shows the code to the students and poses a series of questions. Wallerstein (1983) gives the following questioning process to “decode” the problem presented in the code:

1) Have students describe or name the content and feelings in the code: “What do you see?”
2) Ask students to define the problem concretely: “What is the problem here?” Address as many sides of the issue as possible.
3) Elicit similar problem situations in students’ lives: “Do you also experience this? How is it the same? How is it different? How do you feel about it?” (Also ask if anyone has coped successfully with this issue before. Draw on their successes as well as their difficulties.)
4) Direct students to fit their individual experiences into a larger historical, social, or cultural perspective. Ask them to project opinions: “Why is there a problem? Why do you think?”
5) Encourage students to discuss alternatives and solutions: “What can you do?” Have students attempt small actions that will provide a new perspective on this problem or in some way ameliorate it. Again, ask for success stories (pp. 20-21).

Many Whole-Part-Whole activities could be used for the text generated by learners during problem-posing. Beyond Whole-Part-Whole activities, tutors might also be able to engage students in project-based learning in response to discussing an issue that students face, such as creating a pamphlet explaining immigrant and refugee rights at the doctor’s office. As always, it is important to listen to your students, hear what they are telling you, and thoughtfully consider how their story might be the basis for relevant content for the literacy classroom. For more information see Wallerstein (1983), Auerbach (1994) and Croydon (2005).

Resources for using problem-posing

Online training module on problem-posing from ProLiteracy: www.proliteracvednet.org

Insight from a Tutor

A tutor reflected on a time when a student brought up the issue of facing discrimination at the doctor’s office and wanted to improve her ability to assert herself verbally. The student was offering the tutor an ideal code that could have led to verbal and written activities, but the tutor only later recognized this learner’s issue as pertaining to literacy. It is important to remember that relevant topics are motivating for adult learners and should be a main source for class content.

“That was the gap… really understanding what literacy is, or how to use real-life situations that students are bringing up in order to help focus on my narrow understanding of [literacy as] reading and writing. …I want to bring in realia…so if students want to read the newspaper, I can bring in a newspaper, I can teach skills of skimming and scanning, I can do that. But, if students want to have a conversation with their doctor, I couldn’t figure out how that applied to literacy.”
This section provides tutors with detailed examples of how to develop learner-generated texts and teach reading using the Whole-Part-Whole approach. It is important to remember that this approach emphasizes using language the students know, keeping reading instruction in context, focusing briefly on the decontextualized aspects of language, and then returning to meaning.

Types of Student-generated Texts

*The following example of student-generated text have been used with permission from Vinogradov (2010).*

**Shared experience** such as projects, field trips, demonstrations – Using the Language Experience Approach, the class shares an experience, and then the instructor elicits from the students the story of what they did or experienced.

**Students’ newsletters** (Croydon, 2005) – On Monday, the instructor asks, “What is your good news? What is your bad news?” Students either write or dictate responses. These can then be posted on walls to be read, or collated into a newsletter for the week by the instructor. The newsletter then can be used as part of the text used throughout the week.

**Picture stories** – Picture stories are viewed by learners, who then dictate the story of what they see happening and the instructor transcribes.

**Using a volunteer/higher level student as a scribe** – For any of these activities, learners may dictate their words to a volunteer or learner with stronger literacy skills, rather than to the instructor.

**Tape recorders** – Learners gather in small groups around a tape recorder and are instructed—When you’re ready, turn on the tape recorder and make a comment or ask a question to someone in the group. With practice the conversations become more natural. The tutor transcribes part of the conversation to use as text.

**Texts for wordless books** – The learners write words to go with particular pages. Other learners may be asked to match the words with the page it belongs to. Wide post-it tape works well here.

**Photo books** – The learners and/or instructor bring in photos which are used to generate language and text.

**Class posters** – A theme is given and learners find/draw pictures to go with words they provide.

**Overheard students’ stories** (Croydon, 2005) – If before class or during break learners are sharing with others a longer story about something important (or exciting, or frightening) that happened to them, perhaps in awkward but determined English, the instructor can request permission from the learner to share that story the next day in class. The instructor then summarizes the event in simple, clear written English, and this typed and copied text is brought to class the next day to be used by the group.

Used with permission from Vinogradov (2010).
Once you have a student-generated text and you are certain that learners are familiar with the language in the story (orally), then you can begin the “top-down” activities. “Whole” reading activities keep the written language in context. The majority of a language lesson should focus on completing activities that are meaning-based. Depending on the structure of your tutoring session, you may be able to lead your students in Whole-Part-Whole activities immediately after generating a text or you may prefer to create activities at home and use them the following session, or perhaps both.

Examples of “Whole” reading activities include:

- Choral reading
- Pair reading
- Silent reading
- Reordering sentence strips
- Copying
- Tracing
- Developing sight word vocabulary
- Answering comprehension questions


This section describes bottom-up activities that should be used for brief periods of time during each of your tutoring sessions. After focusing on the language in context, help your students to “zoom in” and think about the parts that make up language. These activities are very important for learners developing literacy. Return to the Whole after focusing in on the Part.

The following phonemic awareness activities and phonics activities have been used with permission from Vinogradov (in 2010) and personal communication.

**Phonemic Awareness Activities**

Phonemic awareness is the understanding that words are made of basic sounds. Activities include isolating, manipulating, blending, and counting sounds—with and without letters. Research has found it is helpful to present these sounds with letters, but you might also want to try some activities based on listening alone to really focus on the sound.
### Phoneme isolation: recognizing individual sounds in words

#### “What is the first sound in milk?” (/m/)

**Where’s the sound?**

Is the sound I say at the beginning, middle, end of the word? Give each team or each student three cups to represent beginning, middle, and end (or first, middle, last). *(Important: teach these terms—do several examples)*. Have them label the cups b-m-e (or f-m-l). They need to drop a chip or a letter into the right cup for where the sound is in the word. The sound, not spelling is important. Go through a list of words that have examples of each—ideally from your unit or from words they know.

Lower-level: only beginning and end sounds

Higher level: use multiple letter-sounds. Also, say the sound, they listen and find the letter tiles, and then put them in the cup.

### Sound chain

One student says a word that starts with end sound of other person’s word. We’re concerned here with SOUNDS, not spelling. This activity helps students focus attention on final sounds of words.

Ex: mom-married-dad-divorce-sister, etc…

### Phoneme identity/matching: recognizing the common sound in different words

#### “What sound is the same in boy and book?” (/b/)

#### “Do these start with the same sound?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>boy, girl (no)</th>
<th>man, milk (yes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Match or categorize pictures/objects by sound</strong></td>
<td>Have students sort pictures or objects by two (or more) sounds you’re working on. As with all the activities, these tasks will only work if the students are familiar with the vocabulary of the pictures and objects. Students need time to become familiar with these words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Same or different</strong></td>
<td>Show two pictures or objects. Students say whether they start with the same sound or different sounds.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concentration</strong></td>
<td>Play concentration with picture cards. Students get a “match” when they turn over two pictures that start with the same sound.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Phoneme categorization: recognizing the word with the odd sound

#### “Which word does not belong?”

**milk, mother, boy** *(boy)*

**Which one is different?**

Students circle or point to the picture or object that does NOT start the target sound.

### Phoneme blending: combining separately spoken sounds to form a word

#### “What word is /m/ /a/ /n/? (man)

**Blend the word “Go down the slide”**

Review theme vocabulary by sounding out the parts of a word, and have students guess the word.

Ex: Clothing unit: *(s - o - k - s), (p - a - n t - s)*….What is it?

Expansion: have them find the picture of the item named.

Higher level: some can write using inventive spelling (write the letters based on sounds).
### Phoneme Segmentation: Breaking a Word into Its Sounds

**What sounds are in *man*? /m/ /a/ /n/**  
**How many sounds are in *man*? 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What sounds do you hear?</th>
<th>You say a word and students identify the sounds they hear. If students are struggling, you can “stretch” the word to help students hear sounds.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count the sounds</td>
<td>Say a word really slowly and have students count the number of sounds in the word. They can show the number of sounds by holding up fingers, or by using chips, beans, cubes, etc. to represent each sound. (c-a-t = 3, ph-o-ne = 3) They can also tap out the sounds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Phoneme Substitution: Substituting One Sound for Another to Form a New Word

“**What word would you have if you changed the /m/ in *man* to /p/?**” (pan)

### Phoneme Deletion: Recognizing What Word Remains When a Specified Sound Is Removed

“**What is *meat* without the /m/?**” (eat)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large cards</th>
<th>Put letters or letter combinations on cards, hand to each student, and have students “spell out” words, starting with those related to your context, at the front of the room. Have them substitute or delete letters to form new words. Great for work on word families.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter tiles</td>
<td>Students can use letter tiles to form words and then substitute/delete letters to form new words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Example Phonics Activities: Teaching Letters and Sounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fill in the missing</th>
<th>To review the vocabulary words for your unit, give students a list of words that have one or more letters missing (try to choose ones that they could easily hear the sound of). Have students write the missing letters (without dictation). Many books have this activity (<em>Foundations, Lifeprints</em>, etc.). Exs: <strong>oa</strong> <strong>a</strong> __an, __oney, <strong>ilk bro</strong> <strong>er, mo</strong> <strong>er, fa</strong> __er P__isy, h__nd, B__nd-aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circle the word</td>
<td>Students have a worksheet that has 3 word options. Call out a word, and they circle the word they hear. 1. sister son student 2. mother married male 3. father friend family 4. baby brother book 5. boy girl grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed up letters, Letter tiles</td>
<td>Like <em>Scrabble</em> tiles, you or a student can call out words that the learners must spell out with the tiles. They can work individually, in pairs or groups. Make a game: Put folks into teams and assign points to the team who can spell the word correctly first!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### BINGO

Play BINGO with sounds (initial, final, vowels, blends), word families, rhyming words, or entire words. This is another way to connect oral language to printed language.

### Dictation

Connect oral and written language by having students try to write the sounds or words you call out. Encourage new readers to write only the first sound they hear, or the final sound, and later the entire word if they’re able. Encourage — inventive spelling. The literacy task of assigning symbols to sounds is a major undertaking, and students will need a great deal of practice. Dictation is also a good progress-checking activity.

### Sort words by sound/letter

Sort pictures or words by the letter sound. This works well to discriminate long and short vowel sounds. Also, you can give students a worksheet with boxes for each sound (works well with digraphs vs. letters). They sort the pictures under the sound or words under the sound.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>socks, sandals, sweater</td>
<td>sAndals, pAnts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sh</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shoes, shorts, shirt</td>
<td>tie, trousers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Same and different

This activity helps build the automaticity that fluent readers use when reading. Create a pile of paper strips with a line in the center, and write two words on each paper strip that differ only by one or two letters.

Students turn over a strip very quickly, just for a moment, and they must quickly determine whether the two words are the same or different. Then turn the paper over to check.

| shirt | skirt |

When focusing on the parts of language, try a variety of activities, but make sure to help the learners establish a routine. If you find a couple of activities that work really well with your learners, continue using those activities as the content changes.

Remember the importance of balanced instruction. Don’t spend too much time on phonemic awareness and phonics activities each week. It’s important to keep these activities as one small part of your total curriculum.

Whole-Part-Whole instruction means starting with meaningful context, using words from the context to focus on phonemic awareness and phonics, and then returning to that meaningful context. This approach takes time to master, but you will notice how much you and your students improve with each tutoring session.

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Used with permission from Patsy Vinogradov (2010), Hamline University.
VII. Literacy Levels

PCC ESOL Literacy Tutoring has identified three levels of literacy learners: Literacy A, Literacy B, and Literacy C. These groupings attempt to place students in classes with similar skills and abilities. Within each level, there is bound to some variety of literacy skills and oral proficiency. Whether you are tutoring a small group of same-level students, a small group of mixed-level students, or one-on-one, it is helpful to have access to the descriptions and sample outcomes for each level.

This section begins with a general overview of each level as described by Sue Moser, Volunteer Literacy Tutoring program coordinator. Following the introduction to the three levels will be a “Learner Profile”, which is based off of the Canadian Language Benchmark literacy phases, as adapted by Bow Valley College (2009). Each profile gives you a quick overview of the typical background for that level of student. Use these profiles as a starting point for thinking about where your students are coming from and the challenges and strengths they may be bringing into the classroom. These profiles might also help you identify a student who might have been misplaced in your class. Following each learner profile is a table of example outcomes. Outcomes are what learners will be able to do at the end of the course. Those examples can be used as ideas of what you might be working towards with your students, as informed by your learners’ goals. Defining course outcomes helps you determine what to focus for tutoring.

Literacy A
Most of these students have little or no education in their first language. It is likely that they are not literate in their first language. They are working on fine motor control (holding a pencil and using it to form letters clearly). Students in this level need to learn the names and sounds of the letters. They work on identifying and producing initial and final consonant sounds as well as vowel sounds. They are introduced to basic numeracy, including numbers, time, dates, and money. They also work on communicating about themselves orally and in writing using the Language Experience Approach.

Literacy B
Most of these students have some education in their first language. Their fine motor control allows them to write letters that are legible, but some of them may still be working on remembering the correct forms of all the letters. They know the names of the letters, and they are working on identifying and producing the sounds of initial, medial and final consonants, long and short vowels, and some blends and digraphs. They are working on basic numeracy such as numbers, time, dates and money. They are also working on communicating about themselves orally and in writing using the Language Experience Approach.

Literacy C
These students have some education in their first language. They know the forms and names of the letters, and they are working on producing the sounds of consonants, vowels, blends, digraphs, sight words, and drawing on context-clues. They are working on English spelling patterns and developing greater fluency in reading and writing. They study basic numeracy such as numbers, time, dates and money. They also work on communicating about themselves orally and in writing using the Language Experience Approach.
### Learner Profile: Level A

An at-a-glance profile of adult ESL literacy learners in Level A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Formal Education</th>
<th>Typical Age Range</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>adults of all ages, but predominately either between 18-25 or over 55</td>
<td>usually mostly women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Challenges in the Classroom</th>
<th>Common Strengths in the Classroom</th>
<th>Common Barriers to Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no classroom experience</td>
<td>taking risks</td>
<td>poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frequent exhaustion</td>
<td>collaborative learning</td>
<td>lack of adequate housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>few formal learning strategies</td>
<td>oral repetition</td>
<td>lack of childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low oral skills</td>
<td>prior practical knowledge</td>
<td>lack of transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building fine motor skills</td>
<td>survival skills</td>
<td>lack of ability to access help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realizing that print has meaning</td>
<td></td>
<td>issues likely to be in crisis before learner receives help</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Social and Political Background</th>
<th>Indicator a Learner is at Level A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>learner can come from any country in the world</td>
<td>learner has a lack of familiarity with classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usually rural villages</td>
<td>learner cannot identify his or her own nametag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usually highly oral societies</td>
<td>learner has difficulty with left-right and top-down directionality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learner may have spent time in refugee camps or in additional countries before immigrating</td>
<td>learner holds a book upside down or sideways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learner may have experienced war, famine, displacement, poverty, or social or political unrest</td>
<td>learner is unable to track (follow the text) with his or her eyes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Educational Background</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2 years of formal education</td>
<td>learner may talk when the instructor is talking, not recognizing that what the instructor is saying is relevant, or even that it is language at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal education has been interrupted or cut short</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>previous formal education may have been in a second language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>previous education setting may have lacked resources, facilities, or educated teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted with permission from Bow Valley College (2009)
### Sample Outcomes for Level A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>point to pictures to match realia</td>
<td>air draw lines, circles, and letters following instructor model</td>
<td>echo new words</td>
<td>choral count to 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>match letters to identical letters (same font, same case)</td>
<td>use finger to trace large letters</td>
<td>clap out syllables in new words</td>
<td>show fingers for numbers 1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>point to items that are same/different</td>
<td>copy letters directly below/beside model on unlimited paper</td>
<td>say word to self while copying it</td>
<td>recognize numbers up to 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>echo the names of letters and numbers</td>
<td>copy letters directly below/beside model on lined paper</td>
<td>point to a new word on a picture or poster</td>
<td>fill in missing numbers 1-10 in a sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>point to own name in a list of six other personal information words</td>
<td>copy name from a model</td>
<td></td>
<td>organize numbers 1-10 sequentially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>match upper and lower case familiar words (NAME to name)</td>
<td>copy address and phone number from a model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spell own name aloud</td>
<td>fill in missing letters from their personal information using a model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify various real life signs such as EXIT or STOP</td>
<td>print a letter through dictation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Strategy</th>
<th>Writing Strategy</th>
<th>Learning Strategy</th>
<th>Life Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>memorize two or three sentences</td>
<td>copy from another classmate</td>
<td>indicate with body language or a single word when they need help</td>
<td>carry a piece of paper with personal information on it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use a strip of paper or their finger to help with eye tracking</td>
<td>copy from a model</td>
<td>bring the necessary learning tools and supplies to every class</td>
<td>find identification when asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ask other learners to explain a task in their own language</td>
<td>give family a note from the instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted with permission from Bow Valley College (2009)
# Learner Profile: Level B

An at-a-glance profile of adult ESL literacy learners in Level B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Formal Education</th>
<th>Typical Age Range</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3 or previous ESL literacy</td>
<td>adults of all ages</td>
<td>usually more women than men</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Challenges in the Classroom</th>
<th>Common Strengths in the Classroom</th>
<th>Common Barriers to Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>little classroom experience</td>
<td>taking risks</td>
<td>poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frequent exhaustion</td>
<td>collaborative learning</td>
<td>lack of adequate housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>few formal learning strategies</td>
<td>oral repetition</td>
<td>lack of childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>highly dependent learners</td>
<td>prior practical knowledge</td>
<td>lack of transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developing vocabulary</td>
<td>survival skills</td>
<td>lack of ability to access help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building awareness of print</td>
<td></td>
<td>issues likely to be in crisis before learner receives help</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Social and Political Background</th>
<th>Indicator a Learner is ready for Level B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>learner can come from any country in the world</td>
<td>learner can read and write the letters of the alphabet and connect most letters to their sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often rural villages</td>
<td>learner can copy words and short sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often highly oral societies</td>
<td>learner can write letters and words on the line, and begin to use spacing between words consistently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learner may have spent time in refugee camps or in additional countries before immigrating</td>
<td>learner can read simple sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learner may have experienced war, famine, displacement, poverty, or social or political unrest</td>
<td>learner recognizes a small bank of sight words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Educational Background</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years of formal education</td>
<td>learner recognizes the purpose of different kinds of text, such as letters, stories, signs, or bills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal education has been interrupted or cut short</td>
<td>learner can fill out a simple form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any previous formal education may have been in a second language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any previous education setting may have lacked resources, facilities, or educated teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted with permission from Bow Valley College (2009)
## Sample Outcomes for Level B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate awareness of directionality</td>
<td>copy letters and words and write on the line more frequently</td>
<td>use familiar thematic vocabulary</td>
<td>count to 100 by 1s, 2s, 5s, and 10s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognize and read letters of the alphabet and relate most letters to sounds</td>
<td>begin to use invented spelling to write simple text</td>
<td>match new words with appropriate pictures in group tasks and games</td>
<td>add and subtract using manipulatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognize and read high frequency sight words</td>
<td>begin to write personal journal entries with support</td>
<td>copy new words into appropriate places in writing frames</td>
<td>create and recognize basic patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>begin to sound out simple words</td>
<td>fill out a very simple form with support</td>
<td>use new vocabulary to express wants or needs, likes, dislikes, and to ask for help</td>
<td>read and record information on a monthly calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spell familiar words</td>
<td></td>
<td>read a clock to the quarter hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tell the value of coins and dollar bills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>use comparatives to describe value of various measurements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Strategy</th>
<th>Writing Strategy</th>
<th>Learning Strategy</th>
<th>Life Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>use pictures to predict text</td>
<td>find words in a picture dictionary or other supportive materials to assist in writing</td>
<td>ask for help when needed</td>
<td>ask for help before a problem becomes a crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use initial consonants and vowels to read next</td>
<td>hear and record sounds in words, particularly initial and final consonants</td>
<td>use first language to assist development of English language skills</td>
<td>access medical care, legal advice and financial help when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use background knowledge to bring meaning to the text</td>
<td></td>
<td>organize school papers and books</td>
<td>use a calendar to record and keep appointments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted with permission from Bow Valley College (2009)
# Learner Profile: Level C

An at-a-glance profile of adult ESL literacy learners in Level C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Formal Education</th>
<th>Typical Age Range</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-6 or previous ESL literacy</td>
<td>adults of all ages</td>
<td>usually fairly balanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Challenges in the Classroom</th>
<th>Common Strengths in the Classroom</th>
<th>Common Barriers to Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>some classroom experience</td>
<td>collaborative learning</td>
<td>poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some formal learning strategies</td>
<td>prior practical knowledge</td>
<td>lack of adequate housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dependent learners</td>
<td>survival skills</td>
<td>lack of childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developing vocabulary</td>
<td>often highly motivated to learn</td>
<td>limited ability to access help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building an awareness of structure</td>
<td>viewing education as a privilege</td>
<td>issues may be serious before learner receives help</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Social and Political Background</th>
<th>Indicator a Learner is ready for Level C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>learner can come from any country in the world</td>
<td>learner can use a limited sight word bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rural villages or urban areas</td>
<td>learner can write legibly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oral or literate societies</td>
<td>learner can copy with fairly consistent accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learner may have spent time in refugee camps or in additional countries before immigrating</td>
<td>learner can space words acceptably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learner may have experienced war, famine, displacement, poverty, or social or political unrest</td>
<td>learner can write a few comprehensible sentences on familiar topics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Educational Background</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-6 years of formal education</td>
<td>learner can read and understand a short simple text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal education has been interrupted or cut short</td>
<td>learner can use initial and final consonant sounds to prompt recall to discriminate between like words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any previous formal education may have been in a second language</td>
<td>learner can fill in simple forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any previous education setting may have lacked resources, facilities, or educated teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted with permission from Bow Valley College (2009)
### Sample Outcomes for Level C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>read a simple map and identify directions</td>
<td>use phonics to improve spelling</td>
<td>recognize and use adverbs of frequency</td>
<td>identify place value in double digit numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>find and understand information on simple charts, ads, and directories</td>
<td>accurately copy information from simple charts, ads, and directories</td>
<td>recognize and use time references for sequencing</td>
<td>add and subtract double-digit numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read a short, simple paragraph and identify main idea and some supporting details</td>
<td>convey a message such as a note of congratulations, thanks, excuse, or request</td>
<td>recognize and use some abstract words, such as descriptive words</td>
<td>use a simple calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fill in charts and simple forms</td>
<td>recognize and use partitives with count and non-count nouns such as “a jug of milk”</td>
<td>measure weight, height, length, width and temperature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>write several simple sentences on a highly familiar topic</td>
<td>match new words with appropriate pictures in group tasks and games</td>
<td>use digital and analogue time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>copy new words into appropriate places in writing frames</td>
<td>estimate time for daily tasks and cost of monthly expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>use new vocabulary to express wants or needs, likes, dislikes, and to ask for help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy</td>
<td>Writing Strategy</td>
<td>Learning Strategy</td>
<td>Life Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use phonics to discriminate between sight words and predict the sound of new words in a text</td>
<td>refer to word banks and spelling lists to spell unfamiliar words</td>
<td>ask for help when needed</td>
<td>be aware of and read most posted notices in the community to avoid serious from to consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use familiar format to understand a text</td>
<td>refer to identification and documentation to fill in forms</td>
<td>use patterns to understand sentence structure</td>
<td>follow a schedule and make appropriate arrangements when it is necessary to deviate from the schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use words families and rhyming words</td>
<td>use writing models to write a text, changing necessary words and phrases</td>
<td>take risks in learning</td>
<td>anticipate problems in finances, daycare, and transportation, and plan ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify what is new in a text</td>
<td>look up new words in a picture dictionary or simple dictionary</td>
<td></td>
<td>access help agencies legal advice, and health professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use categories to understand a simple chart</td>
<td>revise a text according to the instructor’s corrections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted with permission from Bow Valley College (2009)
Lesson planning is an important aspect of tutoring, whether you are working with a small group or one-on-one. As you get to know your student(s) better, it will become easier to identify relevant themes and lesson plan objectives. It is important that you strive to plan lessons that are informed by your learners’ contexts, strengths, needs, learning styles and goals.

Many general lesson planning principles apply to tutoring ESOL literacy learners:

- Be prepared with more material than you may need
- Be prepared with contingency plans
- Take notes on what worked and what didn’t
- Reflect on each lesson and revise accordingly

Remember the principles of effective instruction for ESOL literacy learners while lesson planning:

- Relevant to Learners’ Lives
- Oral Language First
- Whole-Part-Whole
- Routine
- No more than one new piece of information at a time
- Recycle the same language in a variety of activities
- Focus on Learners’ Strengths

Lesson planning takes time, but it will get easier as you learn more about your students and how to best support their learning. Below is a lesson plan template that reflects the principles for working with adult ESOL literacy learners. The template particularly emphasizes the importance of routine, of using learner-generated text to cover Whole-Part-Whole, carrying out ongoing assessment, and taking time to reflect after each lesson. Feel free to adapt the lesson plan template in a way that works best for you! There is also a sample lesson plan that could be adapted for use with your particular literacy level for the first week of literacy tutoring. Following the lesson plan given here are links to example lesson plans Bow Valley College (2009) that represent examples of level-appropriate instruction for Levels A, B, and C. Those resources are all meant to function as springboards as you get to know your students and begin developing your own student-centered tutoring practices.
**Routine Warm-Up:**

**Goals:** *(E.g., community building, “doing school”)*

**Learner-Generated Text:** *Review or Elicit New Text*

**Additional Activities:**

**Routine Wrap-Up:**

**Ongoing Assessment:**

*Jot down notes on students’ strengths or struggles during lesson, & other observations*

**Tutor Reflection:**
**Adult ESOL Literacy Tutoring: Example First Week Lesson Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: Week 1</th>
<th>Theme: Introductions</th>
<th>Level: B (Adaptable: A &amp; C)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Materials:** visuals representing me; template; chart, realia & visuals for needs analysis

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will be able to verbally share basic personal information. Students will be able to fill in and read a template with their basic personal information.

**Routine Warm-Up:**
Greet students (Ss), model the interaction: Hello, my name is ______. What’s your name? Nice to meet you. Signal to Ss that they should introduce themselves to one another. Continue to request & share basic personal information, informally assessing Ss’ oral proficiency.

*Other warm-up possibilities: pass out name cards, go over class agenda*

**Goals:** Community building, establishing routine, introducing theme

**Learner-Generated Text:**
This task continues to build on oral language used in the warm-up. Tutor (T) models introduction using visual support: My name is, I am from, I speak, I am a, etc. T asks comprehension questions to see if Ss understand. Choral repetition of T’s info (x3). T passes out prepared script with personal info. T has Ss follow along. Whole class reads together. Transition to content that is relevant to Ss’ lives. T asks Ss personal info questions. T can vary number of questions, depending on oral proficiency. T transcribes answers on board. Each S now has his or her own words on board.

**Whole**
- T reads Ss info from board
- Choral repetition x2
- T has each S chorally repeat their personal info x3
- Ss are directed to fill out a template with basic info: My name is ______. Ss can copy from the board if they need to. Higher level Ss can write additional sentences. Now, each student has their own text to work with.
- Each S reads their info x2

**Part**
- T asks each student to orally spell their name (assess familiarity with alphabet)
- T asks Ss to identify words on their paper that begin with certain sounds (e.g., S, T, M)
- T uses words on board & asks Ss same or different?
- Higher levels can begin talking about how many sounds in certain words

**Whole**
- T has Ss copy 3 words onto cards for sight word bank
- T has Ss read their info to a partner
- T encourages partners to ask each other questions
- T has each S introduce their partner
- T asks questions about how to say hello in Ss’ different L1s. Could ask higher level Ss to explain greetings in their culture

**Additional Activities:** With remaining time, T asks Ss questions from the needs analysis while using supporting visuals and realia. T attempts to learn about each S’s general background, education, L1 literacy, strengths, barriers & goals. T shares personal info as well.

**Routine Wrap-Up:** T asks Ss if anyone can say the others’ names. If only 1-2 Ss are present, ask if they can remember all of the personal info shared about the other.

**Ongoing Assessment:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes on students’ strengths or struggles during lesson, &amp; other observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tutor Reflection:**
Tips from Bow Valley College on Lesson Planning:

- **Level A:**
  - Based on the class theme, increase sight word vocabulary
  - Help students to strengthen the connection that objects & ideas can be represented by words & symbols
  - Have students copy from models
  - No one activity should take longer than 20 minutes

- **Level B:**
  - Give students the chance to practice listening and writing (strengthening the idea that they can begin to write words using invented spelling — an important step in developing the self-confidence to write).
  - Have students read both formatted and unformatted texts and use computers and the internet, if possible.
  - No activity takes longer than 20 minutes
  - Use a variety of activities, including speaking, listening, reading, writing, and computer use.
  - More challenging textual work is broken up with opportunities to talk & move

- **Level C:**
  - No activity takes longer than 40 minutes.
  - More intense activities involving reading and writing are interspersed with activities that involve talking and movement.
  - Activities take into account different reading levels within the class; higher-level learners help lower-level learners.
  - The activities draw on learners’ previous knowledge and give them highly practical, useful skills

Example Lesson Plans:

**Bow Valley College:**

- **Level A:**
  - Sample theme unit and three lesson plans, materials included.

- **Level B:**
  - Sample theme unit and three lesson plans, materials included.

- **Level C:**
  - Sample theme unit and three lesson plans, materials included.

**New American Horizons:**

- “Building Literacy with Adult Emergent Readers”
  - Video Example of Whole-Part-Whole lesson plan:
    - [http://www.newamericanhorizons.org/training-videos](http://www.newamericanhorizons.org/training-videos)
  - Outline of Lesson Plan for your reference:
IX. Wisdom from Former Tutors

Here are some pieces of advice former tutors want to pass along to you:

Literacy Tutoring Do’s

- Smile and create a positive, welcoming atmosphere.
- Get to know your students, and share about yourself with them.
- Go even slower than you think you need to.
- Know that everything takes even longer than you imagine it will.
- Plan activities that are fun and interactive.
- Establish a routine for your tutoring sessions that the students can count on.
- Keep your eyes and ears open for clues from the students about their goals, what they need and what they want to talk about.
- Keep short notes about your students’ goals, interests and needs to use for lesson planning.
- Plan activities that allow the students to share themselves and their interests.
- Be on-time and be prepared (don't wing it!)
- Review. A lot.
- Draw pictures.
- Ask "How do you spell that?" Ask and then write down each letter that students say, to make a receptive-productive-aural-visual connection.
- Incorporate students’ lives into materials you develop.
- Use classroom routines, community building, and lots of clear spoken communication to build a comfortable base that allows students to try new, difficult things.
- Be patient and be positive.
- Assess student progress. Give tests that reflect what you do in class (e.g., spelling tests, fill-in-the-blank tests with word banks, find-the-vowel exercises, etc.).
- Oral first, then written.
- Ask for help with ideas, plans, websites, materials, and anything else you need.
- Share your successes with other tutors. We all want to learn!

Literacy Tutoring Don’ts

- Lose patience.
- Speak too fast or move too quickly.
- Go into too many details and rules about grammar.
- Have students sitting in one place for long periods of time.
- Forget to contact the students if you have to arrive late or cancel a group session.
- Forget to take breaks.
- Write too many words (on the board or on handouts), words students have never heard before, or words that are not important in some way.
- Have too much teacher talk time.
- Expect students to learn and remember something the first time you introduce it.
- Try too many new or difficult things in one class.

Feel like you have to get through your lesson plan.
X. Tutor Reflection

Reflecting on your practice and what takes place in the classroom is a valuable way to continue growing and improving as a tutor. Be observant during sessions and notice what is working well for your students and what is not. It can be very helpful to take some time soon after a tutoring session and write out what went well, what did not go so well, and how you plan to make adjustments based on these observations for your following session. Below is a form that you can use to help you reflect on your experience as a tutor. Tutors are encouraged to fill out this optional form half way through the term and at the end of the term. Feel free to share a copy of your reflections with your program coordinator.

- What are some of the things that have worked really well for you as a tutor?

- What have you tried out that did not seem to work so well?

- What resources or techniques would you recommend to other tutors?

- What have you enjoyed most about being a tutor?

- What have you found most challenging about being a tutor?

- What have your students taught you?

- Do you need any additional support, materials, or training in order to be more effective with your students? If so, please feel free to contact your program coordinator.
ESOL Literacy learners at PCC come from a variety of countries and backgrounds. In one tutoring group, you may have students from Somalia, Mexico, Thailand, Iraq, China and Guatemala. An ongoing needs analysis is a valuable way to continue learning more about your students. While your students should be regarded as the experts on their personal lived experiences, it can also be helpful to learn basic background information about their home countries and cultures. The various resources below can help you learn more about different countries and cultures.

### Online Resources about Refugees and Culture:

**Cultural Orientation**  
Download, view, or order articles and other materials regarding refugees and resettlement.  
[www.cal.org/co/](http://www.cal.org/co/)

**Refugee Backgrounders**  
The Cultural Orientation Resource Center has produced numerous publications providing key information about various refugee populations. These Refugee Backgrounders and Culture Profiles include a population’s history, culture, religion, language, education, and resettlement needs, and brief demographic information.  
[http://www.culturalorientation.net/learning/backgrounders](http://www.culturalorientation.net/learning/backgrounders)

**Culturegrams:**  
Concise reports on over 200 of the world’s countries are available through the PCC library.

**Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning**  
Information, materials, and technical assistance to ESL teachers and tutors of refugees or immigrants.  

**International Rescue Committee**  
Browse article about IRC’s activities overseas, general reports, program info, news, and country specific websites.  

**United States Committee for Refugees**  
Current info about refugee issues in the form of articles, photo galleries, short videos, and statistical reports.  

**The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**  
Current news and history about the world’s refugees.  
[http://www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)
XII. Resources: Tutor-Training & Literacy Activities

Tutor-Training Resources:

ESL Literacy Network [www.esl-literacy.com](http://www.esl-literacy.com)
This site is operated by Bow Valley College and it contains a wealth of information and resources for educators working with ESOL literacy students (e.g., lesson plans, literacy readers, training info). You will want to visit this site often as it is updated frequently.

ProLiteracy [www.proliteracyednet.org](http://www.proliteracyednet.org)
Excellent site for better understanding how to work with literacy students. The Phonemic Awareness and Language Experience Approach modules explain the top-down, bottom-up foundation of literacy instruction.

Free online courses tailored for educators working with adult ESOL students are offered at this site. There is a wonderful course specifically for educators working with literacy students, titled “Emergent Readers”

Making it Real
This wonderful resource offers an abundance of activity ideas for developing listening, speaking, reading & writing skills with pre-literate refugees.

Literacy Work International [www.literacywork.com](http://www.literacywork.com)
This website hosts a number of resources and videos for instructors working with ESL students and ESL literacy students. The ESL Literacy and Reading Demonstration videos are particularly insightful.

Resources for Literacy Activities:

Theme-based readers for Levels A, B & C and an instructors guide that will support you in creating comprehensive, theme-based lessons for adult ESL literacy learners.

Handwriting Worksheets [www.handwritingworksheets.com](http://www.handwritingworksheets.com)
This website allows you to create your own handwriting worksheets, in a variety of styles. This resource is idea for practicing tracing or copying a learner-generated text.

Soft Schools [www.softschools.com](http://www.softschools.com)
Here you can create and print out a variety of free worksheets, including basic numeracy worksheets and handwriting worksheets (for learner-generated text activities).

Free Phonics Worksheets [www.free-phonics-worksheets.com](http://www.free-phonics-worksheets.com)
Array of printable worksheets; sight words flash cards; pictures match words targeting all letters, blends, digraphs, etc.
XIII. References


XIV. Appendix:

Large Sample Photos for Needs Analysis

Photo by: Jason McHuff

Photo by: Steve Morgan