



Creating Learning Partners

A facilitator's guide for training
effective adult literacy tutors

Creating Learning Partners:

A Facilitator's Guide for Training Effective Adult Literacy Tutors

Units 1 to 12

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Unit 13: Essential Skills

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Ann Goldblatt authored the facilitation unit and the facilitation tips throughout the manual.

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Candice Jackson

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Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

Basics and Tools: A Collection of Popular Education Resources and Activities	Anne Bishop et al., editors	This book provides useful concepts about popular education, and then techniques and activities to implement them.
Popular Education Resources	The Catalyst Centre	This website provides news and resources promoting cultures of learning for positive social change.
The Popular Education News	North American Alliance for Popular and Adult Education	This free monthly e-mail newsletter connects popular and community-based educators with resources. In addition to back issues of the newsletter, the website includes quotations, links to other sites and lists of useful resources.

If you think there are only two of you in the room, you are missing the thousand people sitting in the lap of each person in the conversation. Those thousand people represent all the voices from the past influencing what each of us brings to the dialogue.

Dr. Paul Pederson, University of Hawaii

Introduction

Overview

We have divided *Creating Learning Partners: A Facilitator's Guide for Training Effective Adult Literacy Tutors* into units. Each of them covers a major topic. In turn, we divided the units into sections that focus on a main concept within the major topic. Each section is comprised of a number of activities that help tutors expand their knowledge, and prepare them to work with adults in a one-to-one learning situation.

A chart at the beginning of each unit serves as a table of contents. It lists all the activities in the unit, what they involve, the time they're expected to take and whether the activities are core or optional.

Core activities introduce core material. As the name implies, that material is necessary to understand the concepts in the unit. Therefore, in your tutor training, it is important to teach all the material introduced through the core activities.

Optional activities, on the other hand, will enhance your tutor training, but the training does not depend on them. In addition to being named in the table of contents, optional activities have a special icon next to them in the sidebar.

Throughout each unit, also in the sidebars, you will find variations on the activities – ideas for other ways you might want to present the same material. Our intention is that you feel comfortable using this manual in the way that works best for you. Use our activities and their variations or activities you have designed yourself. The important thing is that, over a period of time, all the core material be introduced to tutors.

The sidebars also contain coordinator, facilitation and program tips – points that we thought could be helpful to your practice.

The handouts and overheads that accompany the activities in a unit are located on the CD that is included with this binder.

Using a participatory approach

This manual follows the participatory approach to learning. As the facilitator using this approach, you are guiding your tutors from the known to the unknown. We therefore designed the activities to begin by drawing on the experience and knowledge tutors bring with them. Once tutors have reflected on what they already know, you will provide new information and give them the opportunity to turn it into knowledge by applying and practising it.

If your first role as facilitator is to act as a guide, your second role is to act as a model. The way you facilitate the training sessions, the way you guide tutors through the activities, will be a model of how they can best work with their learners. Be aware of this as you facilitate and, every now and then, point it out to tutors.

Adapting to levels of experience

We designed this manual to be flexible, so that it can work for you, in your particular situation, over time. You can use it whether you are new to being a literacy

coordinator or highly experienced. You can use it to offer introductory training to your volunteers or more advanced in-service workshops.

You will find that a number of activities have options that allow you to adapt and change the training to reflect your experience and understanding of the subject. We have included background information in many of the units about the topic(s) presented in the unit's activities. Less experienced facilitators might find this information useful to read before conducting the workshops. We have also included an annotated listing of resources at the beginning of each unit that includes books, manuals and websites for those who would like to expand their knowledge.

You can also adapt the manual to fit the knowledge, understanding and experience of your tutors. However, it's important not to make assumptions about your tutors' prior learning. Even though they may have a background in education or some other related experience, you may still need to introduce them to the participatory model, to working with adults, or to working in a one-to-one tutoring situation.

The sections and activities within each unit build on one another, but it is possible to use many sections and activities as stand-alone training.

CD

You will find a PDF of this manual plus the handouts and overheads on the CD that is included with this binder. Print off the handouts and overheads you need for your program.

Also included on the CD is a evaluation form for tutors to provide feedback on tutor training. This information is for your use. The evaluation form is in two formats, PDF and Microsoft Word. If you wish to customize your evaluation form you will need to copy the word document to your files. From there you can make any changes you would like.

Adapting overheads

If you don't have an overhead projector, turn the overheads into handouts for your tutors.

Adapting times

You will notice that at the beginning of each unit, we list the time we think it will take. When one activity has several processes to choose from, the time at the beginning of the unit includes the time it takes to do the longest option.

The time is rounded off to the nearest quarter hour and includes only the core activities. If you include the optional activities in your training, you will need to add more time.

The exact time of each activity will depend on the size and dynamics of the group of tutors participating in the training. We wrote the manual with both smaller and larger groups in mind, ranging from groups of four to six tutors to groups of 7 to 12.

Adapting to train one tutor

Perhaps you only have one tutor to train. You will find that you can adapt much of the material for one-to-one training situations. When adapting, be sure to engage in the discussions as you would if you had a larger group. The discussions are designed to find out what tutors know. They also help you to determine how much to modify and adapt your further training.

Training schedule/agendas

A sample training schedule and two sample agendas follow this introduction. We've included them to give you some ideas on planning your own training sessions. You might want to begin training tutors using the units that relate to all learners, such as Adults as Learners (Unit 2) and Planning for Learning (Unit 4).

We suggest that after this general training, if at all possible, you match your tutors with learners before having tutors attend further training. Then tutors can attend training related to the specific needs of the learners with whom they are working. If tutors have actual learners to think about as they go through the training, they can apply their new knowledge to their own learners. Offering the training in this way provides a frame of reference for your tutors and therefore can help them remember what they've learned.

You may want to use many of the units, sections or activities for ongoing training with your tutors. You can also use the units as a refresher for more experienced tutors. In this way, you can tailor your sessions to best fit the needs of your tutors.

Encourage your tutors to attend the training sessions. You may find that some want to attend because tutoring or literacy is a new field for them and they want to learn all they can. Others, more experienced or knowledgeable, should also attend. As well as continuing to learn themselves, they can perhaps provide some knowledge and experience for less experienced tutors to draw on.

Tutor handbook

We have not included a tutor handbook with this manual. Rather, we propose that you provide your tutors with a binder in which they can place the handouts and notes from the training they attend, thus creating their own handbooks.

Use of pronouns

A few years ago, using masculine pronouns to indicate both men and women was appropriate. These days, to avoid doing that, writers often use gender-neutral plural pronouns even to refer to single individuals. We didn't like either option and because we fully understand that literacy programs include male and female coordinators, tutors and learners, we have chosen to use both male and female pronouns interchangeably throughout the manual.

Bibliography and references

Whenever we refer to a source, we indicate it in the body of the text rather than through footnotes. All the sources are then listed in the bibliography at the end of each unit. Because our goal is to make it easy for you to find a text if you want it, the

bibliographies provide as much relevant information as possible, including websites, ISBNs and phone numbers.

Handouts and overheads that come from or are based on other sources have the relevant sources clearly indicated directly on them.

You will find a reference table in each unit that will provide you with more information on that concept or topic. Use it as you feel you would like to. Again, all the texts listed in these tables are fully cited in the bibliographies.

All URLs cited were confirmed on April 19, 2007. However, it is likely that a number of URLs will become outdated as time goes by. We suggest that if you find a web page is no longer available, you try to shorten the URL or go to the home page. For example, you could shorten www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/learningenglish/pdf/mb_best_practices_guide.pdf to www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/learningenglish/pdf.

If that still doesn't lead to a working web page, try shortening it even more: www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate.

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We hope this manual offers the supports you need to be an effective facilitator and educator as you work with volunteer tutors to help adult learners.

Fundamental Facilitation

To facilitate means to “make easy.” This section introduces fundamental ideas about facilitation that both complement and support delivery of the content of the *Creating Learning Partners* manual. Building on this introduction, you will find facilitation tips in sidebars throughout the manual.

In a survey done in 2006, literacy coordinators across Alberta raised five priority questions:

1. What principles should guide facilitation?
2. How can I tap into learners’ experiences beyond simply asking them?
3. Why include icebreakers?
4. Why should I try to be creative if I believe I’m not?
5. How do I work with diversity (i.e., of culture, learning styles and levels of experience)?

The questions are related to one another, and so our responses to one help to answer each of the others.

Principles guiding facilitation

Principles guide our facilitation practice, whether our work is one-to-one or with small or large groups. The following facilitation principles help to anchor our work.

We begin with these assumptions as facilitators

- We should only ask people to do things we feel comfortable doing ourselves. The intent is to strike a balance between stretching participants beyond the familiar and avoiding embarrassing them.
- Participatory activities are purposeful rather than simply games for entertainment.
- The way we facilitate reflects how we see ourselves in relation to the other people. If we see ourselves as the experts, for example, that attitude has an impact on how we value the knowledge of others.
- We are creating knowledge together. We don’t necessarily know where we will end up. Learning is an evolving process of discovery rather than a process of filling an empty vessel.

Our role is one of “power with” rather than “power over” participants

If we trust the process and have faith in the wisdom of the people taking part, we accept that they hold many of the answers to their questions. Our role is to support their process of figuring out solutions. We are not using power to control but, rather, sharing power with the participants as a process of shared learning.

- As facilitators, we legitimately add new information. At the same time, we are creating the conditions for discovery and new understanding as partners in learning.

- Education for change takes learning beyond the superficial and connects it with people’s day-to-day lived experience. It is based on a continuous learning spiral, asking *What?*, *So what?* and *Now what?*, or to put it differently, *What is our experience?*, *What does it mean?* and *What can we do about it?*

We need to plan ahead

- To be effective, our role starts long before we walk through the door. By speaking with key players in advance, we can learn about the history, dynamics and expectations of the participants.
- We can ask participants about their hopes and “hope-nots” for the learning experience. We blend the insights gained from the participants with our knowledge of the content of the units.
- We can pick up clues from the participant feedback about a format that will fit for the particular group.

There are ways we can help each person to feel heard

- Many people have been discouraged from letting their voices be heard, particularly women and people of minority cultures and colour. As facilitators committed to ensuring every voice is heard, we need an array of approaches that break down barriers to participation in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

We need to remember to work with the whole person

- We bring all parts of ourselves into the room – feelings, beliefs, past experiences, knowledge, skills, bodies and spirit.
- People have a variety of ways of acquiring new knowledge and expressing themselves. We can open doors to learning by using a variety of approaches for learning.
- If we pay close attention to cues, such as tone of voice, body language, eye contact and gut instincts, we can move with the energy of the people in the room.
- If we feel tension, we can name it and ask for guidance from the participants, knowing that together we can create a solution to the problem.

Tapping into learners’ experiences

Adult learners, like all of us, come with a wealth of life experience. Our good and bad experiences have shaped our beliefs and values, our memories, our confidence and our sense of self-worth, and we bring that constellation into every learning situation.

We come to understand people’s life experiences through their stories. The creative challenge is to figure out ways of tapping into those stories. Roots of this approach to learning are partially found in “popular education” (meaning “the people’s education”) and the work of Brazilian adult educator, Paulo Freire.

In their *Popular Education Handbook*, Rick Arnold and Bev Burke list a set of common characteristics for the popular education approach to facilitation:

- Everyone teaches and learns – leadership is shared.
- It involves a high level of participation.
- It stresses the creation of new knowledge rather than the passing-on of existing knowledge.
- The concrete experience of the participants is the starting point for the joint creation of knowledge.
- It's fun!
- There is no “expert” – rather, there is mutual respect for the knowledge and experience all participants bring to the process.
- Facilitators and participants are equal members of the group. It is a relationship of dialogue, of people talking as equals.
- The facilitator learns as much from the participants as the participants learn from the facilitator.

Popular education methods include a variety of ways of drawing out people's stories

- Invite participants to use craft materials (for example, Lego blocks, pipe cleaners, ribbon, Popsicle sticks, cotton balls, playdough) to create an image of a story.
- Choose an object from a set of household objects (for example, scissors, a ball, a clock, a water bottle, a book, a ruler, keys, eyeglasses) to represent a personal experience.
- Choose a photograph from a set of photographs to represent a feeling or an experience.
- Create a collage from magazines in keeping with a particular theme.
- Pick situations and characters from a hat and create role-plays or human sculptures to tell the story.

We can ask the group questions to bring the stories together

- Have you had an experience like this? Does this remind you of something that has happened to you?
- How is your experience similar to or different from others' stories?
- Is this a problem that other people have?
- Why does it happen like this?
- What can we do about it?

We can also bring participants' experiences to the surface by exploring points of view on various topics that arise

- Post different points of view on a topic on flip chart sheets around the room and ask people to go to the one that fits best with their beliefs, and then ask them to discuss their reasons for picking that perspective. The group can use visual materials to present their perspective.

- Ask people to position themselves along an imaginary line, from highly agree to highly disagree, representing points of view on a topic. They can discuss their reasons with the people standing close to them or with people at opposite ends.

Including icebreakers

Icebreakers can serve multiple purposes. The key characteristic is that they are meant to build a sense of comfort and connection at a point when people are uncertain and perhaps nervous.

- We can set the stage for people to feel comfortable and relaxed in a group. Even working one-to-one, we create comfort or discomfort by the way we begin.
 - If people start by saying or doing something that is familiar and non-threatening, they are more likely to relax.
 - If they use their voice in the room to say something that comes easily, they are more likely to speak up during the session.
- Icebreakers can help people begin to know more about others in the group, with the freedom to choose how open they wish to be.
- Icebreakers create an opportunity for people to begin to learn about one another. Each participant should be free to choose how much she wishes to share.
- Icebreakers should build trust among the participants.
- Icebreakers can set the stage for the content of the session while creating comfort and building connections.
- A variation on icebreakers is energizers, which usually involve some kind of body movement that is fun and non-threatening. We can use them to stimulate energy at the beginning of a program. We can also use them during a program when energy slides and people need a break from thinking and want to get up and move around.

Icebreakers that connect people with one another

- Participants to put their names and a symbol or picture of one of their passions on a name card, using coloured markers, as a starting point for introducing themselves. Name cards are easy to make using 8½" x 11" paper or card stock folded lengthwise.
- Gather according to where you were born, the number of children in the household where you grew up, your birth order or the length of time you have lived in this community. People can introduce themselves within the group.
- Form a line according to how far we are right now from the place you were born or the length of time you have lived in this community. This exercise necessitates people speaking with one another and the group can make observations about the results.
- In small groups, participants draw one circle in the middle of a flip chart page and one smaller circle for each person in the group around the rim of the large circle. They then put the name of each person inside one of the small circles. The intent is

to identify and write in the small circles three things unique to that one individual. In the centre, write three things all the group members have in common. Each group can share the results with the full group.

- In small groups, participants create a group resume to respond to a job ad, (such as ad for a gardener or a tour guide), that could include skills and knowledge from everyone.
- Each person picks a penny from a bowl and speaks to something that happened in her life during the year the coin was made.

Icebreakers that lead into content

- Participants select a photograph from a set of photographs that fits with their view on the particular topic and explain their choice to a partner or the full group.
- In pairs, participants have a conversation in which every statement begins with “Yes, and...” Then the pairs switch to every statement beginning with “Yes, but...” to gain an understanding of open and closed thinking.

Uncovering creativity

We are more than talking heads. Knowing that people have a variety of learning styles, we need to open up opportunities that allow each person to learn and to express himself. Being creative does not mean that you have to be a budding artist or an accomplished actor. It means finding ways to explore ideas that are accessible and fun.

Suggestions for being creative in designing learning opportunities

- We can create a space that has colour and, if possible, natural light. Simple additions such as a coloured placemat, coloured paper, coloured markers or a vase with a flower can create warmth and stimulation.
- We can try to find ways to relate the learning to people’s everyday, familiar experiences. If we are introducing the concept of planning, we can ask people to think about planning a project in their home. If we are trying to talk about how concepts are connected or overlap with one another, we could use objects or a ball of wool to demonstrate visually what we mean.
- We can use familiar games to stimulate dialogue and reflection. The squares on a board game, for example, can be accompanied by corresponding questions that open up discussion.
- Humour is important but it should not be used at someone’s expense because it can embarrass them. Encourage people to laugh at themselves and the situations presented.
- When we provide kinesthetic materials, such as craft supplies, people are often more creative than they imagined. They tap into a different part of their brains to express ideas or share stories.
- We can keep the energy flowing by asking people to pair and group in a variety

of ways, by using a variety of techniques for sharing small group feedback and by including activities that involve some physical movement.

Activities that stimulate “out of the box” thinking

- Participants pick from a collection of simple household objects, such as a key chain, a flashlight, a pen. What would they do to modify the object by adding features that would make it more useful?
- An object is held up in front of the group and each person, in turn, suggests a different way it could be used. For example, a pizza box might become a slide, a shelter for a bird, a hat in bad weather, or a shield in a food fight.

Working with diversity

Complexity is your friend. Within every group of participants, there is some degree of diversity. We know that the more diverse the group – in terms of culture, learning styles and levels of experience – the more complex. We can take steps to respect and reflect that diversity in how we facilitate learning.

- The information and materials we use always have a cultural bias. Images and experiences of immigrants, refugees, Aboriginal people, working class people and people with disabilities are often missing in mainstream materials. Knowing people appreciate seeing their own cultures and circumstances reflected, we can look for material that presents diverse images and experiences.
- We cannot know all there is to know about every culture because there is diversity within cultures and cultures are always evolving. Furthermore, we can be limited by stereotypes based on generalized information. We can ask questions that invite people of diverse backgrounds to share their experience and inform their fellow learners and the facilitators.
- We can ask participants to reflect on who is left out of the written and audio-visual materials presented and why. How would their stories differ from the “mainstream” experience?
- We can invite participants to share approaches to learning familiar to them that may widen the repertoire of the whole group.
- By integrating a variety of approaches for learning and expression, you increase the chance of making the experience meaningful and accessible for people of diverse cultures, learning styles and levels of experience. Verbal methods alone favour those who can articulate their ideas with words, whereas visual or kinesthetic approaches create openings and reduce gaps among diverse participants.
- When we create opportunities for varying combinations of pairs and working groups, people have the chance to work alongside others who have shared and differing backgrounds from their own.
- Mixed into the experience of diverse groups of people are stories of discrimination and powerlessness based on differences. Rather than trying to gloss over negative experiences, we can create a safe atmosphere for people to share their stories and find support and strategies for dealing with those encounters.

Practical Pointers for Facilitating

Preparing for facilitating

- Watch other facilitators whenever you get a chance. What do they do that you might like to try?
- When you facilitate, if possible, arrange the tables in a horseshoe or herringbone pattern. This creates an informal setting and allows people to see each other as they speak.
- Make sure you can easily find and sort through your handouts when you need them. If you prepare them on different coloured papers, you'll be able to tell one handout from the other. Or, you could fasten them together with a paper clip or something else that is easy to remove.
- Always test your equipment and check that you have all the necessary cords for your equipment.
- Be sure you have all the necessary materials, handouts and resources.
- When using videotapes, always preview the portion you are going to use and give tutors a reason for viewing it.
- Set the mood with music, inspirational posters or quotes, and icebreakers.

Time

- One of the toughest jobs is deciding what absolutely must be included and what – even though it seems important – will have to wait for another time.
- Add together the following to figure out the time the session will take:
 - the total length of each presentation and/or activity
 - 5 to 10 minutes at the beginning of each session for review and to preview upcoming topics
 - 10 to 15 minutes at the end of each session to recap what was covered, review any homework assignment, and give the participants a chance to reflect on what they learned
 - 15 to 20 minutes per three-hour session for transition activities and breaks
- Allow time for group discussions and opportunities for practice. This is often where the real learning takes place. It also gives you a chance to see how well tutors understand the concepts you are covering.
- Build time in for sharing if some tutors have tutoring experience.

During facilitation

- At the beginning, talk about what you will cover. At the end, summarize the main points.
- Explain the purpose to tutors at the beginning or the end of each activity, or ask tutors what they think the purpose is before you explain it.

- Be aware that you are modelling the way tutors should work with their learners and make tutors aware of what you are modelling.
- When asking questions, allow some silence to give tutors the time to have thoughtful answers.
- Be open to many answers even though the “best” answer has already been given.
- Be careful to not make assumptions about the prior knowledge of tutors.
- Mention connections to other sessions or to similar activities in the same session.
- Be flexible, anticipate and adjust.
- Enthusiasm is contagious. If you are excited about what you are presenting, your tutors will also be excited.
- Use techniques with which you are comfortable. If it doesn't feel right, don't use it.
- Provide duotangs or binders for your tutors to put handouts in and to take notes. At the end of the training, tutors will have created their own tutor handbook.

After facilitating

- Use an evaluation form to collect feedback on the session from tutors.
- Write notes for your own use shortly after the session on what you felt went well and what you might want to change for the next training session.

Facilitation is a constant learning experience. We can be sponges as we watch others facilitate. Even those with decades of experience can continuously challenge themselves to try new approaches and gain new insights about making learning easy and engaging. We are not lone islands with the entire burden of responsibility of facilitating learning on our shoulders, because we know that “everyone teaches, everyone learns.”

Example of a Training Schedule

This is an example of what an overall training schedule might look like, but remember that the idea is to tailor *your* training to meet the needs of *your* tutors and learners.

DAY ONE: Orientation and Adults as Learners – 4 hours

Introductions/Icebreaker	10 minutes
Unit 1 Orientation	1 hour
Break	15 minutes
Unit 2 Adults as Learners	2½ hours
Evaluation	5 minutes

DAY TWO: Learning Styles and Planning for Learning – 7¼ hours

Note: This proposed workshop does not cover the Aboriginal section of the Learning Styles unit.

Icebreaker	5 minutes
Unit 3 Learning Styles	1½ hours
- section 1 (Introduction)	
- section 2 (Auditory/Visual/Kinesthetic)	
Break	15 minutes
Unit 3 Learning Styles (continued)	1½ hours
- section 3 (Right/Left Brain Dominance)	
- section 4 (Culture and Learning)	
Lunch	45 minutes
Unit 4 Planning for Learning	3 hours – include a break in the afternoon
Evaluation	5 minutes

At this time it would be a good idea to match up your tutors with a learner. When they come back for more training, they will have a learner in mind, which will help them retain information.

DAY THREE: About Literacy and Reading – 6 hours

Icebreaker	5 minutes
Unit 5 About Literacy	1½ hours
Break	10 minutes
Unit 6 Reading	1 hour
Lunch	30 minutes
Unit 6 Reading (continued)	2½ hours – include a 10 minute break
Evaluation	5 minutes

DAY FOUR: Writing – 5 hours

Icebreaker	5 minutes
Unit 7 Writing	1 hour
Break	10 minutes
Unit 7 Writing (continued)	1 hour
Lunch	30 minutes
Unit 7 Writing (continued)	1 hour
Break	10 minutes
Unit 7 Writing (continued)	1 hour
Evaluation	5 minutes

DAY FIVE: English as a Second Language – 6 hours

Icebreaker	5 minutes
Unit 11 ESL: Learner and Tutor	1½ hours
Break	10 minutes
Unit 12 ESL: Tutoring Basics	1½ hours
Lunch	30 minutes
Unit 12 ESL: Tutoring Basics (continued)	1 hour
Break	10 minutes
Unit 12 ESL: Tutoring Basics (continued)	1 hour
Evaluation	5 minutes

You can also teach the above workshops over several evenings or days by focusing on a different unit each time. Break up the training to best suit the needs of your program.

If you are training just one tutor, the sessions will take less time, since there will be less discussion. On the other hand, if you have more than six tutors at your training, the sessions will take longer.

You can use the following workshops as the need arises, depending on your learners and tutors.

Unit 8 Spelling (3½ hours)

Unit 9 Numeracy (3½ hours)

Unit 10 Learning Disabilities (2 hours)

Sample Agenda One

Use this sample agenda as a guide only. Plan your agenda according to the needs of your program.

9:00–9:05 Welcome

9:05–10:30 Unit 3 Learning Styles

Section 1: Introduction to Learning Styles

Activity A. Pig Psychological Test

Activity B. Preferred learning environment

Activity C. We learn in different ways

Section 2: Auditory/Visual/Kinesthetic

Activity A. We use different ways to learn new things

Activity B. Determining your learning style

Activity C. Characteristics and tutoring strategies for each style

10:30–10:45 Break

10:45–12:15 Unit 3 Learning Styles (continued)

Section 3: Right/Left Brain Dominance

Activity A. The two sides of the brain

Activity B. Determining which side is dominant

Activity C. Characteristics and tutoring strategies

Section 4: Culture and Learning

Activity A. The meaning of culture

Activity B. Cultural attitudes that may impact learning

Activity C. Cultural differences

12:15–1:00 Lunch

1:00–2:15 Unit 4 Planning for Learning

Section 1: First Steps

Activity A. Getting to know your learner

Activity B. First meeting

Section 2: Learning Situations

Activity A. Problem-solving skills

Activity B. Ways to handle difficult situations

2:15–2:30 Break

2:30–4:50 Unit 4 Planning for Learning (continued)

Section 3: Developing a Learning Plan

Activity A. Why we use goals

Activity B. How to set goals

Activity C. Developing your own learning plan

Activity D. Developing a learning plan for your learner

Section 4: Lesson Planning

Activity A. Planning a lesson

Activity B. Components of a lesson

Activity C. Developing a lesson plan

Activity D. Assessing lesson plans

Section 5: Portfolio Development

Activity A. Developing a portfolio

4:50–5:00 Evaluation

Sample Agenda Two

This sample is a variation of the training schedule and shows one way to adapt the training to fit your program needs.

9:00–9:10 Welcome/Introductions

Have tutors share their name and one interesting fact about themselves.
Review agenda for the day.

9:10–10:05 Unit 2 Adults as Learners

Section 1: Characteristics of Adult Learners
Activity A. Option 1 We have different backgrounds and experiences
Activity B. Option 1 Characteristics of adult learners
Activity C. Some learner stories

10:05–10:20 Break

10:20–11:20 Unit 2 Adults as Learners (continued)

Section 2: Helping Learning Happen
Activity A. What makes a positive learning experience
Activity B. Guidelines for promoting positive learning experiences
Activity C. Some barriers to learning

11:20–12:10 Unit 2 Adults as Learners (continued)

Section 3: Active Learners
Activity A. The value of active learning
Activity B. What is an active learner?

12:10–1:00 Lunch

1:00–2:30 Unit 3 Learning Styles

Section 1: Introduction to Learning Styles
Activity A. Pig Psychological Test
Activity B. Preferred learning environment
Activity C. We learn in different ways
Section 2: Auditory/Visual/Kinesthetic
Activity A. We use different ways to learn new things
Activity B. Determining your learning style
Activity C. Characteristics and tutoring strategies for each style

2:30–2:45 Break

2:45–3:20 Unit 3 Learning Styles (continued)

Section 3: Right/Left Brain Dominance
Activity A. The two sides of the brain
Activity B. Determining which side is dominant
Activity C. Characteristics and tutoring strategies

3:20–3:30 Evaluation

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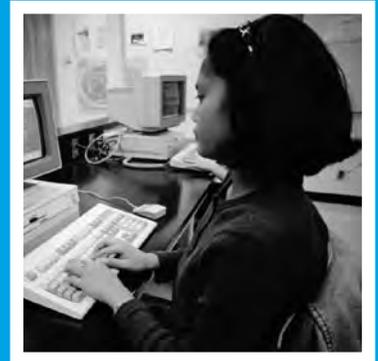
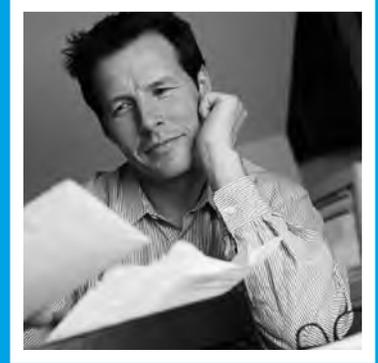
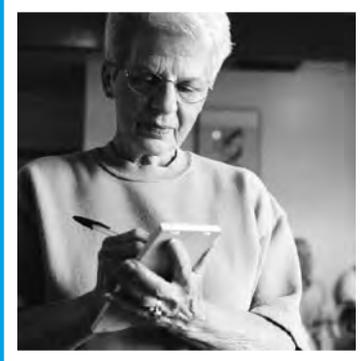
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Being creative means finding ways to explore ideas that are accessible and fun.

Ann Goldblatt



Orientation

UNIT
1

Unit 1: Orientation

A. Welcome	Core	Icebreaker, reflection, discussion	15 min
B. Background of our program	Core	Discussion, viewing objects	10 min
C. Our students	Core	Talk about the program	5-10 min
D. Being a tutor	Core	Discussion, completion of necessary forms	15-20 min
E. Program staff and facility	Core if tour is possible	Talk about the program staff, tour	10 min

UNIT

1

Orientation

This unit provides the background for the rest of the training. It helps tutors get an overview of the program and what is expected of them, and gives them the chance to begin getting to know one another.

You could use this workshop as a screening tool. Offer it at a different time from the rest of the training to help potential volunteers decide if they want to work as tutors. Not everyone who attends will become a volunteer, but you may gain an advocate or a potential board member.

Each literacy program is unique and reflects the community in which it is located. Some programs have been around for a number of years and may have a rich history, while others are fairly new. Some programs may offer a variety of services and serve a larger population in the community, or they may be very focused on a select group. Some programs are non-profit societies and have developed policies and procedures, while other programs are part of a larger organization. Even the office space for each program is unique, depending on what is available within the community.

The point is that there are many different kinds of literacy programs in Alberta. This unit cannot serve as a specific orientation to each of them. Therefore, this unit is designed to be adapted to fit your program.

You should make sure tutors have a good understanding of the program you coordinate, its connection to the community, its participants and its history.



Approx. 1 hour
using core activities

The complexity of your program will determine how long this unit takes. If you have a very straightforward program, you will probably be able to give tutors a good basic orientation in about one hour.

Concepts

- **How your program works**

Making a connection with students is a necessity, a joy and a challenge.

Evelyn Battell

Activity A

Welcome

Use any icebreaker you have on hand to help put people at ease. You may have already asked why they want to tutor, but if you have a group, they might want to discuss why they are volunteering and share some of their background experiences.

Icebreaker, reflection, discussion

Materials and equipment

An icebreaker of your choice

Coloured paper, coloured markers

Preparation

Make copies of the icebreaker as needed.

Cut 8½" x 11" sheets of coloured paper into thirds.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Welcome tutors.
2. Use an icebreaker of your choice.
3. To engage the attention of tutors, you could ask them to let you know what curiosities and questions they bring to this workshop. If you have more than one person, you could ask them to first speak in pairs so that you model the value of mutual connections.
4. You could give tutors slips of coloured paper (8½" x 11" sheets cut into thirds) and ask them to record key words from their conversations using coloured markers. Ask them to record just one idea per sheet and to make sure others can read them easily. When you come back together, you can collect one sheet from each pair and then continue rounds until you have added all the ideas.
5. Place the sheets in a space everyone can see (on a table, on the floor if you are standing in a circle, or on a wall). You can ask the group to cluster the sheets into categories, creating one header card to identify the common thread in each cluster. You can then link the rest of the presentation back to their interests.
6. If you are comfortable being flexible, you could use the categories they named to present your information, adding any items they did not identify. This activity adds time to the orientation but it grounds your presentation and makes it more interactive, increasing the likelihood of people absorbing what you have to share. It also models the value of first asking people about their interests in any learning situation.

Activity B

Background of our program

This is an opportunity to show the best features of your program. If you have any awards or are involved in annual events, share them with your potential volunteers. Even if they decide not to be tutors, they may be willing to help with events or other projects.

Use brochures or other media information to explain your program. This is a good time to help community members get a better understanding of your program.

Some programs only offer one-to-one tutoring for literacy and ESL; other programs offer a variety of services to the community. If your program is quite complex, it might be a good idea to use some type of schema to show relationships.

This background information will give tutors the bigger picture of the program and its community context. After this, you will look more closely at the actual people who use your program.

Discussion, viewing objects

Materials and equipment

Anything that shows your program's accomplishments, such as awards, certificates, resources published, or special recognition

Program brochure

Preparation

Gather any objects or articles you have that you want to share.

Become familiar with your program's history: when it was first organized, highlights over the years, and so on.

Review any goals or objectives of your program.

If necessary, develop a graphic or schema that shows your program in the context of the larger community and that explains its relationship with other groups, individuals and agencies.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give a brief history of your program, including any program highlights or accomplishments. Show any objects that demonstrate your program's accomplishments.
2. Discuss any visions, goals or objectives your program may have.
3. Give an overview of the programs you offer (e.g., adult one-to-one tutoring, family literacy, small classes).
4. Many potential volunteers want to know about your connections to the community and the province. Tell them where you get your program funding and share information about any partnerships you have within your community.

Activity C

Our students

The idea is to help tutors get an understanding of the types of learners you serve.

Talk about the program

Materials and equipment

None

Preparation

Review the demographics of your program. You may want to prepare a summary of your intake process. If you are new to the program, you can look at past year-end reports and other resources in your program to gather this information.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Explain who your students are (e.g., ESL, literacy, families) and the age groups, numbers and gender you typically work with in your program.
2. Explain the process you use to take in new students.
3. Explain why and how your students need the program. For example, ESL students need to practise their conversation skills.
4. Include any other information about your students that will help volunteers understand the role your program plays in the community.

Facilitation tip

Before moving into the administrative information, you could ask each tutor to turn to another, and ask them to share any concerns, fears, or questions they may have after hearing the information presented. Ask them to record on a flip chart their key concerns, questions, and so on, then share with the larger group.

Activity D

Being a tutor

Discussion, completion of necessary forms

Materials and equipment

Tutor job description

Forms for tutors to fill out:

- registration (if not done already)
- confidentiality

Record-keeping sheets

Sample of resources from your library

Preparation

Gather the forms you use to register new tutors.

Make copies of your tutor job description.

Gather samples of resources from your library.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Discuss the tutor job description and the requirements for being a tutor, such as confidentiality, the number of hours they are expected to tutor each week, where they meet the learners and so on.

2. Explain how you use the students' and tutors' interests, their locations and the times they are available to match them up.
3. Review the tutor training schedule and the opportunities for growth and development your program has for volunteer tutors to enhance their skills.
4. Explain any volunteer benefits and professional development events available to volunteers in your program.
5. Give each tutor your record-keeping sheets and review the procedures for using them.
6. Discuss your resource library and the way tutors can use it. Mention your borrowing policy. Have a few resources set out for tutors to look at.
7. Review the following as they apply to your program:
 - any policies you may have
 - photocopying procedures
 - how to deal with problems
 - what expenses you cover
 - the program's process for tutor review and evaluation
 - the grounds for dismissal of tutors
8. Have tutors fill out the forms as needed.

Activity E

Program staff and facility

If you hold your training in a separate building from your program office, this activity may not be practical. Adapt it to meet the needs and conditions of your program.

Talk about the program staff, tour

Materials and equipment

Business cards – if you have them

Preparation

Make arrangements as needed to tour your facility.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Explain your role as the coordinator and that you are the contact person for the program. If they have any questions or concerns, they should speak with you.
2. Write your hours and contact information on the board, or hand out your business cards.
3. If you have any other staff or contact people, explain how they fit in with your program and include any information tutors need.
4. If possible and practical, take tutors on a tour of your office space. If you have an office in a larger building, then show them as much as you can of the building. This will help tutors to get a sense of where they are allowed to go while in the program space. In your tour, include washrooms, meeting places, your resource library and parking, as applicable.

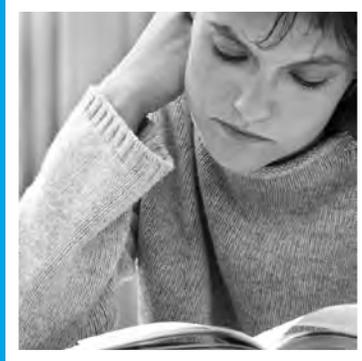
if tour is possible

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Volunteer tutors are the key people who make the program work because they share their knowledge and skill with others while donating their time.

Rocky View Adult Literacy, *Policy Handbook*



Adults as Learners

UNIT
2

Unit 2: Adults as Learners

SECTION 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT LEARNERS			
A. Different backgrounds and experiences	Core	Option 1. Reflection and group discussion Option 2. Reflection and sticky notes posted around a picture	10 min 20 min
B. Characteristics of adult learners	Core	Option 1. Discussion, reflection, use of overhead Option 2. Reflection, use of sticky notes and overhead, discussion	20 min 20 min
C. Some learner stories	Core	Video, discussion	depends on video
SECTION 2. HELPING LEARNING HAPPEN			
A. What makes a positive learning experience	Core	Reflection, discussion in pairs and large group, use of handout	30 min
B. What makes a good tutor	Optional	Reflection, creative expression, discussion, use of handout	30 min
C. Guidelines for promoting positive learning experiences	Core	Reflection, discussion, use of handouts	10 min
D. Barriers to learning	Core	Reflection, discussion	20 min
E. Good communication skills	Optional	Guest speaker	depends
SECTION 3. ACTIVE LEARNERS			
A. The value of active learning	Core	Use of overhead, reflection, discussion	10 min
B. What is an active learner?	Core	Use of handout, reflection	25 min
C. Expanding on learning experience	Core	Reflection, use of sticky notes, discussion	15 min

UNIT 2

Adults as Learners

 **Approx. 2½ hours**
using core activities

Concepts

- **Adult learning principles**
- **Ways to foster positive learning experiences**

We are all learners. We have a wide variety of experiences and interests and we bring our own particular characteristics to our lifelong learning. The learners who come to our programs are not much different. They need to improve their reading, writing, English or math skills, while we may need to learn other things. When we identify ourselves as learners, we become better prepared to work with other adult learners.

Learning is a two-way street and we can learn from those we teach. This unit will help tutors to understand adult characteristics, determine what helps learning to happen and become active learners as they experience being a learner.

The importance of creating an atmosphere in which there is freedom to “make mistakes” cannot be overestimated.

Tutor Tools

Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE / USEFULNESS
Section 1: Characteristics of Adult Learners		
Adult Learning, Adult Teaching	John and Carolyn Daines and Brian Graham	Chapter 1 is a good summary of adults as learners.
Principles of Adult Learning	Verizon Literacy Network	This is a free online training course for volunteers.
Literacy and Basic Skills Practitioner Training	Literacy and Basic Skills Program of Ontario	See the module on adult learning that is part of this free online training course.
Section 2: Helping Learning Happen		
Journeyworkers	Mary Norton	“Helping Learning Happen” on pages 29-33 has a good discussion of how to foster learning.
Making It Meaningful: A Whole Language Guide for Literacy Tutors	Marilyn Caplan	“Getting to Know Your Student” on pages 3-4 has a brief discussion on getting to know a learner. “Students as Learners” on pages 5-8 has a few ideas on how to work with a learner.
The Volunteer Tutor’s Toolbox	Beth Herrmann	“Know your Learners” on pages 3-6 has a few ideas on how to get to know learners. “Know How to Interact with Learners” on pages 10-14 lists the factors tutors should consider when working with a learner.
Who Wants to Learn? Patterns of Participation in Canadian Literacy and Upgrading Programs	ABC Canada Literacy Foundation	This national research lists the reasons people want to learn.
Why Aren’t They Calling? Non-participation in Literacy and Upgrading Programs	ABC Canada Literacy Foundation	This national research explains why people do not register in programs.
Handbook for Literacy Tutors	Chris Harwood	“Learners and Tutors” on pages 2-2 through 2-4 focuses on literacy learners and barriers to learning.
Tutor Tools	Literacy Alberta	Pages 6-10 list ways to create a positive learning experience.
Pathways Sourcebook	Ann Goldblatt and Jan McBean	This identifies factors affecting participation and provides insights into barriers to participation.
Section 3: Active Learners		
The Volunteer Tutor’s Toolbox	Beth Herrmann	“Helping Literacy Learners Develop Positive Attitudes” on pages 20-23 offers some good ideas for developing positive learning attitudes.
Teaching Reading to Adults: A Balanced Approach	Pat Campbell	Chapter 6 provides an in-depth exploration of participatory approaches to learning.

Section 1

Characteristics of Adult Learners

It is important for tutors to see themselves as learners in order to understand those they work with. The activities in this section will help tutors

- describe some of the characteristics they bring to a learning situation
- compare their learning characteristics with those of the learners who come to literacy programs

Activity A

Different backgrounds and experiences

Option 1 Reflection and group discussion

Why choose this option?

Choose this activity if you are comfortable facilitating a discussion.

This activity works well for training more than one tutor.

The activity uses a personal approach.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Share two or three things with your tutors that describe who you are. For example, you are a literacy worker and are involved in an interest, hobby or sport.
2. Ask tutors to share two or three things about their background and experiences.
3. Summarize with the group the varied backgrounds and experiences they have.
4. Share with tutors that over the next while, they will be learning how to tutor and therefore they will be learners.

Option 2 Reflection and sticky notes posted around a picture

Why choose this option?

This activity will work well with an individual tutor as well as a large group.

The activity uses a less personal approach.

Materials and equipment

Sticky notes

Markers

Picture of an adult, on a handout or as a large poster

Preparation

Draw or find a picture of an adult. For a large picture, you could have someone lie down on a large piece of paper and draw around his body.

Variation

To draw on the “whole person,” you could ask tutors to create a name card (paper or card stock folded horizontally) with symbols or pictures of one or two of their passions.

Facilitation tip

Understanding the people with whom we are working is critical. It is important to recognize that we are observers and we make assumptions about others based on our experience. We have the chance to check out those assumptions by inviting others to tell us about their lives through stories, using a variety of ways of tapping into “whole person” expression.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out the prepared picture of an adult, or post it on the wall.
2. Ask tutors to imagine what type of life experiences this adult might have had. Have tutors write a few of their ideas on sticky notes and post the sticky notes around the picture.
3. Have tutors read over the sticky notes. Note that, as adults, we have backgrounds and experiences that are both shared with and different from those of the learners with whom we are working.
4. Share with tutors that over the next while, they will be learning how to tutor and therefore they will be learners.

Activity B

Characteristics of adult learners

In the facilitator’s guide of the *Nova Scotia Tutor and Instructor Training and Certification Program* manual, Catherine Baker challenges us to rethink the way we characterize adults with literacy problems. Her article is reproduced in full below, with permission from the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

Plain Talk – On Stereotypes

A member of a local literacy council recently published a letter-to-the-editor in the newspaper in which she described her student Joe.

According to her letter, Joe suffers the cliché disasters: he gets a ticket because he can’t read the no-parking sign; he can’t read his own lease; it is implied he might give his child the wrong dose of medicine.

Joe used the illiterate’s cliché strategies; he claims he lost his glasses; he pretends to read the paper; he lets others make decisions. Joe pulls off the cliché tricks. He’s a cook and can’t read the menu; he got married and couldn’t read his own wedding invitation; he graduated from high school and can’t read “despite the efforts of the school system.”

And Joe is ashamed. Before he began his confidence-building reading program, his tutor writes, “He was slouching by the library front door; he moved his eyes from side to side, hoping to spot me in the crowded library without drawing attention to himself by acting confused.”

Think about this description of poor Joe and how it might fit your literate self. Have you ever been uncomfortable in a strange environment? Ever gotten a parking ticket? Ever tried to do a job without reading the manual – and done it? Ever conned anybody?

I see contradictions in the way that, when we talk about illiteracy, we refer to people who happen to not read so well. To the media, to volunteers and even prospective students, we tend to typecast the marginally literate or nonliterate person as, by turns, a pathetic incompetent and an adept copper.

We focus with voyeuristic fascination on their shame, and by doing so we imply that there is something shameful about the condition of illiteracy. Then we want – expect! – such people to admit their identities and come forward for help.

Here's another example of what I mean. At the press conference introducing the Rep. Thomas Sawyer's new literacy bill, the head of a reading program described illiterate persons. She said that many have poor health; cannot buy generic products at the grocery store; have transportation, family and child care problems; move frequently; and – I have quote directly here – “their phones get disconnected.”

Have you ever had a utility cut off? How many places have you ever had problems with your child care? How's your health?

At that same event, Harold W. McGraw, Jr., president of the Business Council for Effective Literacy, said, in a now standard characterization, “Often illiteracy is the root cause” of such problems as homelessness and crime.

We have to stop talking about illiterate people as if they were different from us.

Indeed, people with poor educations are over proportionately represented in housing shelters and prisons; so are member of minority groups. Would you say that your ability to read is a “root cause” of your behaviour and your property wealth? More or less so than your skin colour?

Mr. McGraw was followed by Rep. David Price, who stated that illiterates are “a brake on our economic development” and “incapable.” He said “Their nonproductiveness ripples through our whole economy.”

That statement begs a lot of questions. Have you ever been unemployed? Underemployed? Has your daddy ever gotten you a job? Have you ever been promoted because you had a credential? Have you ever had training or education paid for by your employer? What factors affect your productivity?

We have to stop talking about illiterate people as if they are different from us. Many people who have difficulty reading have other difficulties that are attributable to their reading ability – and their reading ability is a function that can be improved given funds and opportunity. That's all – except they also may or may not have difficulties attributable to the changing job market, racism, sexism, the cost of housing, child rearing, credentials, connections and genetics. They deal with their difficulties using the same strategies that we use to deal with our particular difficulties. They are, as a lot, neither more ingenious nor stupid than we are. They deserve empathy, not sympathy or spite.

Sometimes it seems we paint a picture of heroic pathos around illiteracy because it's a more dramatic way to solicit volunteers and funding. I think also that such a flexible stereotype as timid/lazy/clever/bumbling/victimized lets us conveniently pigeonhole the illiterate person as it suits our need.

But I think we would do better if we left off the stereotypes. People like helping their own. When an illiterate person comes to be seen as “one of us,” our personal and our public response is likely to be more logical and longer-term.

Tutoring tip

Learners will quickly sense if we see ourselves as better than they are because we have more education. Their life experience, and maybe our own, often involves getting through trying circumstances despite the odds. Genuine respect is something you feel and express from inside.

Option 1 Discussion, reflection, use of overhead

Why choose this option?

Tutors have an opportunity to look at their own characteristics.

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Overhead 2.1: *Adult Learners*

Overhead projector and screen

Preparation

Read the background information in the introduction to this activity, Plain Talk – On Stereotypes, and/or some of the resources listed at the beginning of this unit (in the Useful Resources table), as needed, to become familiar with concepts to be covered.

Prepare overhead.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors write down a few of the characteristics they bring to this learning experience.
2. Have tutors share their thoughts with the rest of the group. List them on the flip chart.
3. Put up the overhead and note the similarities and differences of the two lists. Usually what we bring to a learning situation is the same as what our learners will bring.
4. Discuss the fact that the characteristics of adult learners differ from those of children and that, as a result, the way adults learn is different from the way children learn. Bring out the concept that we are all learners and that we all come to learning situations with similar characteristics, even though we have different experiences and backgrounds.

Option 2 Reflection, use of sticky notes and overhead, discussion

Why choose this option?

Some tutors may feel uncomfortable sharing their own characteristics. This activity allows tutors to share their ideas in a less threatening situation.

Materials and equipment

Markers

Sticky notes

Overhead 2.1: *Adult Learners*

Overhead projector and screen

Preparation

Read the background information in the introduction to this activity, Plain Talk – On Stereotypes, and/or some of the resources listed at the beginning of this unit (in the Useful Resources table), as needed, to become familiar with concepts to be covered.

Prepare overhead.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors write down on sticky notes a few of the characteristics they bring to this learning experience.
2. Post the notes around the picture of the adult.
3. Put up the overhead and note the similarities and/or differences of the two lists. Usually what we bring to a learning situation is the same as what our learners will bring.
4. Discuss the fact that the characteristics of adult learners differ from those of children and that, as a result, the way adults learn is different from the way children learn. Bring out the concept that we are all learners and that we all come to learning situations with similar characteristics even though we have different experiences and backgrounds.

Activity C

Some learner stories

Video, discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Choose from one of the following videos or choose a similar video that focuses on a learner's story. Complete information on the videos is available in this unit's bibliography.

- *Creating Learning Partners – Some Learner Stories*
- *Learning for Life* (20 minutes)
- *Literacy: The Hidden Problem* (15 minutes)
- *BLAST Student Speakers' Bureau*

TV and VCR

Preparation

Cue the tape to the story you want, if necessary.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Show a video that focuses on learner stories.
2. Create a chart that
 - lists the experiences of tutors as noted in Activity A. Add to the list the experiences of the learners in the video.
 - lists the characteristics noted from Activity B and add any other characteristics from the video
3. Add any points to your list you may have missed, especially those that reflect the learners in your program.
4. Compare the similar learning characteristics of learners and tutors and contrast it with the different backgrounds and experiences of each.
5. The important concept to bring out is that although we all have different experiences, we are all learners and deserve respect.

Facilitation tip

When you provide tutors with a sample story, you can invite them to reflect on whether they can relate to the story and whether it reminds them of other similar stories from their experience. This allows people to apply the learning to experiences that are familiar to them.

Section 2

Helping Learning Happen

In this section, tutors will explore their positive learning experiences and identify what factors created them. They will discover how to promote positive learning and identify some barriers to learning that they may need to help their learners overcome.

Activity A

What makes a positive learning experience

Facilitation tip

When you are asking people to recall and consider an experience, sometimes people value a few minutes for individual reflection. You could invite tutors to take a few minutes to do some free writing to think about the questions you have posed.

If you are working with a group of eight or more tutors, you could ask each pair to join up with another pair to form groups of four. This will give tutors a second round of comparing the three most critical elements of a good learning experience. The foursome should then come up with a short list of their shared critical elements and bring those back to the full group. This is a good technique for consolidating information.

Reflection, discussion in pairs and large group, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Small index cards

Flip chart and markers

Handout 2.1: *Working with Adult Learners* (2 pages)

Preparation

Copy handout.

Write the following questions on the flip chart or handout:

- What were you trying to learn?
- What skills or knowledge did you use to learn?
- Did you have to practise?
- Did someone help you?
- Was it a positive or negative learning experience?
- If it was positive, what do you think made it work well?
- If it was negative, what could have turned it into a positive learning experience?
- How did you feel about the learning experience?

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to think of a time when they learned something new.
2. Divide tutors into pairs and have them share their learning experiences with each other. Have them use the posted questions you wrote on the flip chart to guide their discussion. Give tutors 10 minutes.
3. Give each tutor a card. Based on their discussion, ask each tutor to list on the card three things that make a good learning experience, or ask each pair to list the three most critical elements needed for a good learning experience based on their combined experiences.
4. Ask tutors to share their ideas with the rest of the group. Collect the ideas on the flip chart.
5. Ask your tutors to identify the factors that are important to them from the handout *Working with Adult Learners*. This will help to broaden their concept of what is important to all of us in a learning experience.
6. If you haven't already discussed it, introduce the concept of tutors building their own handbooks from the training they attend. Explain that they will be building their own training manual to use when they tutor. They can make notes and keep the handouts in the duotang or binder you have provided.

Activity B

optional
activity

What makes a good tutor

Why choose this activity?

We all have different ways of learning. Some people prefer to explore concepts through a medium other than discussion. In this activity, you give tutors the chance to use an art form rather than discussion to learn what makes a good tutor.

Reflection, creative expression, discussion, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Variety of markers
Magazines
Large coloured paper
Glue
Scissors
Craft items, such as pipe cleaners, stickers, feathers, glitter glue
Pens, pencils and paper to write on
Handout 2.4: *Qualities Developed by Good Tutors* (2 pages)

Preparation

Make copies of the handout.
Gather craft items and other supplies.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors reflect on what makes a good tutor. Refer to *Qualities Developed by Good Tutors* for ideas.
2. Using a variety of methods, depending on their individual preferences, tutors create drawings, artwork or pieces of writing that express their ideas of what makes a good tutor. (You should do this activity as well.)
3. Those who wish to do so can share their creations. Be sure to share yours.
4. Encourage tutors to include some form of artistic expression in their own tutoring sessions.

Facilitation tip

Some people may be shy about using creative forms of expression. You could start by asking people to take five minutes to use the materials to express something more general, such as an ideal place to relax or an ideal way to relax, and share that image with a partner.

If you move right into the focus on qualities of good tutors, you can ask people to initially share their creation with one other person. From the creations, people can name the qualities and list them on a flip chart with a simple drawing of a tutor in the middle. A variation would be to put a simple drawing of a tutor on a flat surface and ask each pair to use the materials to depict qualities of a good tutor that they can add to the drawing.

A shared joke may reduce the tension in an otherwise stressful situation.

Patricia Frey in *LITSTART*

Activity C

Guidelines for promoting positive learning experiences

Reflection, discussion, use of handouts

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 2.2: *General Instructions to Tutors* (2 pages)

Handout 2.3: *Helping Learning Happen*

Handout 2.4: *Qualities Developed by Good Tutors* (2 pages)

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Discuss with your tutors some of the guidelines from the *General Instructions to Tutors* handout. Explain that these guidelines help to promote positive learning experiences.
2. Discuss with tutors the handout *Helping Learning Happen*.
3. Have your tutors brainstorm some qualities they think would be important for tutors to have based on the previous handouts. List these qualities on the flip chart. Give them the handout *Qualities Developed by Good Tutors* and compare that list to theirs.

Activity D

Barriers to learning

Research published by ABC Canada Literacy Foundation in 2001 and 2002 showed that adult literacy and ESL learners face a number of barriers that make it difficult for them to get help:

- trouble finding the time to learn
- lack of money
- lack of child care
- the location of the program
- lack of transportation
- having a family that is not supportive
- low self-esteem
- lack of knowledge about programs
- physical disability
- sense of failure and inability to envision success
- bad learning and school experiences
- lack of English language

The research showed the main reasons adults have difficulty returning to learning:

- money problems
- conflict with job
- program too far away
- program too difficult
- difficulties with child care
- other family/social reasons
- program not relevant to daily life

Reflection, discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Review the research information from ABC Canada in the introduction to this activity.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to think of some of the barriers that may keep them from participating in a learning opportunity. Write the barriers on the flip chart.
2. Ask them to think about what encourages them or their friends to go to something new. For example, tutors might say that they only go if they know someone else who is going, or they would go if they have been to the place before. Note their responses on the flip chart.
3. Ask tutors to brainstorm questions a learner might ask herself when deciding to enter a program for the first time. Note their responses on the flip chart.
4. Brainstorm some barriers literacy and English as a Second Language learners may experience when they come into a program. Note tutors' responses on the flip chart. Refer to the ABC Canada research quoted in the introduction to this activity and add to the list any new barriers identified by tutors. How do these barriers differ from the questions a learner might ask?
5. Ask tutors what might keep a learner coming back.
6. Using your own experience, highlight the barriers that exist in your community. Note these on the flip chart with the other barriers.
7. Have tutors review the notes you made. How can they use the strengths listed in step 2 to overcome the barriers noted? Are there other ways to overcome barriers and help a learner to continue to participate in the program?

Facilitation tip

When a tutor can identify with a learner's experience, there is a stronger chance the tutor will be able to relate to and help reduce some of the barriers the learner may be facing.

You can turn the question of barriers around and ask tutors to think about the conditions that encourage them and people they know well to go to something new.

You could ask tutors to talk to one other person before the next training session to ask what helps and what gets in the way of that person going to a new program or activity.

Activity E

Good communication skills

One of the skills needed as a tutor is good listening skills. You may want to arrange for someone in the community to deliver a short workshop on developing good listening skills.

Why choose this activity?

You can use this activity if you have the time and have access to someone in the community.

Guest speaker

Preparation

Find a person in your community who has experience delivering workshops on good communication skills. Describe your program and the role of tutors in the learning process to help your speaker get an idea of the workshop audience.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

As per the guest speaker

Adults come to tutoring sessions voluntarily, which means they are already motivated.

Patricia Frey in *LITSTART*

Section 3

Active Learners

Adults are more engaged and retain more when they are involved in their own learning. Through the following activities, tutors will understand how they learn and how to help learning be an active process. They will examine their own learning from the workshop and suggest other concepts they would like to learn about.

Activity A

The value of active learning

Active Learning Concepts

In *Making Meaning, Making Change*, Elsa Roberts Auerbach writes, “People learn best when learning starts with what they already know, builds on their strengths, engages them in the learning process and enables them to accomplish something they want to accomplish.”

When a tutor creates the conditions Auerbach names, the learner is no longer passive. He or she has become an active learner.

Why do we want to see adult learners in an active role?

- Because they *are* adults. They have a lot to offer in the tutor-learner partnership.
- Taking an active role in our learning is a valuable life skill. Adult learners sometimes do not know how to do this. You can help them grasp and use this skill.
- The sessions will be more relevant to learners’ needs and interests.
- The learning will be deeper and they will remember it longer.
- Learners will ask questions and check to see if the new material makes sense.
- Learners will be able to help evaluate the materials and the methods used to teach it.
- The sessions will be more dynamic and probably more fun.

Tutoring tip

Ask the learner “What’s new?” This will bring up relevant subjects to include in lessons.

Facilitation tip

Learning has a context. When we understand our context and the learners' context, learning is at its best. Culture influences learning styles – active and passive. Ask tutors to reflect on what has influenced the kinds of learners they have become.

How has the culture of the tutors' parents influenced their comfort with active learning? What do they anticipate from adult learners? How can they learn more about the learners' context from the learners?

Use of overhead, reflection, discussion

Materials and equipment

Overhead 2.2: *Involving Learners*

Overhead projector and screen

Preparation

Read over the background information.

Prepare overhead.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Put up the overhead *Involving Learners*. Ask for volunteers to read each row aloud.
2. Ask tutors to reflect on whether they are active or passive learners.
3. Ask tutors to name the positive outcomes of being an active learner. (Refer to Active Learning Concepts in the introduction to this activity, for ideas you feel need to be brought out.)
4. Point out the parts of the tutor training so far that have encouraged active learning. For example, tutors got involved in discussing their backgrounds and learning experiences.

Activity B

What is an active learner?

Use of handout, reflection

Materials and equipment

Handout 2.5: *Active Notes*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give tutors the handout *Active Notes*. Mention that the questions and categories are from the *Involving Learners* overhead used in the previous activity.
2. Ask them to fill in the *Active Notes* form, based on their learning in this session.
3. When they have finished filling in the chart, ask tutors to look over their notes and reflect back to the discussion on creating positive learning experiences. What positive factors were part of the learning situations they listed in their *Active Notes*? How did these factors impact their learning?
4. Were some positive factors missing? What impact did that have on their learning?
5. Are there other factors they would list to create a positive learning experience?

Activity C

Expanding on learning experience

Reflection, use of sticky notes, discussion

Materials and equipment

Sticky notes

Flip chart

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to share one or two things they learned in the workshop that they could see themselves using in a tutoring session.
2. Ask tutors to share one concept they want to learn more about. (It does not have to relate to this session.) Give them sticky notes and ask them to write out the concept and place the sticky on the flip chart. Explain that this information is important for planning your tutor training.
3. Go over each sticky and let tutors know when you will be covering that concept in the tutor training sessions. If there is some concept you do not plan to cover, offer them some resources that will give them the information.
4. Mention that if there was anything in this session they did not understand, you would be happy to talk to them further.

Literacy coordinators and tutors are more likely to be effective if they recognize the strengths and abilities of the learners, approach them as equal partners in the learning process and remember that they are adults with outside responsibilities.

Mary Elliott, et al. in *Empowering the Spirit II*

Variation

Place a drawing of a person at the front of the room and ask people to place a sticky note beside the head, the heart, and the hand or foot to represent something they learned, something they felt and some action they want to take because of what they learned from this unit.

You could also create a line along the middle of a wide piece of newsprint (or several flip chart papers taped together, widthwise), with each of the activities noted at points in sequence along the line. Tutors each use a marker to draw a line to indicate the flow of their sense of engagement during the day (high to low, above and below the neutral line) and where they felt their learning was greatest by adding a light bulb above those activities. This could open dialogue on the effectiveness of the experience and invite suggestions for strengthening the unit for future learners.

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Learning Styles

UNIT
3

Unit 3: Learning Styles

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION TO LEARNING STYLES			
A. Pig Psychological Test	Core	Icebreaker	10 min
B. Preferred learning environment	Core	Reflection, discussion	10 min
C. Different ways of learning	Core	Discussion	5 min
SECTION 2. AUDITORY/VISUAL/KINESTHETIC			
A. We use different ways to learn new things	Core	Option 1. Discussion, introduction to each style using a word-based activity Option 2. Discussion, introduction to each style using a craft-based activity	20 min 30 min
B. Determining your learning style	Core	Discussion, completing an assessment	20 min
C. Characteristics and tutoring strategies for each style	Core	Use of handouts, discussion, reflection	20 min
SECTION 3. RIGHT/LEFT BRAIN DOMINANCE			
A. The two sides of the brain	Core	Lecture	10 min
B. Determining which side is dominant	Core	Activity with movement or handout	20 min
C. Characteristics and tutoring strategies	Core	Use of handout, reflection, discussion	10 min
OPTIONAL – SECTION 4. CULTURE AND LEARNING			
A. The meaning of culture	Core	Reflection, discussion	15 min
B. Cultural attitudes that may impact learning	Core	Reflection, use of handout, discussion	15 min
C. Cultural differences	Core	Option 1. Use of video and handouts, discussion Option 2. Use of handouts, discussion	30 min 20 min
OPTIONAL – SECTION 5. ABORIGINAL CULTURE			
A. Aboriginal culture	Core	Reflection, use of handouts, discussion	10 min
OPTIONAL – SECTION 6. ABORIGINAL EDUCATION AND LEARNING			
A. Learning	Core	Discussion	10 min
B. School system	Core	Group work, discussion	20 min
C. Effective learning	Core	Reflection, use of handout, discussion	15 min
OPTIONAL – SECTION 7. ABORIGINAL LEARNING STYLES			
A. Medicine Wheel	Core	Reflection, group activity, discussion	20 min
B. Learning styles	Core	Use of handout, reflection, discussion	10 min

UNIT 3

Learning Styles

We all have a preferred way of learning. We need to understand there is not one *right* way to learn; there are many ways to approach learning. When we understand our own learning style and the preferred style of our learners, we are more effective in our tutoring. However, it is important to use a variety of learning styles in lesson planning to help learners gain skills in thinking and problem solving.

A lot of research has been done on learning styles in the last decade or so. As a result, there are a variety of ways of categorizing and naming learning styles and the subject can seem quite complex. This manual will use the two most common learning style theories: Auditory/Visual/Kinesthetic and Right/Left Brain Dominance.

If you have tutors interested in this topic, you could arrange for them to read some of the resources listed for further study.

Culture can also affect the way in which a learner processes and uses the information. Understanding cultural differences and Aboriginal ways of learning will therefore help your tutors be more effective.

Learning styles are the ways in which individual people attach new information to what is already known.

Red Deer Adult Literacy Program Tutor Handbook

 **Approx. 4¾ hours**
using core activities

General overview, Sections 1-3:
2¼ hours

Cultural focus, Section 4:
1 hour

Aboriginal focus, Sections 5-7:
1½ hours

Concepts

- **Introduction to several learning styles**
- **Characteristics and strategies for each style**
- **Relationship of culture to learning**
- **Emphasis on Aboriginal culture, education and learning styles**

Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE / USEFULNESS
Section 1: Introduction to Learning Styles		
Saskatchewan Level 2 Learning How to Learn	Saskatchewan Literacy Network	This manual provides a good overview of a number of different learning style theories. Look especially in Session One, <i>The Mind</i> .
Learning Styles and Strategies	Lori Herod	This online resource looks in depth at a few learning style theories.
LITSTART: Strategies for Adult Literacy and ESL Tutors	Patricia Frey	This book takes a basic, simple look at a few styles and indicates particular strategies to use with each style.
Section 2: Auditory/Visual/Kinesthetic		
LITSTART: Strategies for Adult Literacy and ESL Tutors	Patricia Frey	Page 19 suggests a few strategies to use with each of the styles.
Red Deer Adult Literacy Program Tutor Handbook	Red Deer Adult Literacy Program	Pages 54-57 list a number of characteristics for each learning style.
Abiator's Online Learning Styles Inventory	A. J. Berghuis	These are quick online inventories for three learning styles as well as characteristics of each. They may be useful for a learner.
Tutor Tools	Literacy Alberta	A good overview of learning styles.
Section 3: Right/Left Brain Dominance		
Saskatchewan Level 2 Learning How to Learn	Saskatchewan Literacy Network	Pages 6-10 explain brain-based learning.
LITSTART: Strategies for Adult Literacy and ESL Tutors	Patricia Frey	Page 19 suggests a few strategies to use with each of the styles.
Abiator's Online Learning Styles Inventory	A. J. Berghuis	This is a quick online inventory of the thinking styles as well as characteristics of each. They may be useful for a learner.
Section 4: Culture and Learning		
Learning Styles and Strategies	Lori Herod	This online resource explores culture and learning in Module 4.
Section 6: Aboriginal Education and Learning		
Saskatchewan Level 2 Learning How to Learn	Saskatchewan Literacy Network	This manual has lots of information on learning and culture.
Empowering the Spirit II	Mary Elliott, Deana Halonen, Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, Suzanne Methot, Priscilla George	This Aboriginal literacy curriculum has lots of ideas for using appropriate materials and methods.
Adult Literacy Tutor Training Manual	Regina Public Library	Chapter 9 has very good information on Aboriginal culture and learning. Some good activities to use with Aboriginal learners are listed.
Literacy Coordinator's Guide for PAL Tutor Training	Marilyn Arms	The guide contains good background information on Aboriginal culture and learning (see Appendix E).
Violence and Learning: Taking Action	Mary Norton, editor	This book explores ways to break the silence about violence and ways to create environments to support learning for all. It shares what was learned from the VALTA project and invites further exploration.
Section 7: Aboriginal Learning Styles		
Literacy Coordinator's Guide for PAL Tutor Training	Marilyn Arms	The guide contains good background information on Aboriginal culture and learning (see Appendix E).
Adult Literacy Tutor Training Manual	Regina Public Library	See the discussion in Chapter 9 on the circle of learning.

Section 1

Introduction to Learning Styles

This section will help tutors explore their preferred learning environment. This helps to lay the foundation for the concept that we all prefer to learn in different ways.

Activity A

Pig Psychological Test

Use this activity as an icebreaker. It's also a nice lead-in to the workshop.

Icebreaker

Materials and equipment

Pig Psychological Test explanation below

Blank paper and markers

Preparation

Read over the test explanation so that you're prepared to read it to tutors.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to take a blank piece of paper and draw a picture of a pig.
2. When tutors have drawn their pigs, explain that pigs serve as a test of their personality traits.
3. Read through the list explaining the meaning of their drawn pigs. At the end, tell tutors this is all in fun.

Pig Psychological Test explanation *(Source unknown)*

If you drew the pig

Towards the **top** of the paper, you are positive and optimistic.

Towards the **middle**, you are a realist.

Towards the **bottom**, you are a pessimist and have a tendency to behave negatively.

Facing left, you believe in tradition, are friendly and remember dates (e.g., birthdays).

Facing right, you are innovative and active, but don't have a strong sense of family, nor do you remember dates.

Facing front (looking at you), you are direct; you enjoy playing devil's advocate and you neither fear nor avoid discussions.

With many details, you are analytical, cautious and distrustful.

With few details, you are emotional and naive, you care little for details and are a risk-taker.

With four legs showing, you are secure, stubborn and stick to your ideals.

With fewer than four legs showing, you are insecure or are living through a period of major change.

The **size of the ears** indicates how good a listener you are – the bigger, the better.

The **length of the tail** indicates the quality of your love life. (And again, more is better!)

Okay, who didn't draw a tail?

Activity B

Preferred learning environment

We all like different environments when we are learning. Some people may want to be very comfortable and prefer soft easy chairs. Other will prefer their learning to take place at a table. The degree of light, noise, food and other stimulants all play a part in creating an optimum learning environment.

Variation

Tutors may be reluctant to say things about this particular workshop that the coordinator could perceive as criticism.

A variation would be to ask tutors to think about a workshop they have attended at some time and imagine what would have made it ideal, using the questions cited in this activity or others that come to mind.

Reflection, discussion

Preparation

Decide if you want to use the questions below or make up your own.

Think a bit about your own preferences.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to close their eyes and think how they would love this workshop to be. You can use these questions to guide their thinking or make up your own:
 - Would it be in a different place?
 - What type of furniture would be there?
 - Would there be lots of discussion? A video? Art project? Lots of food?
2. After a minute, have tutors write down or draw what they would like.
3. Share with tutors your own optimum learning environment – include the following factors:
 - environmental (how much light you need, what room temperature you prefer, what type of furniture you would like)
 - physical (whether you want food or not, if you need water, whether you need to move or not)
 - perceptual (whether you would like to see a video, have discussions, create something)
4. Ask tutors to share their ideal learning environments. Bring out the concept that we all have different ideas of what is an ideal learning environment. You could ask tutors to note their thoughts on the evaluation at the end of the workshop.

Activity C

We learn in different ways

Discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors why it is important to understand the concept that we all have different ways of learning. Note their ideas on the flip chart. Bring out the following points:
 - No one way is the *right* way.
 - We all have a *preferred* learning style.
 - It's important we understand our own learning styles.
 - It's important we understand our learners' preferred learning styles.
 - It's important we know about the variety of learning styles so we can plan effective lessons.
2. Explain that the rest of the workshop will focus on two basic learning style theories and the role culture has on learning.

During learning, adults' brains are constantly trying to retrieve information or skills that they may have learned in grade school or high school to expand on information they are trying to learn now.

Saskatchewan Level 2 Learning How to Learn

Section 2

Auditory/Visual/Kinesthetic

One of the most popular learning styles is based on the auditory/visual/kinesthetic theory of learning. This theory focuses on how we process information through our ears, eyes and body. This does not reflect how well someone hears or sees, but rather how they take in information and make sense of it to learn new things. Often this style refers to modalities of learning.

Activity A

We use different ways to learn new things

There are two different processes to this activity. Review them and decide which one you would be most comfortable facilitating. You may know how to make a simple craft that you could teach the group for the second process.

If you aren't familiar with this learning style, then review Handout 3.4 *Learning Styles Characteristics and Tutoring Tips*. You may want to take the assessment yourself to determine your preferred learning style.

Option 1 Discussion, introduction to each style using a word-based activity

Why choose this option?

This process takes less time. You don't have to make a craft.

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Paper of different colours

Ziploc bags

Preparation

Write the following sentences onto strips of paper. Use a different coloured piece of paper for each sentence:

- Some people learn best by doing an activity.
- They have a short attention span and need to move around a lot.
- They may be good at sports or dance.
- They enjoy using their hands to learn and prefer 'hands on' activities like field trips.
- They are kinesthetic learners.

They

are

kinesthetic

learners.

Cut up each word in a sentence like a puzzle.

Place the cut up sentences into the Ziploc bag.

If you have a large group that you want to divide into smaller groups, put each sentence into a separate Ziploc bag and give one bag to each group.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Auditory learning preferences

- Ask tutors to close their eyes as you read the following:
“Some people learn best when they hear the information and discuss it. They love to talk but they find noise distracting. They prefer to read out loud and when asked to read to themselves they may mouth or whisper the words. They don’t like lengthy descriptions but they do enjoy phonics. They are auditory learners.”
- Ask tutors to tell each other what they heard.

2. Visual learning preferences

- Write the following on the flip chart or paper and ask tutors to read it:
“Some people learn best when they see information written down. They like to have things neat and organized and will often make lists. They like videos and other visual presentations. They would rather read themselves than be read to. They have good memorization skills. They are visual learners.”
- Ask tutors to tell each other what they read.

3. Kinesthetic learning preferences

If you have a small group

- Give tutors the Ziploc bag with the cut-up sentences.
- Ask tutors to match the coloured words to form sentences.
- Have tutors take turns reading one of the sentences they put together
- Have them share with each other what they learned.

If you have a larger group

- Give each group a Ziploc bag with one cut up sentence
- Have the group match their words to form a sentence
- Have each group read their sentence to the larger group.
- Have tutors share with each other what they learned.

4. Ask tutors which method they preferred to use. Ask them to share what they remember about each style.

5. State that spoken instructions and explanations work best for those who are auditory learners, written ones work best for visual learners and doing the activity works best for kinesthetic learners.

Facilitator note

Some people will have trouble explaining what they heard or read from just listening or reading. They may ask you to repeat different words or explain certain sentences. Others will be able to explain and remember with either listening or reading. Everyone should be able to explain and remember their sentences once they have put them together.

Option 2 Discussion, introduction to each style using a craft-based activity

Why choose this option?

This exercise demonstrates the value of focusing on one simple, common activity to allow tutors the opportunity to clearly see the contrast in learning styles. You may know a simple craft or activity that will work well with this process.

Facilitator note

Some people will have trouble explaining the craft from just hearing or seeing the instructions. They may ask you to repeat different steps or explain the written instructions. Others will be able to complete the craft with either verbal or written instructions. Everyone should be able to complete the craft once you show them how.

Variation

Ask tutors to cluster in one area of the room for each of the three learning styles and list the style's characteristics to share with the other two groups. Each person can then complete the *Barsch Learning Style Reference Form* and determine whether they should have gone to another area to match the assessment. They can discuss why they think their perception differed from the results of their written assessment and whether a completely accurate assessment is possible.

Materials and equipment

All the items you will be using for your craft or activity

Preparation

Gather the materials you need for the craft or activity.

Prepare the instructions in a written format to either post for all to see or for each individual tutor.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Read the instructions or tell your tutors how to make a craft. Do not show them the written instructions yet.
 - Ask them to explain the instructions to a partner or the group.
 - Ask who could start making the craft and let those who feel comfortable with the verbal instructions begin the craft.
2. Give or show tutors the written instructions that describe how to make the craft.
 - Ask tutors to explain to a partner or the group how to make the craft using the written explanations.
 - Let those who feel comfortable with the written instructions begin the craft.
3. Finally, show tutors how to do the craft and walk through each step with them.
 - Once they have finished the craft, ask them to explain how to make it.
4. Ask tutors which method they preferred in learning how to make the craft.
 - State that spoken instructions and explanations work best for those who are auditory learners, written ones work best for visual learners and doing the activity works best for kinesthetic learners.

Activity B

Determining your learning style

Tutors will have the opportunity to determine their learning style by completing the assessment.

Discussion, completing an assessment

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 3.1: *Barsch Learning Style Reference Form* (2 pages)

Handout 3.2: *Learning Channels Inventory*

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Write on the flip chart the three learning styles (auditory, visual, kinesthetic).
2. Ask tutors to name a few characteristics they learned from the previous activity and write them under each style.
3. Hand out the *Barsch Learning Style Reference Form* and have tutors determine their own learning styles.
4. Have them share their learning styles with the group.
5. There is a simpler learning style assessment included on the *Learning Channels Inventory* handout. Tutors can use this format with their learners.

Activity C

Characteristics and tutoring strategies for each style

This activity allows tutors to put their knowledge of learning styles into practice. They will also look at tutoring strategies they can use with their learners. There are handouts of learning strategies for each particular style that can be given to learners.

Use of handouts, discussion, reflection

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 3.3: *Learning Styles Matching Activity*

Handout 3.4: *Learning Styles Characteristics and Tutoring Tips* (3 pages)

Handout 3.5: *Strategies for Learning* (3 pages)

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out the *Learning Styles Matching Activity*. Have tutors complete the activity, then review the answers together.
2. Use the matching activity to brainstorm other general tutoring tips they could use with each of the different styles.
3. Review the handout *Learning Styles Characteristics and Tutoring Tips*.
4. Ask tutors if the listed characteristics for their style match their own characteristics.
5. Ask tutors if they learn best according to the tutoring tips for their style.
6. Have tutors brainstorm ways to work with a learner who has a different learning style from their own. Note their answers on the flip chart.
7. Once tutors have identified the learning style of their own learner, they may want to give their learner the corresponding page from the handout *Strategies for Learning*.

Section 3

Right/Left Brain Dominance

The different sides of the brain control two different modes of thinking. To foster a more whole-brain approach, tutors should know their own mode and how to tutor to each side of the brain.

Activity A

The two sides of the brain

If you are not familiar with this learning style, you should review the handouts. You may also want to read the resources for this section.

Lecture

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 3.6: *Right Brain and Left Brain Learning* (Note: This is for your reference; you will give it to tutors in a later activity.)

Preparation

Read over the handout *Right Brain and Left Brain Learning*. Familiarize yourself with some of the characteristics of each side.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Explain to tutors that the two hemispheres of the brain respond differently depending on which side is more dominant. This does not refer to right- or left-handedness; rather, it's about how we perceive and interact with the world around us.
2. Write on the flip chart Left/Analytical and Right/Global. Each side of the brain has different learning strengths and weaknesses. Depending on whether we are right- or left-brained will determine the way we learn best.
3. Write under each heading a few characteristics.

*It's not how smart you are
but how are you smart.*

Activity B

Determining which side is dominant

You will lead the group in an activity that will help them see which side of the brain is their more dominant side.

Activity with movement or handout

Preparation

Move desks and chairs, if necessary, to make room for participants to line up in the centre of the room and move around.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to stand in a line one behind the other.
2. Read the questions from the list below. First read a question from the one column, then read the corresponding question from the other column.
3. As you read a question from the list, tutors will either step to the right or left. Ask them to move according to the way they would most often react to the question. Ask them to move far away from centre if the tendency is strong. Ask them to remain at centre if both questions apply to them equally. Tell them to wait to hear both questions before they move either to the left or to the right.

Analytical/Global Activity

These questions come from Toni Garlock's book, *Building Blocks: A Family Literacy Program for Your Community*, and are used with permission.

Step to the left

- Do you rely on words to communicate?
- Do you listen to what the word means?
- Do you remember facts and dates?
- Do you like things in logical sequence?
- Do arguments need to be logical to convince you?
- Do you need to plan ahead?
- Do you remember names?
- Do you speak without or with few gestures?
- Do you take time to think things through?

OR

Step to the right

- Do you rely on visual or kinesthetic clues?
- Do you react to the pitch and feeling of the speaker?
- Do you remember images and patterns?
- Can information come at you from all directions?
- Do arguments based on emotion convince you?
- Do you like spontaneous activity?
- Do you remember faces?
- Do you speak with a lot of gestures?
- Are you impulsive?

4. Those who have moved more to the left have analytical tendencies while, those who have moved more to the right have global tendencies. Those who have moved further from the centre line will have stronger tendencies than those who are close to the centre. Those who are on the centre line use both sides of the brain equally well.

Variation

If your space is too small to do this activity by moving around the room, then make a handout with the questions listed below (turn the questions into statements for this variation). Ask tutors to check off which statement best describes them. The side with the most check marks will be their dominant side.

Activity C

Characteristics and tutoring strategies

This activity allows tutors to put into practice their knowledge of right- and left-brain dominance. They will also look at tutoring strategies they can use with their learners.

Use of handout, reflection, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 3.6: *Right Brain and Left Brain Learning*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give tutors the handout *Right Brain and Left Brain Learning* and ask them if the characteristics on the handout match the way they learn.
2. Brainstorm some tutoring tips that will work for each side of the brain. Refer to the handout for ideas. Write their ideas on the flip chart.
3. Point out that it's very important to use the learners' preferred style if they have a suspected learning disability. This ensures that the learner will have more success in the program (see Unit 10, Learning Disabilities). Since some learners are in the program for such a short while, it's much better to focus on tutoring to the learners' strengths.

Becoming aware of other styles and working to strengthen weaker ones can enhance learning by providing a variety of strategies for taking in and processing information.

Lori Herod in *Learning Styles and Strategies*

Section 4

optional
section

Culture and Learning

You may have a number of learners from different cultural backgrounds in your program.

Culture influences many things we do. However, we often don't notice this until we see someone else's culture and observe the differences between our cultures. These differences have an impact on the way we tutor and the way our learners learn.

The following activities are designed to be discussions around culture. The discussions provide an opportunity for tutors to explore and express their own ideas. Respect all answers. However, there are some general cultural attitudes to consider. You should explore these cultural attitudes in relation to the types of learners you have in your program. The attitudes may be difficult to understand in the abstract form. Therefore, it is best to make them real for tutors.

You can do this by watching the video in which learners share their cultural beliefs and attitudes to learning or by using the alternate activity if the video isn't available (see Activity C). Either will make concrete what would otherwise be abstract.

**This section is optional.
Use it if you have ESL
learners in your program.**

Activity A

The meaning of culture

This activity allows tutors to explore the concept of culture through their own cultural backgrounds. You will find this especially useful if you have a number of ESL learners in your program.

To get a better understanding of how culture impacts our lives, look over the following information.

The nine universals of culture

This information is based on Lori Herod's *Learning Styles and Strategies*.

The following components make up a person's culture:

- Arts* – literature, plays, recreation
- Material* – clothing, food, transportation
- Social organization* – families, relationships
- Communication* – written and verbal
- Social control* – justice system, government, laws
- Education* – both formal and informal
- Economic organization* – trade, labour, property, business
- World view* – religion, values, belief system
- Conflict and warfare* – conflict resolutions, defence practices

Cultural awareness

An awareness of culture includes four aspects:

Culture as **Knowing About** – knowing bits and pieces of information that make up a culture.

Example: “What is a *hamburger*?”

Culture as **Knowing How** – knowing the skills necessary for interaction within a culture.

Example: How do I order a meal at a restaurant?

Culture as **Knowing Why** – understanding the basic values, attitudes and assumptions of the culture.

Example: Why are there so many fast-food restaurants?
What does “time is money” mean?

Culture as **Knowing Oneself** – understanding oneself and one’s own culture helps with understanding or adapting to another culture.

Example: How do I feel about fast-food restaurants?
Do I want to keep family sit-down meals as our normal family practice?

Reflection, discussion

Materials and equipment

A variety of pictures
Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Read over the background information in the introduction to this activity. Locate pictures that may reflect culture. Cut out and mount the pictures. Place them randomly around the room. You can use the nine universals as a guide when selecting appropriate pictures.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors find a picture they feel speaks to them about their culture.
2. Ask tutors to share in small groups (or together if your group is small) why they chose that picture.
3. Have tutors share some aspect of their culture.
4. Based on their discussion, ask tutors what they think makes up culture. Post answers on the flip chart.
5. You may want to share the nine universals of culture and cultural awareness information from the introduction.

Activity B

Cultural attitudes that may impact learning

This activity gives tutors the opportunity to explore the different attitudes other cultures have towards learning. By understanding these different attitudes, tutors can more effectively work with learners from a different cultural background.

Reflection, use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 3.7: *Cultural Attitudes*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors why they think it's important to consider culture in learning. Note comments on the flip chart.
2. Give tutors the handout *Cultural Attitudes*. Discuss the different attitudes they may experience when working with their learners. Ask tutors how they would deal with some of the cultural attitudes to make the learning a positive experience for their learner.

Activity C

Cultural differences

It's important that tutors have respect for other cultures. Often, those of us in the dominant culture do not see our own cultural biases. Yet they guide us as we design learning programs, choose materials to use and respond to individuals and families from other cultures. For example, our biases about people from other cultures sometimes leads us to make assumptions about what people do, how they relate to one another, how they raise children, how they conceive of time, how people solve problems, and the roles of men and women.

We cannot be expert in every culture. Furthermore, cultures are always evolving. We can, however, ask questions of the learner so that we understand the person's particular experiences, beliefs and values. We can also be as conscious as possible of the fact that our expectations, judgments and response to others are culturally based. We can become aware that what is "normal" for us is just another culture, not better or worse, just different.

In the video *Creating Learning Partners – Cultural Differences*, a few learners share aspects of their culture that may seem unusual to us. You may want to share a few examples from your own program. Approach this activity with sensitivity and help tutors to respect the differences of other cultures.

Option 1 Use of video and handouts, discussion

Why choose this option?

Use this activity if you have access to the video.

Materials and equipment

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – Cultural Differences*

TV and VCR

Handout 3.8: *Practical Tips*

Handout 3.9: *Considerations for English as a Second Language Learners*

Preparation

Be sure equipment is in good working order.

Cue the video to the right spot.

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Watch the video section on cultural differences.
2. Based on the video and your own experience, discuss how to be sensitive and respectful of other cultures.
3. Discuss the handout *Practical Tips* and discuss it with tutors.
4. Discuss the handout *Considerations for English as a Second Language Learners*.
5. Ask tutors to briefly write down what they would do differently now that they have explored culture more closely.

Option 2 Use of handouts, discussion

Why choose this option?

Use this process if you don't have the video or would like to try a different variation of the concepts covered.

Materials and equipment

Handout 3.8: *Practical Tips*

Handout 3.9: *Considerations for English as a Second Language Learners*

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Talk about a typical day in a public school. Thinking back to the different cultural attitudes, explore the possible cultural assumptions and biases that we expect all children to know.
2. Ask tutors how they can use this awareness in their tutoring relationship with learners from a culture different from their own.
3. Refer to the handout *Practical Tips* and discuss it with tutors.
4. Discuss the handout *Considerations for English as a Second Language Learners*.

NOTE: The following three sections focus on Aboriginal culture. If there are a large number of Aboriginal learners in your area, you may want to work through these sections. Choose those that are best suited to help your tutors. You may choose to do all of them or just one or two.

Section 5

Aboriginal Culture

Some tutors will enter with negative stereotypes about Aboriginal people and, similarly, some Aboriginal learners will enter with negative stereotypes about non-Aboriginal tutors. While participants may not openly acknowledge negative opinions, you can invite tutors to reflect on how negative stereotyping, in both directions, will impact the capacity of the tutor and learner to work in a mutually respectful relationship. They can explore, through discussion, how they can recognize and deal with those attitudes so as to move forward.

When we understand other cultures, we are better able to assist them with their learning. In this section tutors will gain a greater appreciation for Aboriginal culture and values.

Aboriginal culture and learning

This information is adapted with permission from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network's *Saskatchewan Level 2 Learning How to Learn*.

We need to examine Aboriginal culture to identify differences in approaches to learning between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners. Differences between individuals should also be remembered when talking about general cultural differences and planning instruction that is responsive to the learners' needs.

Historically, Aboriginal education meant the ongoing education of the whole person: mind, body and spirit, from birth until death. Elders passed on knowledge in a holistic way.

Aboriginal education traditionally included

- teaching people to become responsible members of society
- teaching survival skills
- teaching a shared history and language
- teaching values and beliefs (cultural survival)
- the idea that knowledge is
 - a gift
 - earned
 - a privilege
 - the responsibility of the learner
 - motivated by environment
- a belief that education is a lifelong process

optional
section

**This section is optional.
Use it if you have Aboriginal learners in your program and would like to have your tutors explore Aboriginal culture.**

The traditional education system was highly developed and effective. A child was thought of as a gift from the Creator to be nurtured and cared for by everyone in the community. Elders were the transmitters of knowledge and wisdom in the lifelong process of learning.

Two major educational techniques included

- storytelling
- observation and practice

Through the telling of stories, children quickly learned appropriate cultural behaviours like silence and independence. They learned such values as humility and respect. They also learned the history of their people and the connection they shared with the land.

Children were also encouraged to watch and then model behaviours of their Elders and parents. By observing, children learned accepted behaviours as well as physical skills that helped them survive, develop crafts, and so on.

Although the European education system and residential schools nearly wiped out this idea of education, the renewed strength of Aboriginal cultures shows that these educational values are still being practised today. In order to create an environment that will help stimulate learning, it is important that practitioners and volunteers understand the perceptions adult Aboriginal learners bring to a learning situation.

Also important to understand are the differences that still exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures. Please see the handouts in this unit for two charts covering differences in the use of language and differences in world view and learning in general.

Activity A

Aboriginal cultures

Removing Aboriginal children from their families and placing them in residential schools during the 1800s and 1900s, where they were not allowed to speak their first language or practise cultural traditions, undermined Aboriginal culture for generations. Many adults living off-reserve or away from Metis settlements today do not know their cultural traditions. Some are reconnecting with their heritage and others are not. Hence, tutors would not want to assume, but rather explore, in what ways each Aboriginal learner relates to his culture.

Reflection, use of handouts, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 3.10: *Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal*

Handout 3.11: *What's Confusing*

Preparation

Copy handouts.

Read through the background information for Section 5.

Facilitation tip

During the training, you can invite tutors to discuss how they would open up the topic of residential schools with learners.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what they know about Aboriginal values.
2. Review and discuss the handouts *Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal* and *What's Confusing*. Raise the following ideas about traditional Aboriginal cultures:
 - Aboriginal cultures view time and space differently.
 - It's important to think before speaking or acting.
 - Spiritual ceremonies, dance, art and symbols play an important role.
 - Knowledge and skills are passed from one generation to the next.
 - Storytelling is used to teach values and explain the world around us.
3. Discuss with tutors some of the values Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures have in common.
4. You might want to explore the following thoughts with your tutors. Is working with someone from an Aboriginal culture any different than working with someone from another culture? Why would we want a workshop on Aboriginal culture and learning?

We are all connected to the entire universe. We are connected to each other as human beings and we are connected to all of the seen and unseen natural world. We have an effect on the world around us and it has an effect on us.

Mary Elliott, et al. in *Empowering the Spirit II*

Use this section if you have Aboriginal learners in your program and you would like your tutors to explore Aboriginal learning and the impact left by residential schools.

Section 6

Aboriginal Education and Learning

Aboriginal people used a method to teach their children that the government did not recognize or respect. As a result, children were sent to residential schools. The repercussions from this program are still being felt today. This can be a very sensitive topic for Aboriginal people and you may want to explore the work done by Mary Norton with the VALTA (Violence and Learning: Taking Action) project on how violence affects learning. You will find more information about VALTA in this unit's table of useful resources and bibliography.

In this section, tutors will increase their knowledge of Aboriginal education and learning.

Activity A

Learning

There are significant differences in the process Aboriginal people use to foster learning. Tutors will have the opportunity to explore these differences and gain respect for Aboriginal learning.

Discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Read through the background information at the beginning of Section 5, if you haven't already done so.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what they know about Aboriginal learning from the previous activities. Note their ideas and comments on the flip chart. Discuss the following concepts:
 - Learning is passed from one generation to the next.
 - Learning is done by watching others.
 - Information is passed along through oral language.
 - Residential schools did not support Aboriginal education.
2. Ask tutors how understanding these concepts can help them in tutoring.

Activity B

School system

The residential school system had a negative impact on Aboriginal learning. Tutors will have an opportunity to explore the legacy of these schools and the ongoing challenges many Aboriginal learners experience in the educational system. Since this can be a hot topic for Aboriginal people, be sure tutors understand the negative impact of residential schools and how they could work with a learner who attended the schools.

You may want to read Chapter 9 in *Adult Literacy Tutor Training Manual*, published in 1996 by the Regina Public Library. It has a very good discussion on the legacy of the residential school system.

Group work, discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Divide into groups to discuss the questions listed below. Have someone in each group record comments from the discussion.
 - What is the legacy of residential schools?
 - Have Aboriginal students been successful in the public school system?
 - What changes need to be made?
 - What should schools teach?
 - Should all students be treated the same?
2. Have the groups share their discussion with the larger group.

Activity C

Effective learning

Some strategies are particularly effective with Aboriginal learners. Tutors should become aware of those strategies and be encouraged to use them with their learners. This will help tutors to be more effective in their tutoring.

To help tutors working with Aboriginal learners, two resources are especially useful. The *Adult Literacy Tutor Training Manual* published by the Regina Public Library has some great activities to use in working with Aboriginal adult literacy learners. *Empowering the Spirit II*, by Mary Elliott et al., will help tutors develop effective lesson plans.

Reflection, use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 3.12: *Appropriate Instructional Approaches and Techniques*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Review the handout.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors brainstorm what types of activities would be useful with Aboriginal learners or review any ideas they had while discussing the previous activities. Note their ideas on the flip chart.
2. Use the handout *Appropriate Instructional Approaches and Techniques* for more ideas. Important strategies include the following:
 - language experience stories
 - drama
 - Reader's Theatre
 - art in its many forms (e.g., sculpting, painting, drawing, weaving)
 - traditional stories
3. Discuss how to incorporate the concepts from the handout into a tutoring session, with an emphasis on using art forms in their tutoring.
4. Ask tutors to discuss which strategies noted above they like to use when learning new concepts.

Our wellness is achieved through the balance of our mind, body, spirit and emotion. Healing is only "holistic" when our needs as a whole being have been considered.

Mary Elliott, et al. in *Empowering the Spirit II*

Section 7

optional
section

Aboriginal Learning Styles

Although Aboriginal people have the same learning styles as their non-Aboriginal counterparts, there are specific styles that are more dominant in Aboriginal culture. One key concept of Aboriginal learning is an attention to the whole. In this section, tutors will explore the concept of holistic learning and identify which learning styles may be most effective when working with Aboriginal learners.

This section is optional.
Use it if you have Aboriginal learners in your program and to have your tutors explore Aboriginal learning styles.

Activity A

Medicine Wheel

People achieve wellness through the balance of mind, body, spirit and emotion. The Medicine Wheel helps people to balance and heal themselves. It's an important tool to show movement that is circular in nature and has no beginning or end. Most Aboriginal cultures include an understanding of the circle or cyclical nature of life.

A basic understanding of the Medicine Wheel helps us understand traditional Aboriginal ideas about balance since the Wheel includes all aspects of a person. It can provide a sense of direction and guidance. It is divided into physical, mental, emotional and spiritual parts. In this activity, we will look at each part separately as it relates to learning. By the end of the activity, tutors will see how each of these parts is interconnected. Each part supports, enhances and affects the other.

The list of words and statements below focuses on an important aspect of our being in relation to each part of the Medicine Wheel. Tutors will look at each word or statement on its own and decide to which part of the Wheel it belongs.

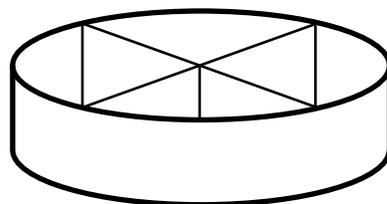
Reflection, group activity, discussion

Materials and equipment

- Round container (for example, a cookie tin)
- Two cardboard dividers to fit into the container
- Cards or slips of paper on which you will write statements

Preparation

Cut out two cardboard dividers to form an X in the container, making four equal compartments.



Label the four compartments *Physical, Emotional, Mental, Spiritual*.

Write the following statements onto slips of paper or cards:

Physical

Doing
Detail
Concrete
Whole context
Creating a collage
Speaking not central to learning
Sense of belonging to a community
Practical
Healthy living

Emotional

Feeling
Planning
Relating
Make connections
Talk about learning
Write about personal experiences
Assessing
Express themselves
Belonging
History and culture

Mental

Thinking
Values
Can sit for long periods of time
Wholeness
Get information from textbooks
Structures
Come to their own conclusions
Identify values
Choice

Spiritual

Balance
Harmony
Culture
Connection to inner self
Cultural ceremonies

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what learning styles Aboriginal people might share.
 - Point out that Aboriginal people often have a greater predominance of right-brain learning.
 - They often learn by watching and observing.
2. Show tutors the container you made and explain that it represents the Circle of Learning or the Medicine Wheel. Each divided section represents one aspect of the circle: Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual. Each of these parts is related to a certain learning style.
3. Hand out the cards on which you've written the words.
4. Have tutors place each card into the divided area they think it belongs and give their reason for placing it into that category.
5. When all the cards are in the container, ask tutors what aspects of the circle of learning they incorporate into their own learning and life experiences.

Activity B

Learning styles

Tutors will explore specific activities they can use with Aboriginal learners.

Aboriginal learners and learning

This information comes from *Creative Student Assessment: A Guide to Developing Meaningful Evaluation*, available online from Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, Adult Learning and Literacy.

It is now well recognized that many Aboriginal learners have learning preferences and styles that may be very different from their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Work by Brent Kaulback published in the *Canadian Journal of Native Education* indicates that “Indian and Inuit children are most successful at processing visual information and have the most difficulty performing well on tasks saturated with verbal content.”

Studies of Aboriginal cognitive learning styles indicate that many Aboriginal learners may prefer to have information presented in a meaningful context with an emphasis given to the introduction and overview before getting into specific details and applications. These studies also suggest that Aboriginal learners may learn best if material is presented through images such as diagrams, metaphors, and symbols, and if concrete support materials are used.

It is also important to recognize that Aboriginal learners may prefer to interact with information in ways that are different from their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Studies suggest that they prefer a “watch then do” or “listen then do” or “think then do” approach to learning. Since most classrooms frequently use a “trial and error” approach, where learners are encouraged to try out an answer verbally and then improve the answer after receiving feedback from teachers and peers, Aboriginal students will not experience an optimum learning environment if their preference is not recognized and accommodated.

Use of handout, reflection, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 3.13: *Aboriginal Learning Styles*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Read over the background information in the introduction to this activity.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give tutors the handout *Aboriginal Learning Styles* and ask them to brainstorm some activities that might be useful with an Aboriginal learner. Note their ideas on the flip chart. One important factor to bring out is that many Aboriginal learners like to watch the activity and then do it. They may need to watch three or four times and be able to explain a task before they practise it themselves.
2. Point out that while culture has an impact on learning, tutors need to remember that each individual also has her own preferred learning style.

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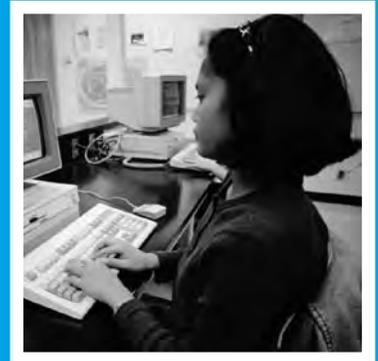
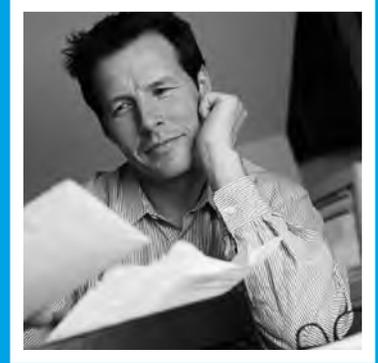
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Planning for Learning

UNIT
4

Unit 4: Planning for Learning

SECTION 1. FIRST STEPS			
A. Getting to know your learner	Core	Reflection, discussion, role-playing, use of handout	20 min
B. First meeting	Core	Reflection, discussion, use of video	20 min
SECTION 2. LEARNING SITUATIONS			
A. Problem-solving skills	Core	Reflection, use of handout, discussion	10 min
B. Ways to handle difficult situations	Core	Option 1. Reflection, use of handout, discussion Option 2. Use of handout, role-play Option 3. Guest speaker – experienced tutor	20 min 30 min 30 min
C. Addressing tutors' concerns	Optional	Option 1. Brainwriting for large group, use of handout Option 2. Brainwriting for small group, use of handout	10 min
SECTION 3. DEVELOPING A LEARNING PLAN			
A. Why we use goals	Core	Reflection, discussion, use of handout	10 min
B. How to set goals	Core	Reflection	10 min
C. Developing your own learning plan	Core	Discussion, use of handouts and overheads	15 min
D. Developing a learning plan for your learner	Core	Video, discussion, use of handouts and overheads	30 min
SECTION 4. LESSON PLANNING			
A. Planning a lesson	Core	Reflection, discussion	5 min
B. Components of a lesson	Core	Group activity, use of handouts	10 min
C. Developing a lesson plan	Core	Discussion, use of handouts and overheads	30 min
D. Assessing lesson plans	Core	Discussion, use of handouts	10 min
SECTION 5. PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT			
A. Developing a portfolio	Core	Discussion, use of handouts	20 min

UNIT 4

Planning for Learning

 **Approx 3¾ hours**
using core activities

Concepts

- **Plans for the first meeting with a learner**
- **Dealing with challenging situations**
- **Developing a learning plan**
- **Creating a lesson plan**
- **Using portfolios to track learning**

Builds on

- **Adults as Learners**
- **Learning Styles**

Planning for learning is the key to a successful match. Tutors need a plan to follow and learners need to see success fairly soon. When tutors and learners develop a plan together, they meet both these needs. That plan is like a road map and will direct individual lesson plans. The learning plan is the big picture; it outlines where the learner wants to go. The lesson plans are then designed for each time a tutor and learner meet.

As a coordinator, it is your job to start developing this road map with the learner. The tutor then continues with it, making changes as the needs and interests of the learner change. This is why it's so important for tutors to really get to know their learners and to understand what they want to accomplish.

Some tutors might have concerns about the first meeting with a learner and might want to know how to handle any challenges that arise. There will be an opportunity in this unit to explore the first meeting and to allow tutors to address their concerns about tutoring.

Developing a portfolio helps learners track the progress they have made. It is tangible proof of the work they have been doing with their tutors. Tutors will have the opportunity to explore portfolios and look at developing one of their own around training as a tutor.

The learning plan is the “map” which will guide the student (and the tutor) as they work towards their goals.

Rose Gittins in *An Introduction to Literacy Teaching*

Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE / USEFULNESS
Section 2: Learning Situations		
Violence and Learning: Taking Action	Mary Norton	This book explores ways to break the silence about violence and ways to create environments to support learning for all. It shares what was learned from the VALTA project and invites further exploration.
Too Scared to Learn: Women, Violence and Education	Jenny Horsman	This research project looks at the impact of violence on learning.
Level 2: Drawing the Line: Dealing with Affective Issues in Literacy	Jenny Horsman	This manual includes activities for tutor training that can help tutors know how much they can be involved in dealing with affective issues in their tutoring sessions.
Section 3: Developing a Learning Plan		
Progress Profile	Mary Norton	This works through the process of setting goals.
A Dream that Walks	Myrna Hanna	This is a goal-setting workbook to help lower-level learners set goals, get ready to learn, develop problem-solving skills and learn how to manage their personal lives.
Saskatchewan Level 1 Tutor Training Kit	Saskatchewan Literacy Network	See the section in “Getting Started” on setting goals.
Tutor Tools	Literacy Alberta	This resource is full of ideas from other tutors that your tutors will love.
Section 4: Lesson Planning		
LITSTART: Strategies for Adult Literacy and ESL Tutors	Patricia Frey	Pages 56-69 have samples of lesson plans for ESL and literacy learners at different levels.
Saskatchewan Level 1 Tutor Training Kit	Saskatchewan Literacy Network	See the section in “Getting Started” about planning learning.
Section 5: Portfolio Development		
Saskatchewan Level 1 Tutor Training Kit	Saskatchewan Literacy Network	This provides information sheets to include in a portfolio.

Section 1

First Steps

In this section, tutors will learn how to get to know their learners and prepare for their first meeting.

The first thing you and your tutor need to do is get to know the learner. The Violence and Learning: Taking Action (VALTA) project that looked at the impact of experiences of violence on adult learners clearly showed how true this is. Through the project, literacy educators learned they sometimes need to spend the first meeting building trust and rapport with an individual. Only then can they move into a more formal assessment of a person's abilities and performance, or write things down. For all learners with low self-confidence, whether or not they have experienced violence, it may take time to be comfortable sharing personal information.

You and your tutor, therefore, must take time asking questions and drawing out information about the learner's experiences and interests. Look over the sample questionnaires in the handouts from Activity A to get an idea of the types of questions you can ask. It isn't necessary to use all the questions or even to ask them in the order listed. Rather, the questionnaires are a guide to help you get to know the learner. In fact, the tutor can just ask questions that invite learners to share stories about their lives, and through those stories, learn about the specifics covered by the questionnaires. At all times, you and the tutor must remain sensitive to the learner and avoid asking questions that could make her feel uncomfortable.

As the coordinator and the one who meets the learner first, you may want to ask her quite a few of the questions. But your tutor also needs to ask some of them. The tutor can begin doing that at the first meeting with the learner. At that first meeting, both the tutor and learner are going to feel nervous, so it is a good idea for them to focus on sharing and getting to know each other.

Use creativity and imagination to design lesson plans.

Activity A

Getting to know your learner

Reflection, discussion, role-playing, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Handout 4.1: *Getting to Know Your Learner*

Samples of questionnaires from your program

Handout 4.2: *Sample Questionnaire* (4 pages)

Preparation

Copy handouts.

Gather samples of additional questionnaires if you'd like.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Describe the type of intake assessments you use with learners. Explain that assessments are different from tests because you do them **with** a learner, not **to** a learner. They help you determine a learner's abilities and performance and they help guide instruction. In effect, they are one way of getting to know the learner.
2. Explain to tutors that the first thing they need to do is get to know their learners.
3. Ask tutors to brainstorm what they might want to know about their learners.
4. Have tutors role-play getting to know a learner. Working in pairs, ask one tutor to be the learner and the other to be the tutor. Give each tutor in the pair a different questionnaire. Have the tutor ask the learner questions and share information about themselves, working on getting to know each other. Have the pairs switch roles so each has the opportunity to guide the discussion.
5. Have tutors look over a few questionnaires on a learner's interests and abilities.
6. Review the *Getting to Know Your Learner* handout.

Tutoring tip

Learners often have to deal with formal systems and answer personal questions chosen by others. You could explore with tutors how to make that different in the tutoring situation, allowing the learner to control the process of creating a learner profile. For example, the learner and tutor could name areas of their life stories that they would like to share with each other.

The tutor could invite the learner to use drawings or create a collage to represent his stories. For detail, the tutor could add key words the learner has used around the drawings.

Activity B

First meeting

Although the section following this one discusses different learning situations, tutors may already be starting to ask questions about how to handle the first meeting with their learners. They may express some concerns about it. You will need to use your judgment to determine the best time to discuss these concerns.

Reflection, discussion, use of video

Materials and equipment

TV and VCR

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – First Meeting*

Preparation

Cue the video to the *First Meeting* segment.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to brainstorm about the first meeting with the learner: what they might do, where they might meet, what materials/resources they might have on hand, and so on.
2. Let tutors know they can use the first meeting just to get to know their learner and to share something about themselves. They don't need to start delivering a planned lesson. That will come later. Emphasize that tutors and learners getting to know one another extends beyond the first meeting and is an ongoing process.
3. Another goal of the first meeting is to establish rapport and trust. Ask tutors how they can start and continue to build rapport and trust between themselves and their learners.
4. View the video section on the *First Meeting*.
5. Ask tutors what they thought were good points that helped the first meeting be successful.
6. Based on the video and the previous activity of getting to know your learner, have tutors draft out a plan of what they might do at the first meeting. Have those who want to share their plan with the rest of the group do so.

The student approaches that first lesson with dread; the first-time tutor feels a mixture of panic and despair. The carefully prepared activities suddenly seem too much, too little, wrong, wrong, wrong. Knowing I was supposed to be a role model, I felt completely inadequate. I felt that I didn't know enough. What if I did something absolutely dreadful?

Victoria Perry

Variation

You could also ask tutors to consider first encounters from their own experience, particularly situations where they were seeking support from someone helping them. What feelings and thoughts can they recall? What questions tended to open dialogue? What questions shut them down? Why? What attitudes and beliefs on the part of the helping person were helpful or created barriers? Why?

Section 2

Learning Situations

This section can help to alleviate tutors' fears and concerns about difficult situations that may occur as part of their tutoring. They will have a chance to think of their own solutions or ideas as well as benefit from your experience. It also gives you a chance to explain that you are there to help. You can further address any other concerns they may have about tutoring.

In this section, tutors will have an opportunity to address different ways of handling challenges that may impact or influence learning. You might want to come back to this section at the end of the unit or the end of your workshop series to see what new ideas tutors come up with. The chances are good that they will know a lot more than they do at this point. It might be good for them to see what they've learned. It would also be good modelling about how review can be helpful.

You may want to use this section later, as a get-together with tutors when they actually have some training, to come up with ideas or answers.

Activity A

Problem-solving skills

Tutors will have a chance to think about how they can turn learner concerns into learning situations.

Reflection, use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 4.3: *How to Handle Concerns*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to think about the challenges they face in their daily life. Which of their challenges might affect their learning experiences? Are there other challenges or concerns a learner might face? List the challenges and concerns on the flip chart.
2. Discuss with tutors what would be appropriate boundaries around solving concerns of a learner.
3. Point out to tutors that it is possible to turn some concerns into learning opportunities for learners.
4. Review the handout *How to Handle Concerns*.
5. Have tutors brainstorm ways to turn concerns into learning situations based on the handout.

Activity B

Ways to handle difficult situations

The next set of activities helps tutors think about how to handle difficult situations that may impact or influence learning. Several examples of actual situations tutors have encountered in other programs are provided. Tutors have the chance to brainstorm solutions or ideas as a group. The skills they develop through this process will help them problem-solve with their learners.

You may choose just one or a combination of the processes below, depending on what best fits the needs of your tutors and the resources in your program. There are options for training one tutor as well as for working with large groups. You may want to use the learning situations provided or might prefer to use ones that are more common in your program. Discuss with your tutors ways to work with learners in these situations.

Option 1 Reflection, use of handout, discussion

Why choose this option?

This will work well if you are training just one tutor. You may also choose this option if neither you nor your potential tutors are comfortable with role-playing (as suggested in the second option) or if you do not have a tutor available to come in as a guest speaker (as suggested in the final option).

Materials and equipment

Handout 4.4: *Learning Situations*

Slips of paper

Box or container

Preparation

Review any policies and procedures your program has for handling situations involving tutors and learners. Review the *Learning Situations* handout, which is based on real tutoring experiences. Choose ones that reflect your program. Use your choices in the following activities.

Make a copy of the *Learning Situations* handout and cut the situations into separate pieces. Be sure not to cut up the original handout or you won't be able to use it next time!

Put the cut-apart situations into the container.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors write down on slips of paper the situations that concern them. Have them put the slips into the container with the situations you have prepared.
2. Have tutors take turns pulling a situation out of the box and reading it aloud.
3. Discuss as a group possible solutions, ideas or approaches.
4. Add comments that reflect your experience or your program's policies. Be sure your tutors understand you are there to help them resolve difficult situations.

Thought-provoking questions

Building on the belief that the tutor and learner are partners in seeking solutions, how can the tutor communicate that belief to the learner? How might this approach be similar to or different from other experiences of seeking or providing help?

Variation

Another way to generate ideas about difficult situations that might be challenging is to create a collective story, adding creativity and possibly some humour to the exercise. Record the story on a flip chart sheet. You can suggest an opening sentence and each person adds a sentence as you go around the circle. For example, an opening sentence might be: "Jiri walked into the tutoring session at the library in tears." Once everyone has added a sentence or two, you can identify the challenges that have surfaced in the story. You may opt to break into pairs or small groups to brainstorm how to respond as a tutor.

Variation

One variation on role-playing, which may seem less intimidating because it does not require dialogue, is to create “frozen snapshots.”

Using the situation pulled from the box, the players create three posed tableaux.

In the first tableau, they show the situation (as if the viewer were looking at a photograph of it). In the second tableau, they show the impact of the situation on the learner. The third tableau shows a possible way to work through the situation. The players can give a title to each tableau.

The full group can discuss what they observe, why they think the situation exists and how the learner can move from it to a solution that she can live with. Tutors can also discuss the role that they can play to support their learners without becoming overwhelmed or losing a sense of boundaries.

Option 2 Use of handout, role-play

Why choose this option?

You and your tutors may enjoy doing role-plays.

This works well in a larger group.

Materials and equipment

Handout 4.4: *Learning Situations*

Slips of paper

Box or container

Preparation

Review any policies and procedures your program has for handling situations involving tutors and learners. Review the *Learning Situations* handout, which is based on real tutoring experiences. Choose ones that reflect your program. Use your choices in the following activities.

Make a copy of the *Learning Situations* handout and cut the situations into separate pieces. Be sure not to cut up the original handout or you won't be able to use it next time!

Put the cut-apart situations into the container.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Show tutors the box or container and explain that the slips of paper inside each describe a situation based on real tutoring experiences.
2. Have tutors pair up and pull a situation from the box.
3. Tell them they are to role-play the situation. One person will be the tutor and one person will be the learner.
4. Give them up to five minutes to rehearse, as they will have to ad lib the conversation.
5. Have each pair present the role-play of the situation to the rest of the tutors.
6. The group can discuss other possible solutions or approaches.
7. Add comments that reflect your experience or any program policies.

Each lesson should be a learning experience for both the tutor and the student.

Option 3 Guest speaker – experienced tutor

Why choose this option?

You may have an experienced tutor who would be willing to come and speak about dealing with difficult situations and concerns.

Materials and equipment

Handout 4.4: *Learning Situations* (for you only – not to hand out to tutors)

Preparation

Arrange for a tutor in your program to be a guest speaker.

Ask your speaker to discuss challenges she faced and her responses to them. She can also share some of her tutoring experiences. Be sure to let her know how long she has to speak.

Review any policies and procedures your program has for handling situations involving tutors and learners.

Review the *Learning Situations* handout, which is based on real tutoring experiences. Think about which ones reflect your program. You might want to discuss some of these with the guest speaker beforehand.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce your guest speaker.
2. Turn the time over to her.
3. At the end of her talk, allow time for tutors to ask questions and for a general discussion.

Variation

You could invite tutors to brainstorm questions they would like to ask the guest speaker prior to the presentation. This will engage tutors' attention, and you will be able to let the guest speaker know what tutors are curious about. As an option, you could give each person a third of a coloured sheet of 8½" x 11" paper to record their question and then share and cluster the questions so that the speaker can respond to themes rather than each individual question. The speaker can still prepare areas to share, but will have a better sense of how to relate comments to tutors' interests.

Activity C

Addressing tutors' concerns

Why choose this activity?

Depending on the process you chose for the last activity, your tutors may not have had all of their concerns addressed. If you have a sense they need more time to address their concerns, you can use the following process.

By using sticky notes, you allow tutors to voice their concerns relatively anonymously, making it safer to do so.

Option 1 Brainwriting for a large group, use of handout

Why choose this option?

This works with a larger group and gathers concerns anonymously.

Materials and equipment

Sticky notes

Flip chart and markers

Handout 4.5: *Questions Tutors Commonly Ask* (4 pages)

optional
activity

Variation

To reduce the chance of tutors wondering if they are raising a “stupid question or concern,” pairs of tutors can talk about questions they have between them and write their questions on a flip chart sheet. By sharing ideas and questions with one other person, tutors usually receive validation for their concern.

Preparation

Write the common themes of tutors’ questions and concerns at the top of the flip chart, one sheet for each theme. Examples of themes include questions and concerns about learners, questions and concerns about difficult problems learners raise, questions and concerns about resources and questions and concerns about expectations. Add an “open-ended” sheet for concerns that don’t fit into a named theme.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors write their concerns on sticky notes and place them on the corresponding flip chart paper.
2. Read off the different concerns and address them as best you can. Draw on the experience of the group to help as needed.
3. Give tutors the handout *Questions Tutors Commonly Ask*.

Option 2 Brainwriting for a small group, use of handout

Why choose this option?

For a smaller group, you could use this option.

Materials and equipment

8½" x11" sheets of paper

Handout 4.5: *Questions Tutors Commonly Ask* (4 pages)

Preparation

Write the common themes of tutors’ questions and concerns at the top of sheets of paper, one sheet for each theme. Examples of themes include questions and concerns about learners, questions and concerns about difficult problems learners raise, questions and concerns about resources and questions and concerns about expectations. Add an “open-ended” sheet for concerns that don’t fit into a named theme.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Place the pieces of paper in the middle of the table.
2. Tutors sit around the table and pull any one of the sheets to which they add their question under the particular theme written at the top, and then replace that sheet in the middle of the table and take another. Tutors can all be taking sheets and adding questions at the same time.
3. Once tutors have run out of questions, they can take turns reading questions from one of the lists. Address the concerns the best you can, drawing on the experience of the group.
4. Give tutors the handout *Questions Tutors Commonly Ask*.

Section 3

Developing a Learning Plan

As the coordinator, you will have met with the learners and discussed their goals, interests and abilities. However, it is important for tutors to set goals with their learners too. The following process helps tutors understand goal setting and how to design learning plans to meet their learners' goals. A learning plan is not the same as a lesson plan. It's a big picture or overview of what a tutor and learner hope to accomplish in their time together. You may find it helpful to read through both this section and Section 4, Lesson Planning, before doing the activities to gain a better understanding of how the two are separate but work together.

Learning plans use statements or objectives to show what learning will take place. The term *objectives* may be confusing to some tutors. Another term you could use is *learning statements*. Use whichever term works best for you and your tutors.

Activity A

Why we use goals

The first step in this process is to determine what tutors already know about setting goals. You may have groups who have had no experience setting goals, which is fine, as the next steps will take them through the process. The first activity will build on whatever experience they have had and lead into the rest of the section.

Reflection, discussion, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 4.6: *Setting Goals – An Overview*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors if they have ever set goals. Why did they set goals? Have them tell you what they know about setting goals. Write down their answers on the flip chart.
2. Ask tutors why they would want to know their learners' goals. Bring out the following concepts:
 - helps to keep the tutoring sessions on track
 - helps tutors find out what the learners want to do or learn
 - helps to focus on what is important
 - helps tutors plan lessons that are meaningful and relevant
3. Review key points from the handout *Setting Goals*.

Variation

To help tutors and, in turn, learners, relate to the idea of setting goals and planning at a concrete and applied level, you could ask them to think about a project they want to do at home, such as plan a family get-together, fix something that is broken or plan a holiday. For that project, what do they want to accomplish (goals)? What steps will they or would they have to take to make it happen (planning process)? In what ways does having a goal make a difference?

4. Ask tutors why it would be important to include their learner in the planning process. Bring out the following points:
 - gives your learner greater independence
 - helps your learner take ownership of her learning
 - helps your learner work more effectively to accomplish goals
 - teaches your learner a process she can use outside your tutoring sessions.

Activity B

How to set goals

It is easier to help someone else set goals if we have gone through the process ourselves. Setting goals can be difficult due to terms used in some resources. As you work through the next step, try to keep the process as simple as possible.

Reflection

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Write *What are my goals?* on the flip chart. Ask tutors to think about the goal or goals they have for being tutors. What would they like to do or do better? Have them write down their goals.
2. Next write *What do I need to learn?* below the first question. Have tutors think about what they need to do to reach their goals. What skills and concepts do they need to develop? Have them write that down beside their goals.
3. Then write *What will I do to learn?* below the first two questions. Have tutors think about what materials, training and strategies they will need to achieve their goals. Have them add that to their list.
4. Let tutors know this is one way of setting goals and the questions help them to focus on the process. If tutors had difficulty in deciding on a goal and using the process, the next activity will give further help in setting goals.

Facilitation tip
If people are uncertain how to express their goals for becoming tutors, you could ask them to think about what they will think, feel or do differently after becoming a tutor.

Goal setting is the beginning of the learning journey.

*Saskatchewan Level 1 Tutor Training Kit
Tutor Manual*

Activity C

Developing your own learning plan

This activity will help tutors develop their own learning plans. If they have practised it themselves, they will be better able to help their learners. Learning plans come out of our goals. Once we have identified our goals, we can develop a plan to carry out those goals.

The activity uses two different forms for recording a learning plan. One is more detailed than the other. The idea is to let tutors practise creating learning statements/objectives as part of the plan. Some tutors may have difficulty doing this. Practise developing a few statements/objectives together. In the end, tutors may decide to use a different format for developing a learning plan with their learners, but will have had practice in creating learning statements/objectives.

The next activity will help tutors learn to develop a learning plan.

Discussion, use of handouts and overheads

Materials and equipment

Overhead projector

Handout 4.7: *Learning Plan* (blank)

Handout 4.8: *Setting Goals* (blank)

Overhead 4.1: *Learning Plan – Sample for Tutors*

Overhead 4.2: *Learning Plan* (blank)

Overhead 4.3: *Setting Goals – Sample for Tutors*

Overhead 4.4: *Setting Goals* (blank)

Preparation

This can be a difficult activity for those who haven't recorded their goals in a formal process. Review the sample forms to gain an understanding of what a learning plan can look like. This will guide you in helping your tutors create their own plans.

Copy handouts.

Prepare overheads.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Put up the overhead *Learning Plan – Sample for Tutors*. Review with tutors each of the columns to assist tutors in understanding the types of statements they would use in each one.
2. Put up the overhead *Learning Plan*, and practise filling it in as a group. Ask the group what could be their objective or learning statement and what would be some of the skills they would need to learn. Discuss how they would learn those skills and what resources they would need. Then decide as a group how they will know they have learned the skill. As the discussion unfolds, fill in the different columns.
3. Give the blank *Learning Plan* handout to tutors. Have them fill it in based on their goals from Activity B, *How to Set Goals*. Provide help and assistance as needed.

Facilitation tip

Examples provide a visual guide for participants. If they are having difficulty envisioning the task you are asking them to perform, a visual sample can help put them on the right track.

4. Put up the overhead *Setting Goals – Sample for Tutors*. Explain this is another way to write their goals. Review the columns and what types of statements they would use in each column. Compare the statements to the sample *Learning Plan* overhead and show where the statements are the same. Ask tutors what they think makes the two plans different. You could point out that the *Learning Plan* has more detail than the *Setting Goals* sample.
5. Put up the overhead *Setting Goals*. Work as a group to fill it in.
6. Give the blank *Setting Goals* handout to tutors and have them fill it in based on their goals.
7. Ask tutors what they liked about each format and what they disliked. What changes would they make to either one?

Activity D

Developing a learning plan for your learner

Tutors will expand on what they learned about creating a learning plan for themselves, and practise developing a learning plan for a learner. Allow tutors to work together in developing the learning plan.

Video, discussion, use of handouts and overheads

Materials and equipment

TV and VCR

Overhead projector

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – Some Learners’ Stories*

Handout 4.7: *Learning Plan* (blank)

Handout 4.8: *Setting Goals* (blank)

Handout 4.9: *Learner Profiles* (4 pages)

Handout 4.10: *Task List for Setting Goals* (3 pages)

Overhead 4.5: *Learning Plan – Sample for Learners*

Overhead 4.6: *Setting Goals – Sample for Learners*

Preparation

Cue video to learners’ stories.

Copy handouts.

Prepare overheads.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Explain to tutors they will practise developing a learning plan for a learner. Put up the overhead *Learning Plan – Sample for Learners*. Discuss the statements and overall plan.
2. Put up the overhead *Setting Goals – Sample for Learners* and review it with tutors.

3. There are several options for relating to tutors the stories of some learners so that they can then develop a plan for them.
 - Show the video *Some Learners' Stories*. Ask tutors to imagine that these are their own new learners. Tell them they will be working with the information they get from the video.
 - Pass out the *Learner Profiles* handout and ask them to read the stories.
 - If tutors already have learners of their own, they could use their own learners' stories for this activity.
4. Tutors may work in pairs or small groups. If they are using their own learners, remind them about confidentiality.
5. Ask tutors to choose a learner and write out that person's goals and interests based on what they found out about that learner from the video, the profiles or their own knowledge of the person. They may want to use the handout *Task List for Setting Goals* to help them identify some goals.
6. Then have tutors develop a learning plan using the information they have gathered. Let tutors decide which tool to use to record the learning plan: give them both the blank *Learning Plan* and the blank *Setting Goals* handouts.
7. If tutors need help in doing this activity, put up the blank *Learning Plan* or *Setting Goals* overhead that you used in Activity C. Choose a learner story not being used. From the information provided, work together to fill in the plan.
8. After doing the activity as a group, encourage tutors to begin a plan for their chosen learner. Provide help as needed.
9. Ask tutors to share their plans if they feel comfortable sharing.

As students gain in ability, confidence and awareness of what can be learned, they are able to write their own learning plans.

Section 4

Lesson Planning

For those tutors who are new to teaching, it will be challenging to create a meaningful lesson plan. This section walks through the reasons tutors should use a lesson plan, what should be included in a lesson, where to get lesson ideas and how to evaluate lessons. Tutors will then have the opportunity to practise creating a lesson plan for a learner.

Lesson plans grow out of understanding our learners' goals and interests. Once we have determined their goals and created a big-picture learning plan, we can use it to create individual lesson plans. The learning plan is the road map to where we want to go. Lesson plans are part of the highway that helps us get to where we want to go.

Activity A

Planning a lesson

Thought-provoking questions

The language of *lessons* and *homework* fits into a learning environment. You can invite tutors to reflect on how school-oriented language may trigger negative associations or anxiety for some adult learners, based on past experiences with learning. Are there other words tutors could use in place of *lessons* and *homework*? How could tutors open up a dialogue about school-based language with their learners?

Reflection, discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to share with a partner what they know about lesson planning. Have they ever planned a lesson? What did they do to plan it? How did it work? What did they learn? If you have a smaller group of less than four, discuss the questions together.
2. Have tutors talk to a partner and discuss what would be important to consider when planning a tutoring learning session.
3. As a whole group, discuss their findings and record their ideas on the flip chart. Bring out the following points if not covered by the group:
 - the purpose of the lesson
 - the length or time of the lesson
 - the shape of the lesson
 - includes a variety of activities
 - provides lots of time for practice and review

Activity B

Components of a lesson

Group activity, use of handouts

Materials and equipment

Handout 4.11: *What Makes a Good Lesson Plan?*

Handout 4.12: *Tips for Planning*

Handout 4.13: *Lesson Plans*

Envelopes for cut-apart sentences

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Make a copy of *What Makes a Good Lesson Plan?* Cut apart the sentences, then cut between each word in the sentence. Place each cut-up sentence in a separate envelope. Some of the short cut-up sentences can go together in one envelope. Note: Be sure to cut up a copy, not the original handout, or you won't have it to use next time.

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Write on the flip chart the statement "A good lesson plan...." Tell tutors they will create sentences to finish the statement.
2. Form small groups and hand each group an envelope or two. If you have only a few tutors, have them work on the envelopes together. Have each group pull out the words and create a sentence from the pieces. Once the sentences are complete, ask tutors to read the statement "A good lesson plan...." on the flip chart and add the sentence they put together. Discuss each of the sentences and ask tutors for their thoughts and feedback.
3. Review the handout *Tips for Planning*. Point out that they should decide with their learner whether there will be any homework and what to cover at the next lesson.
4. Review the handout *Lesson Plans*. Remind tutors to include time for a break and to discuss any issues the learner may have that relate to learning. The three main points to remember are what you will cover (topic), what you will use (materials) and how you will do it (strategies).

Thought-provoking question

In keeping with the stated elements of a good lesson plan, we know that adults and young people often want to have a sense of control and choice. How can the lesson plan emphasize shifting control and power to the learners at each step along the way?

Activity C

Developing a lesson plan

Tutors will have the opportunity to develop a lesson plan based on one of the learners from the video or the profiles. If they have learners already, they could plan lessons for their learners. Tutors could use a number of different lesson plan templates. Provide a few copies of each and allow tutors to choose which template works best for them.

Discussion, use of handouts and overheads

Materials and equipment

Overhead projector

Overhead lesson plan template of your choice

Overhead 4.7: *Lesson Plan Example A* (2 pages)

Overhead 4.8: *Lesson Plan Example B* (2 pages)

Handout 4.9: *Learner Profiles* (4 pages)

Handout 4.14: *Lesson Plan Templates* (5 pages)

Various resources from your program (i.e., workbooks, readers)

Note: The lesson plan examples are based on a composite of learners and are drawn from the author's experience. They are meant to be a guide only and not an example of a perfect lesson plan.

Preparation

Copy handouts.

Prepare overheads.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Inform tutors that they will create a lesson plan in this activity. To help them get started, put up the overhead *Lesson Plan Example A*. Review the different components and what is written for each one.
2. Put up the overhead *Lesson Plan Example B*. Review the components of this plan. Remember these are examples and are meant to be a guide only, not a perfectly created lesson plan.
3. If tutors need further help with lesson planning, use this step to give them more practice before trying it on their own. Put up the blank lesson plan overhead you have chosen. Choose a learner profile different from the ones tutors have. Work with tutors to help fill in the lesson plan based on the profile.
4. Tell tutors they can work individually, in small groups or all together.
5. Using the learner profile they worked with before (in Section 3, Activity D) or their own learners, have tutors develop a possible lesson plan. Let them choose which template they want to use in developing a lesson. Keep one of the lesson plan examples up on the overhead. Tutors can use it as a guide for creating their own plan.
6. Have a variety of resources available for tutors to include as resources or to look through for ideas.
7. Have tutors share their plans if they feel comfortable doing so.
8. Provide feedback and other suggestions as necessary.

Variation

You can ask tutors to consider how they will check with learners to see whether a given plan fits for them. You could also explore how tutors could collaboratively develop some of the plans with the learners.

Activity D

Assessing lesson plans

At the end of a lesson, tutors may have a sense of whether the lesson went well or not. However, coordinators rarely ask them to take the time to evaluate the lesson with their learners. The process below will help tutors know how to conduct regular evaluations. It provides some handouts tutors can use to find out how well a lesson went and how they are doing as tutors.

It is imperative to remind them that these tools are to help them look at ways to strengthen their ability to tutor. Evaluation is about improvement, not about criticism or finding fault. Encourage your tutors to choose a process of evaluating their lessons and themselves.

Discussion, use of handouts

Materials and equipment

Handout 4.15: *Assessing the Session*

Handout 4.16: *How Well Am I Doing as a Tutor?*

Handout 4.17: *Lesson Comments*

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what they think about reviewing their planning. Is this something they should do? Why or why not?
2. Introduce the concept of *Assessing the Session*. Ask tutors what they think it means to assess. Why might assessment be a good idea? Read over the handout and discuss the ideas. Do tutors agree with the questions asked? Would they ask different questions? How would they use this in a tutoring situation?
3. Using the handout *How Well Am I Doing as a Tutor?*, review the questions tutors can ask themselves to determine their effectiveness as tutors.
4. Review the handout *Lesson Comments*. Ask tutors if they feel this would be a useful tool to use.

Coordinator tip

How can tutors solicit feedback from learners about how well the experience is going, knowing people usually do not want to be impolite or risk some kind of consequence by giving negative feedback directly to a person? Some programs may have developed feedback tools for all learners that are administered by the coordinator. A creative example includes asking questions verbally and providing a sheet with facial expressions to circle (e.g., happy, uncertain, neutral, unhappy).

Be aware that talking can be used as an avoidance technique. The student should always leave the lesson having done some reading or writing!

- West Sussex Council Adult Literacy Scheme

Section 5

Portfolio Development

There are few ways for volunteer literacy programs to track their learners' progress. Often learners become discouraged if they do not feel they are progressing or if they cannot see the changes for themselves. If learners develop portfolios, they will then have tangible proof of their learning and programs will be better able to track learner progress.

Activity A

Developing a portfolio

Not many people have experience in developing a portfolio and tutors may question using one. This activity will explain the value of developing a portfolio and show tutors how to do it. Emphasize to tutors that they should only build portfolios if their learners agree.

Discussion, use of handouts

Materials and equipment

Handout 4.18: *Developing a Portfolio*

Handout 4.19: *Portfolio Assessment* (2 pages)

Handout 4.20: *Components of a Portfolio* (8 pages)

Note: Handout 4.20 (page 2) is a blank form for tutors to use with their own learners

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy handouts.

Write the following questions on the flip chart:

- What are portfolios?
- How do you put them together?
- What do you and your learner need to decide?
- What types of materials and information can you keep in a portfolio?

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to share what they know about portfolios.
2. Using the flip chart you prepared, have your tutors answer the questions with the help of the handouts *Developing a Portfolio* and *Portfolio Assessment*.
3. Review the handout *Components of a Portfolio*. (Note that the second page is blank for tutors to use with their learners.)
4. Have tutors discuss how they would feel about using this process to help learners monitor their own progress.
5. Suggest to tutors that they may want to develop a portfolio of their tutoring experience. Ask them to brainstorm items they could put into their own portfolios.

Facilitation tip

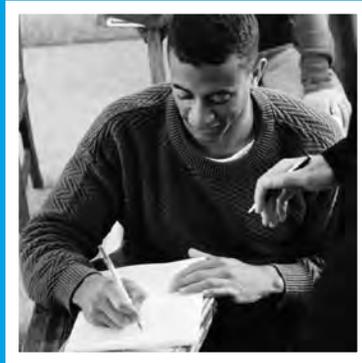
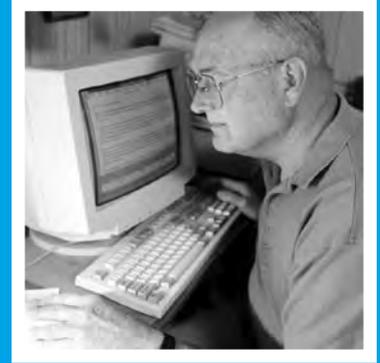
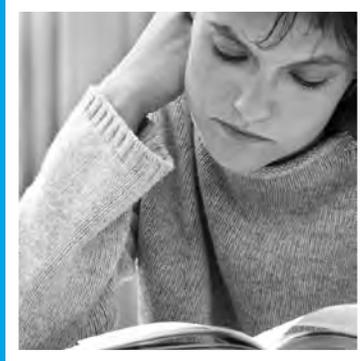
In the step-by-step process for this activity, you will talk about how tutors help learners monitor their progress. The term “monitoring progress” suggests a process that is driven by the tutor, such as you would find in the traditional teacher-student relationship. In this activity, you can reinforce the philosophy of learners tracking their own progress, so that it is the learners who determine what is “success.”

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During learning, adults' brains are constantly trying to retrieve information or skills that they may have learned in grade school or high school to expand on information they are trying to learn now.

Saskatchewan Level 2 Learning How to Learn



About Literacy

UNIT
5

Unit 5: About Literacy

SECTION 1. WHAT DOES LITERACY MEAN?			
A. Literacy in our daily lives	Core	Reflection, discussion, drawing	20 min
B. Learning about literacy	Core	Video, discussion, reflection	30 min
C. Reasons for low literacy	Core	Reflection, work in pairs, use of overhead, story	10 min
SECTION 2. DEFINING YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF LITERACY			
A. My beliefs about literacy learning	Core	Reflection, discussion	20 min
B. Literacy perspectives and tutoring	Core	Use of handout, reflection, discussion	10 min

UNIT 5

About Literacy

 **Approx. 1½ hours**
using core activities

Concepts

- **Literacy in daily life**
- **Beliefs about literacy**

Builds on

- **Adults as Learners**

Many tutors come into programs with a limited knowledge of literacy and how it impacts our lives. Yet our individual understandings and beliefs give literacy its meaning and definition. When we understand our beliefs about literacy and the way literacy, or the lack of it, affects our daily lives, we will be better able to help those with low literacy skills.

This unit will help tutors gain an understanding of literacy's importance in daily life and explore their beliefs about literacy.

Literacy Alberta has created a number of fact sheets related to literacy. They are written in clear language and cover such topics as families, Aboriginal success, clear language and poverty. Contact Literacy Alberta for the fact sheets, or visit our website at www.literacyalberta.ca to download them.

In a learner centered society, the learning choices and aspirations of individual learners are understood, respected and addressed.

Alberta Advanced Education and Technology in
A Learning Alberta

Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE / USEFULNESS
Section 1: What Does Literacy Mean?		
Building on Our Competencies: Canadian Results of the New International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS)	Statistics Canada	The results of IALSS (2003) provide the most recent statistics on literacy at the time this manual was written.
Movement for Canadian Literacy: Statistics Show Millions Struggle with Literacy	Movement for Canadian Literacy	This document highlights key findings of the survey and provides notes on the literacy community's response to IALSS.
Section 2: Defining Your Philosophy of Literacy		
Rethinking Literacy Education	Alan Quigley	This book explores different literacy perspectives and their impact on program delivery.
Learning about Participatory Approaches in Adult Literacy Education	Mary Norton and Grace Malicky	This book examines participatory approaches in education.
Exploring Tutors' and Students' Beliefs About Reading and Reading Strategies	Rebecca Still	This is a book based on a research study conducted in Alberta. Students and tutors share their beliefs about reading.

High literacy skills are critical to a healthy economy and society.

Canadian Council on Learning in
State of Learning in Canada

Section 1

What Does Literacy Mean?

This section will give tutors the opportunity to explore literacy in their daily lives and review the latest statistics about literacy.

Activity A

Literacy in our daily lives

Reflection, discussion, drawing

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers
Blank paper

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to briefly state what they think the word *literacy* means. Write their answers on the flip chart. You will use these responses in the next activity, so keep the flip chart handy.
2. Give tutors a blank sheet of paper and markers and ask them to draw the literacy activities they participated in over the last 24 hours.
3. Allow a few minutes for tutors to work on their drawings.
4. Those who wish to do so can share their drawings with the rest of the group.
5. From the drawings, point out the different ways we use literacy in our daily lives.
6. Ask tutors if they became aware of other uses of literacy skills from this activity.
7. Ask tutors how they felt doing the activity. Were there some who felt uncomfortable with their drawing skills or tried to avoid doing the activity? Did some feel anxiety about doing the drawing correctly?
8. Point out that those with inadequate literacy skills often experience some of these same feelings when confronted with text.

Variation

To bring a particular focus to daily literacy activities, you could ask tutors to think about everything they have eaten over the last 24 hours and to create symbols or simple drawings of all the ways in which they needed literacy skills to be able to eat that food. If they need an example, you can suggest using a car or the bus to shop, reading labels while shopping, handling money or following a recipe.

*Literacy includes reading the world
as well as reading the word.*

Activity B

Learning about literacy

In this activity, tutors will watch a video that gives them a closer look at literacy. They will then work together to express creatively what literacy means to them. They may even create a special statement on what literacy means to them.

Video, discussion, reflection

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 5.1: *Keep Literacy in Your Life*

Other fact sheets from Literacy Alberta

TV, VCR and the video you choose to show

Choose from one of the following videos. If possible, choose a different one from the one you used or will use with Unit 2, *Adults as Learners*. You can find full information about each of these videos in the bibliography for this unit.

- *Learning for Life* (20 minutes)
- *Literacy: The Hidden Problem* (12 minutes)
- *Literacy Matters* (15 minutes)

Preparation

Review the latest statistics on literacy. You can find them, among other places, on the websites listed in this unit's Useful Resources section.

Watch the video of your choice.

Select and cue video.

Request the fact sheets from Literacy Alberta if you don't have them already. Copy the fact sheets you choose to use. Review them and note pertinent information to review with tutors.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce the video and tell tutors what it is about. Watch it with them. Ask tutors if there was anything surprising to them or anything that stood out for them.
2. Review the latest statistics on literacy. You could also go over a few of the fact sheets from Literacy Alberta.
3. Review what tutors said in the previous activity about the meaning of literacy. On the flip chart, write the statement "Literacy is..." and have tutors brainstorm what literacy means to them.
Examples:
 - Literacy is... reading to my children.
 - Literacy is... taking care of my health.
4. Have tutors either draw or write their statements on the flip chart at the front of the room.
5. As a group, develop a creative way to express the various ideas. For example, you could write a poem, create a poster for display or tell a story.

6. Suggest to tutors that after they have worked with their learners for a while, they brainstorm the “Literacy is...” statement with their learner and share their ideas.
7. Have tutors think of ways they can keep literacy in their lives. Give them the handout *Keep Literacy in Your Life*.

Facilitation tip

It's quite powerful to think about the impact of poor literacy skills on various aspects of people's lives, and the resourceful ways people have of getting by with poor literacy skills.

Activity C

Reasons for low literacy

Reflection, work in pairs, use of overhead, story

Materials and equipment

Overhead 5.1: *Reasons for Poor Literacy* (2 pages)

Overhead projector

The book *Jeremiah Learns to Read* by Jo Ellen Bogart or another story about an adult learning to read

Flip chart paper and markers

Preparation

Read the book *Jeremiah Learns to Read*.

Prepare overhead.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give each tutor a piece of flip chart paper and ask them to create a pie chart that shows, in proportion, the main activities in their lives at this time: for example, being a parent, volunteering, working in a paid job, shopping, cooking, being the home fix-it person, travelling and so on.
2. Ask tutors to brainstorm with a partner the ways in which low literacy would affect each of those activities around the pie.
3. After asking tutors to share some key ideas with the full group, discuss the strengths literacy learners use to get around having poor literacy skills. (Think back to the skills used in the video you watched). How could they learn more from learners about those strengths?
4. Ask tutors why an adult might have poor literacy skills.
5. Discuss the overhead *Reasons for Poor Literacy*.
6. Read aloud to tutors *Jeremiah Learns to Read* or another story about an adult learning to read.

Section 2

Defining Your Philosophy of Literacy

We all have different beliefs about literacy. Tutors' beliefs will have an impact on the decisions they make about what resources to use and how to work with learners. Many practitioners and tutors haven't spent time determining and analyzing their beliefs. However, it is important for us all to know what we are doing and why we are doing it because it informs our practice.

Tutors may have preconceived ideas about how a person should improve his literacy skills. These beliefs may get in the way of working with a learner, especially if the learner has different beliefs and purposes for being in the program. The following activities will help tutors explore their beliefs and philosophies about literacy and learning. They will help them understand the impact those beliefs and philosophies might have on their tutoring. There is no "right" philosophy, belief or perspective, but it's important for tutors to understand why they approach literacy in the way they do and how that approach might impact their tutoring sessions.

Activity A

My beliefs about literacy learning

In the previous activities, tutors have had a chance to look at their concept of the word literacy; but, how do we translate that concept into effective tutoring? We may have a broad definition of literacy and what it means in theory, but in practice, we may tutor from a narrower perspective. This activity allows tutors to reflect on how they believe literacy should be learned and acquired.

Variation

To add another layer of reflection, participants could choose among craft material (e.g., playdough, pipe cleaners, Lego, cotton balls) to create a visual image of their philosophy to present to other groups, opening up a full discussion.

Reflection, discussion

Materials and equipment

A variety of resources such as skill workbooks, workplace-related resources, books on specific subjects such as history or politics, resources on goal-setting, social development, problem-solving, becoming a better person, and so on.

If you aren't able to find examples of the different resources, you could use the word strips found in Handout 5.2: *Word Strips*.

Preparation

Gather your resources. If you are using the word strips, cut them up and place them around the room.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Either have the resources laid out or the word strips posted around the room. Ask tutors to look through them all and decide which best describes their beliefs about literacy learning. If you have the space, you can ask tutors to stand by the word or resource they choose.
2. If you have a large group, ask tutors to share with a partner why they chose that particular resource or word.

3. If your group is small (fewer than five), have them share with the whole group why they chose that particular resource or word.
4. Discuss with tutors why someone would choose a particular word or resource over another. For instance, why would one tutor focus on phonics while another might focus on good literature? Why would one want to help a learner make changes in her life while another would want to use tasks from daily life?
5. Discuss with tutors what they think the advantage is of one perspective or belief over another. There is no right or wrong answer; rather, this provides tutors with an opportunity to explore everyone's ideas.

Activity B

Literacy perspectives and tutoring

Use of handout, reflection, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 5.3: *Defining Your Philosophy of Literacy*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors go over the handout *Defining Your Philosophy of Literacy*.
2. Brainstorm with tutors what resources and methods they would use to work with a learner based on their personal philosophies and beliefs about literacy. For instance, if they believe skills are important and that learning works best in the classroom, they might want the student to work out of workbooks, while another tutor might want to take his learner out on field trips to practise literacy in the real world.
3. Ask tutors what the outcome would be if a learner held different beliefs than the tutor. Have tutors brainstorm some solutions.
4. You may want to have some discussion around the question: Whose belief should they follow? Remind tutors about what they learned in Unit 2, *Adults as Learners*, to guide their discussion.

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If we want to create a learning culture, we have to broaden the definition of learning.



Reading

UNIT
6

Unit 6: Reading

SECTION 1. PURPOSE OF READING			
A. What we read	Core	Option 1: Reflection, discussion Option 2: Creative expression, discussion	10 min 30 min
B. Reasons for reading	Core	Discussion, role-play	5 min
SECTION 2. HOW WE READ			
A. Symbol story	Core	Use of overheads, deciphering a code	20 min
B. Reading process	Core	Use of overheads, discussion	10 min
C. Making sense of what we read	Core	Use of overheads, discussion	10 min
D. Levels of understanding	Core	Use of handout and overhead	15 min
SECTION 3. BASICS OF READING			
A. Basics of reading	Core	Use of handout, discussion	10 min
SECTION 4. READING STRATEGIES			
A. Spell fish	Core	Use of unusual spelling	5 min
B. Phonemic awareness	Core	Reflection, discussion	5 min
C. Phonics	Core	Discussion, use of handouts	15 min
D. Cloze	Core	Use of handouts, work alone and in pairs, discussion	15 min
E. To, with and by	Core	Work in pairs, use of reading materials	10 min
F. Think aloud	Core	Use of reading materials, work in pairs	20 min
G. DRTA	Core	Use of overhead, discussion	15 min
SECTION 5. READING ASSESSMENT			
A. Strategies for reading	Core	Use of handout, discussion	10 min
B. Learner profiles	Core	Use of handout, group work	15 min
SECTION 6. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER			
A. Developing a lesson plan	Core	Group work	20 min

UNIT
6

Reading

Reading is a complex process. When tutors understand the process they are better able to help their learners. Through this unit, tutors will look at the purpose, the process and the components of reading, and at some reading strategies they can use with their learners. In the final sections of this unit, tutors will learn how to determine the reading needs of a learner and what reading strategies might work best for the learner.

 **Approx. 4 hours**
using core activities

Concepts

- **Why we read**
- **How we read**
- **Choosing a tutoring strategy**

Builds on

- **Adults as Learners**
- **About Literacy**
- **Planning for Learning**

*Literacy includes reading the world
as well as reading the word.*

Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE/USEFULNESS
Section 3: Basics of Reading		
Teaching Reading to Adults: A Balanced Approach	Pat Campbell	This looks at the process of teaching reading to adults.
Applying Research in Reading Instruction for Adults: First Steps for Teachers	Susan McShane	See chapters 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 for discussion about the components of reading based on scientific research.
Teaching Adults to Read: A Summary of Scientifically Based Research Principles	Mary E. Curtis and John R. Kruidenier	This short booklet discusses emerging principles and trends in research-based principles for adult basic education reading instruction.
Handbook for Literacy Tutors	Chris Harwood	The handbook describes three different types of word recognition strategies.
LITSTART: Strategies for Adult Literacy and ESL Tutors	Patricia Frey	This manual uses the terms reading and word recognition and provides strategies for teaching both. See chapters 6 and 7.
Section 4: Reading Strategies		
Applying Research in Reading Instruction for Adults: First Steps for Teachers	Susan McShane	See chapters 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 for a discussion about the components of reading based on scientific research.
Tips at your Fingertips: Teaching Strategies for Adult Literacy Tutors	Ola M. Brown	See the sections on “Increasing Vocabulary” and “Improving Reading Comprehension” for suggested activities that can be adapted to one-to-one tutoring.
Teaching Reading to Adults: A Balanced Approach	Pat Campbell	This describes different strategies to use depending on the needs of the learner.
LITSTART: Strategies for Adult Literacy and ESL Tutors	Patricia Frey	This includes a large variety of strategies to teach reading.
Reading Rescue 1-2-3	Peggy M. Wilbur	Although these strategies are geared for children, some of them could be adapted to adults.
Tutor Tools	Literacy Alberta	This resource is full of strategies from tutors, that your tutors will love.
Section 5: Reading Assessment		
Assessment Strategies and Reading Profiles	National Institute for Literacy	This organization’s website offers a tutorial on the components of reading and tools to use for assessing word recognition and vocabulary. If you plug in information on a learner, you will get that person’s reading profile.
Student Assessment in Adult Basic Education: A Canadian Snapshot	Pat Campbell	This is a survey of assessment tools being used in English Canada.

Section 1

Purpose of Reading

This section will help tutors understand that we read for different purposes and that we are trying to make sense of what we read.

Activity A

What we read

Option 1 Reflection, discussion

Why choose this option?

You may want to choose this option if you have a limited amount of time.

Materials and equipment

Paper and pencils for tutors

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors make a list of all the tasks they have accomplished in the last 24 hours that involved reading and exactly what reading was involved.
2. Have them note beside each item on the list the purpose and reason of reading that particular item. For example, perhaps they read to get information, for pleasure, to help a child with homework or to prepare a meal.
3. Write the following words on the flip chart: Task, Purpose and Reason.
4. Ask tutors to share their list with the group. As they do, record their answers on the chart, showing the types of reading they did and the purpose for each of them.
5. Based on the discussion, ask tutors why they think we read. Sum up by saying we read different items for different purposes.
6. Ask tutors what we are trying to do when we read. Write their answers on the flip chart.
7. If the following doesn't come out of the discussion, then write on the flip chart "We read to make sense" or "We read for meaning."

Option 2 Creative expression, discussion

Why choose this option?

This activity creates the opportunity for movement and humour and moves beyond words to visual and kinesthetic forms of expression.

You may want to use it if you have more time.

Materials and equipment

Large piece of newsprint for each tutor

Magazines or other craft materials

Flip chart and markers

Variation

Use a role-playing exercise to take the discussion to a deeper level. The idea is to create, and then enact, a setting and some characters for each reading purpose developed in the previous exercise. This will provide tutors with the perspectives of learners. The activity and debriefing discussion may give tutors a deeper level of insight about what it could be like not to be able to read well and how others tend to respond.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to create a mural or a collage of the multiple ways we use reading, such as to get information, for pleasure, to help a child with homework or to prepare a meal.
2. Have them note the purposes and reasons for reading that they portrayed in their collages.
3. Write Task, Purpose and Reason on a flip chart.
4. Ask tutors to share their collages with the group. Record their answers on the flip chart, showing the types of reading they did and the purpose for each of them.
5. Based on the discussion, ask tutors why they think we read. Explain that we read different items for different purposes.
6. Ask tutors what we are trying to do when we read. Write their answers on the flip chart.
7. If the following doesn't come out of the discussion, then write on the flip chart "We read to make sense" or "We read for meaning."

Activity B

Reasons for reading

Use this activity to help your tutors gain further insight into how reading challenges may impact the day-to-day lives of learners.

Discussion, role-play

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Slips of paper

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to choose one purpose for reading listed in the previous activity. Ask them to brainstorm the impact of not being able to read for that purpose. Do this with all the purposes you have listed.
2. Ask tutors to consider the strategies learners might use to compensate for not being able to read in each instance. Many learners have developed coping strategies that enable them to function despite their reading challenges. If you watched the video *Learning for Life* in Unit 5, About Literacy, you may want to brainstorm with tutors how those students learned to cope.
3. To build the role-play, provide tutors with lots of slips of paper. On the slips, ask them to write the reading purposes listed earlier, as well as possible settings (e.g., school, doctor's office, travelling on the bus) and characters (e.g., parent, teacher, government worker, bus driver). Make sure they use separate slips of paper for each purpose, setting and character. Keep the three categories in separate piles.
4. Have pairs or trios then draw one folded slip from each category and role-play the resulting situations.
5. Ask them why they think a learner would come for help with reading.

Section 2

How We Read

This section will help tutors understand the process we use when we read. As fluent readers, we don't think about the process of reading. We go directly from reading to meaning. When we understand the process of reading, we are able to help less fluent readers gain the skills they need to become good readers.

Activity A

Symbol story

Use the symbol story to put tutors in the position of being non-readers and to emphasize the process we go through when we read. With some direction and help, tutors should be able to “crack the code” and read the story.

Use of overheads, deciphering a code

Materials and equipment

Overhead 6.1: *Symbol Story* (or use as a handout)

Overhead 6.2: *Reader's Knowledge*

Overhead projector, screen

Solution to puzzle, at end of this unit's handouts

Preparation

Make copies of *Symbol Story* if you are using it as a handout.

Prepare overheads.

Review the solution.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Explain to tutors that the following activities will help them understand how we read and further explore the concept of reading for meaning.
2. Either put the *Symbol Story* up on an overhead or give tutors copies.
3. Ask tutors to read the story. Give them a minute to see what strategies they will start to use on their own.
4. Explain that each symbol represents a letter in our alphabet and each group of symbols represents a word.
5. If tutors are having difficulty getting started, ask them what they think is happening in the picture.
6. Provide a letter or two as needed. Some tutors will want to match each symbol to a letter, but encourage them to look for patterns in the symbol words.
7. Once tutors have worked out the story, read it together.
8. Ask them what strategies they used. Discuss:
 - picture cues
 - understanding how to spell – letter cues
 - understanding sentence structure – grammar cues
 - word cues
 - their knowledge of the world
9. To summarize, put up the overhead *Reader's Knowledge*.

Activity B

Reading process

The next few activities allow tutors to look more closely at the process we use when we read.

Use of overheads, discussion

Materials and equipment

Overhead 6.3: *Letter Cues*

Overhead 6.4: *Nonsense Words*

Overhead 6.5: *Scrambled Letters*

Overhead projector, screen

Preparation

Prepare overheads.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Put up the overhead *Letter Cues* and see if tutors can fill in the blanks to read the sentence. Discuss the following conclusions:
 - Our knowledge of word recognition helps us fill in the missing letters.
 - It is easier to read when the vowels are missing than it is to read when the consonants are missing.
2. Put up the overhead *Nonsense Words* and ask tutors to pronounce them correctly. Discuss the following conclusion:
 - We use our knowledge of phonics and phonemic awareness to decode unfamiliar words.
3. Put up the overhead *Scrambled Letters* and ask tutors to read it. They will be surprised at how easy it is to read.

Activity C

Making sense of what we read

This further expands on the process of reading. The activity shows that even when we can read the words themselves easily enough, the key to fluent reading is comprehension.

Use of overhead, discussion

Materials and equipment

Overhead 6.6: *The Procedure*

Overhead projector, screen

Preparation

Prepare overhead.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Put up the overhead *The Procedure* and have tutors read it. Once they are finished reading, ask if they know what it's about. State that reading is not just about letters and words, it's about making sense of what we read. Even if we can read and understand every word, that alone does not lead to comprehension.
2. Tell tutors the story is about laundry. Ask them to read it again to see if it makes sense. Our knowledge of the world helps us to comprehend what we read.

Activity D

Levels of understanding

There are three levels at which we comprehend written information. The following activity will help tutors work with these different levels. Often poor readers will use only one level of comprehension. If tutors understand the three levels, they can help their learners expand their own levels of comprehension.

Use of handout and overhead

Materials and equipment

Handout 6.1: *The Shower*

Overhead 6.7: *How We Read*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy handout.

Prepare overhead.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. When we read, we understand at three different levels. Hand out the story *The Shower* and ask tutors to read it, fill in the blanks and answer the questions.
2. When they have finished the exercise, review their answers.
3. List on the flip chart the three levels at which we understand or comprehend text:
 - explicit – factual
 - inferential – implied
 - experiential – based on our own experiences
4. Ask tutors to match a level to each of the questions in the handout.
5. Put up the overhead *How We Read* and sum up the process of reading.

Section 3

Basics of Reading

In order to fully understand the reading process, we need to take it apart, look at its individual pieces, come to know them, and then put them back together. When tutors understand the instructional components of reading, they are able to decide which reading strategies are best to use with their learners. This section looks more closely at those basic components of reading.

Much of the following background information is based on the book *Applying Research in Reading Instruction for Adults: First Steps for Teachers* by Susan McShane. It looks at the following ideas:

- the process of reading
- the components of reading instruction
- a few tutoring tips
- a little about teaching ESL learners

The process of reading

Reading is about making sense of the text on the page. Fluent readers do that without knowing the process they use; they do it without thinking about it, automatically. Making sense of *teaching* reading, therefore, becomes a complex process because we need to break an automatic skill into the component steps that we don't usually think about. The result is that there are many books and articles about how to understand the steps involved in fluent reading well enough to teach them.

Adult literacy training manuals frequently divide teaching reading into two distinct processes: comprehension and word attack skills. However, each manual looks at these processes a bit differently, and then applies them to teaching reading in a different way. If you are interested in learning more, look through the resources for this section listed at the beginning of the unit.

This training manual teaches reading by dividing the process into five basic instructional components:

- phonemic awareness training
- decoding instruction (phonics and sight words)
- fluency development
- vocabulary development
- comprehension

Susan McShane and others further categorize these five instructional components into print skills and meaning skills. Viewing the five components through this skills-lens helps an instructor know where to begin. It identifies a learner's strengths and weaknesses and shows the strategies to use. Teaching someone print skills will include phonemic awareness training, decoding instruction and fluency development. Teaching meaning skills will include vocabulary development and comprehension. Each of these components is defined below.

As you read these definitions, remember that someone learning to read will learn these skills at the same time, not one after another. Tutors need to focus on all these skills in each session. The final section of this unit, Putting It All Together, will help tutors learn how to do this.

The components of reading instruction

Phonemic awareness training teaches a learner to detect, think about and manipulate the individual small sound-parts within words. This in turn helps a learner understand how the words in our language are represented in print. It moves from an understanding of rhymes through an awareness of words in a sentence to an awareness of syllables. Research shows that some struggling readers need to learn to hear the sounds we make in speech. This can be quite difficult to teach, and those with a reading difficulty may never hear all the sounds we make.

Decoding instruction includes teaching a learner about phonics and sight words. Phonics is the correspondence between our language's sounds and the letters we use to represent those sounds. Phonics instruction teaches the sound of each letter as well as teaching about syllables, prefixes and suffixes. Research shows that some students need to be taught phonics directly. Sight words are words that we learn as a complete unit, by automatic recognition.

Fluency development is learning to read as easily as we speak. It involves knowing all the words in a printed text and being able to focus on meaning instead of decoding each individual word.

Vocabulary development builds knowledge of the words used in a language and expands the range of words known to an individual.

Comprehension strategies help learners to actively understand what they read.

Tutoring tips for teaching phonics and phonemic awareness

- Tutors should teach phonics and phonemic awareness together. It's important for learners to know not only the sound of a letter but how it sounds in a word. In other words, tutors should not try to teach sounds in isolation, without connecting them to words.
- It's a good idea for tutors to develop methods of assessing the learners' strengths and weaknesses. They can use simple tasks to determine the areas to work on, and so avoid getting bogged down in teaching phonemes and phonics the learner already knows. For example, if a learner cannot read words with blended sounds, it's clear that blended sounds are an area to teach. (Nonsense words really test a person's ability to read phonetically.)
- Remind tutors that although there may be lots to teach, they should focus on one or two particular areas of need in each session and provide an opportunity for practice. For example, focus just on short vowel sounds and blends, and let the learner work with them long enough to really understand and know them before moving on.

- Tutors should explain to learners that the purpose of learning phonemes and phonics is to help them read and sound out unknown words. Learning phonics and developing phonemic awareness is not an end in itself. Its goal is to help learners become better readers.
- Tutors should use only a small portion of the tutoring session to focus on phonics and phonemes. Remember that a good tutoring session focuses on all the components of reading.
- Plan the lesson and adjust the difficulty of what you are presenting. Make it possible for the learner to be 80-90 per cent successful. Make the exercises easier by having fewer choices and shorter words.
- If the learner becomes frustrated, discontinue the exercises and move on to something where she experiences success.

Teaching reading to ESL learners

It's **not** important to use all the components of reading when working with ESL learners. The greatest challenge they face in reading English is vocabulary development, not phonemic awareness development or decoding instruction. They may have difficulty pronouncing words and therefore have weak phonemic awareness skills, but that doesn't affect their understanding of print; it affects their understanding of speech. As McShane points out, ESL learners often have strong word attack skills and reading fluency, with a relative weakness in comprehension. What holds them back is their limited English vocabulary.

Tutors should keep in mind that beginning ESL learners will need to focus on basic vocabulary, while more advanced learners will need to learn idioms.

*Comprehension is the essence of reading;
without comprehension, reading does
not occur.*

Patricia Frey in *LITSTART*

Activity A

Basics of reading

Depending on the interest and abilities of your tutors and your own comfort with the concepts presented, you may touch on this subject lightly or go more in-depth. Lead the discussion in the way that best suits your abilities and the interests of your tutors.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 6.2: *Basics of Reading*

Preparation

Copy handout.

Do some background reading.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to name what they think are the most important skills in learning to read.
2. Pass out the handout *Basics of Reading*. Discuss:
 - the difference between phonemic awareness and phonics
 - the importance of developing vocabulary
 - the need to learn phonemic awareness and fluency and to develop vocabulary simultaneously. (Have tutors think back to the symbol story. Point out that they didn't need to learn each symbol individually in order to read the story. Therefore, reading doesn't require learning phonemic awareness, then developing fluency and then increasing vocabulary to build comprehension. Rather, the basics interact and reinforce one another. They often develop together. With this in mind, tutors should include all aspects in a tutoring session.)
3. Explain to tutors that later on in the workshop they will learn how to use strategies to teach the different components of reading.

Additional strategies

In this section we cover many reading strategies, but there are still many more that we know are useful. We have therefore created ten additional handouts (called *More Strategies*) that you can give your tutors if you wish.

Section 4

Reading Strategies

In this section, tutors will learn a variety of strategies to use with their learners.

Activity A

Spell fish

Use this as a fun look at how our language works and how complicated phonics really is.

This activity shows that there are other ways to spell *fish*. It will help tutors hear the sounds of language.

Use of unusual spelling

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors how to spell the word *fish*.
2. Tell them this is how to spell *fish* and write *ghoti* on the board.
3. Explain that *gh* is the same sound at the end of *rough*. The *o* is the same vowel sound in *women*. The *ti* is the sound at the beginning of *tion*.

Activity B

Phonemic awareness

The following activity is based on *Applying Research in Reading Instruction for Adults: First Steps for Teachers* by Susan McShane. It will show tutors how to listen for the sounds in words. Tutors can also use it informally to test the sounds a learner is able to hear. This activity uses multi-syllabic words but, when working with learners, tutors should start with one-syllable words.

Reflection, discussion

Materials and equipment

Paper and pencils for tutors if the group is large

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. In the following activity, tutors can either write down the answers or, if the group is small, they can say the answers out loud.

2. Read the following words out loud or use your own words. Ask tutors which sound they hear at the beginning of the words.
 - sensation
 - reservoir
 - winterize
 - buffalo
 - monopoly
 - diversion
3. Ask tutors which sound is similar in the following group of words: nourishment, neighbourhood, negotiate.
(Answer: sound made by the beginning letter *n*)
4. Ask tutors which word doesn't belong to the group: technical, tendency, universal.
(Answer: universal because others start with the letter *t*)
5. Ask tutors how many sounds (phonemes) are in the word *fish*.
(Answer: three sounds)
6. Ask tutors what word the following sounds make: p-i-ch-r.
(Answer: pitcher)
7. Ask tutors what word is made when you remove the *s/* from slouch.
(Answer: ouch)

Activity C

Phonics

Teaching a learner about word families or the sound of various letters are examples of strategies a tutor can use to teach phonics. Remind tutors that they should not use these strategies as a series, one after the other in one lesson.

This activity will give tutors practice using exercises that teach phonics. They can use these exercises with their learners with the following cautions:

- Teach letter sounds in a sequence (see the handout *Tips for Phonemic Awareness and Phonics*).
- Focus on sounds with which a learner is having difficulty, rather than “teaching” something the learner already knows.
- Focus on the sounds within words rather than on the sounds in isolation.

Discussion, use of handouts

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Cards with words from two or three word families written on them, one word per card

Handout 6.3: *Tips for Phonemic Awareness and Phonics*

Preparation

Make a list of word families on the cards.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Remind tutors of the important cautions about teaching phonics (see the introduction to this activity). Tell them that they can use phonics to teach beginning and intermediate readers how to decode unknown words and that the following exercises are examples of phonics instruction. Another way to teach phonics is to include it in a spelling program (see Unit 8, Spelling).
2. First example: Ask tutors to look around the room and name everything that ends with the letter *s*. Ask tutors to name other words that end in the letter *s*. Tutors can use this exercise with beginning sounds, blends or ending sounds when working with a learner.
3. Second example: Tutors can teach word families to help learners who have difficulty hearing vowel sounds. Write the words in the word family *at* on the flip chart (for example, *cat, mat, bat, rat*) and ask tutors to make as many rhyming words as they can by just changing the first sound of the word.
4. Third example: Have a list of words on cards from two or three word families. Tutors sort the cards into the correct piles of similar word families. For example: *sing, ring, thing; rash, splash, flash*.
5. Review the handout *Tips for Phonemic Awareness and Phonics*. Ask tutors how they would use phonemic awareness and phonics in a tutoring session, based on information from the handout.

Activity D

Cloze

Cloze is an exercise that helps readers learn to predict words in a text by using context. In the exercise, predictable words are left out from text. Cloze can also be used to practise vocabulary in text.

Use of handouts, work alone and in pairs, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 6.4: *The Laundromat*

Handout 6.5: *Creating Cloze Text*

Samples of reading material

Correction fluid

Preparation

Copy handouts and reading passages for tutors.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give tutors a copy of *The Laundromat* and ask them to fill in the blanks.
2. When they are finished, ask tutors what strategies they used to determine the missing words. For example, their knowledge of the world helped them know that the second missing word is *week*. Their knowledge of grammar and context helped them with other words. Demonstrate how some of the blanks could have more than one correct word, based on a person's background experience.
3. Pass out the handout *Creating Cloze Text*.
4. Ask tutors to choose one of the samples of text and use the correction fluid to cover up predictable words. Then ask them to work in pairs and to read each other's text.

Activity E

To, with and by

Tutors can use this technique to help learners develop fluency. The demonstration method, which is based on information from *Reading Rescue 1-2-3* by Peggy M. Wilbur, is used often in training fighter pilots. The jet has a set of two controls. First the trainer shows the manoeuvre to the trainee. Next, the trainer does the manoeuvre with the trainee. Finally, the trainee does it by himself or herself.

Work in pairs, use of reading materials

Materials and equipment

Samples of reading material

Preparation

Find samples of reading material that will be suitable for the activity.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to work in pairs and role-play, one as a tutor and the other as a learner.
2. Ask each pair to select a reading passage.
3. The first time the tutor reads the passage to the learner.
4. Then the tutor reads the same passage with the learner.
5. Finally, the learner reads the passage by herself.
6. Have tutors switch roles and go through the process again.

Activity F

Think aloud

Good readers go through a process of making predictions, visualizing and using prior experience. They monitor themselves as they read and correct errors as they go. They take these steps so automatically and unconsciously that they aren't even aware of it. Studies show that poor readers, on the other hand, are weak in making predictions, visualizing, linking with prior knowledge, monitoring and self-correction. This activity will help tutors become aware of how they think as they read. Tutors can use this same activity with learners to help them be aware of the thinking process good readers use and to develop that skill themselves.

You will first model the procedure to your tutors and then they will practise it.

Use of reading materials, work in pairs

Materials and equipment

Several types of reading material, such as magazine and newspaper articles and fiction.

Preparation

Find samples of reading material that will be suitable for the activity.

Tutoring tip

Tutors can build on the interests and daily reading needs of the learners to choose relevant material for these exercises. For example, they could use a description of how to apply for subsidized housing, a note from the teacher to parents about giving consent for field trips or a pamphlet about the exhibits at the zoo.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Select a short passage to read to tutors. As you read,
 - Make predictions and develop hypotheses.
 - “I think this is about...”
 - “I wonder if...”
 - “It looks like...is going to happen.”
 - Describe visual images.
 - “I can see a boat on the sand...”
 - “It’s a rowboat with no paint and it’s worn by the weather.”
 - Share an analogy or make links to prior knowledge.
 - “I remember the large dark green boat we used at our family reunion. It was such a heavy boat that I couldn’t row it.”
 - Monitor confusing points.
 - “I didn’t get that piece...”
 - “I don’t understand this sentence. I have to go back and check that.”
 - “What was that I read before? Where did I read that part again?”
 - Use fix-up strategies or self-correction.
 - “Oh, I thought the boat was on the beach but really it’s out in the water. I’ll have to reread that. I think it’s a lake. Maybe it’s the ocean. If I read on maybe I will know where the boat is.”
2. Have tutors pair up and ask each tutor to select a different reading passage.
3. One tutor will read his passage first and think out loud as shown in the example step 1. Remind tutors that they may need to slow down to catch all their thoughts because, as good readers, the thoughts will come automatically, subtly. The other tutor will record the first tutor’s thoughts.
4. Have tutors switch roles.
5. Once everyone has finished, ask tutors if they were surprised at what came into their mind as they read. What type of strategies did they use to make sense of their reading?
6. Let tutors know they can use this strategy with their learners. Tutors and learners should have different reading material. When selecting reading material for the learners, tutors need to choose material familiar to the learners.
7. It would be a good idea for tutors to make recordings of their learners thinking aloud, and to include them in the learners’ portfolios. The learners could then listen to their earlier think-alouds and see how far they have progressed.

Activity G

DRTA (Directed Reading Thinking Activity)

Tutors can use this activity to help learners use their experience and knowledge of the world to understand what they read.

Use of overhead, discussion

Materials and equipment

Overhead 6.8: *Freeze up on the Yellowhead*

Overhead projector and screen

Flip charts and markers

Preparation

Prepare overhead.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Write the words Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) on the flip chart.
2. Explain to tutors that this activity will help learners learn two things. First, learners will recognize that the purpose of reading is to make sense of what they read. Second, they will learn to ask good questions. When using DRTA, a learner makes predictions and then reads to check those predictions, asking and answering a series of questions.
3. Put up the overhead *Freeze up on the Yellowhead* with only the title showing.
4. Ask tutors to make predictions about the story based on the title.
5. Uncover the first paragraph and ask which guesses were true and which were false. What guesses still haven't been verified?
6. Have tutors make a few more predictions and then read on to see if they are right. Point out to tutors that we don't always make correct predictions but, as good readers, we know that incorrect predictions are just part of reading. Poor readers believe good readers never make mistakes in reading. DRTA can help tutors show learners the process we use when we read: we predict, we read and check, and we either change our prediction or verify it.
7. Keep on making predictions and reading through the rest of the story.

The focus should be on reading to learn not learning to read.

Facilitation tip

To tie the experience of making predictions into topics and experiences that will be meaningful to the learner, you can guide tutors to use personal stories provided by other learners as the content for the exercise. Tutors can find learner stories in the *English Express* newspaper for adult learners or in books written by other learners.

Section 5

Reading Assessment

One of the biggest challenges is deciding which strategies will work best with a learner. As the coordinator, you should have done an initial assessment. If you are using the Canadian Adult Reading Assessment (CARA), you may even have an idea whether the learner relies more on print or meaning cues to read. You will then know if the learner should work more on print skills or meaning skills.

Readers who rely on meaning but pay little attention to print should work on strategies that help them focus on the text itself, such as learning about word families. Those who rely on print but not meaning will need to use strategies that help them focus on the content, such as cloze and DRTA. Those who lose meaning because they have difficulty decoding words will need to work on both print and meaning skills. Of course, most learners' reading needs are not so obvious. This section will help tutors to review information from a learner's profile and do an informal assessment to determine what strategies will work best for that learner.

Activity A

Strategies for reading

Tutors will become aware of strategies they can use for learners at different reading levels or abilities.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 6.6: *Strategies for Reading*

Flip chart and markers

A variety of reading strategies included in this manual and in other resources in your program. (Some are in the back of this unit with the other handouts. Others are listed in Patricia Frey's *LITSTART*, Mary Norton's *Journeyworkers* and other tutor handbooks listed in the bibliography. You may have some strategies in your program from other workshops.)

Preparation

Look through the resources and workshop material you have on hand to find other reading strategies to share with your tutors. Make copies of the strategies for tutors to include in their handbooks.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Look over the handout *Strategies for Reading* and discuss it with tutors.
2. Bring out following points:
 - The chart is divided into levels of ability.
 - Under each level is a listing of different strategies that are most effective at that level.
3. Review briefly the strategies not already discussed in this unit, especially the use of sight words and language experience (see the Language Experience activity in Unit 7, Writing, Section 4).
4. Show tutors where in your program they can find a variety of strategies.

Activity B

Learner profiles

The profiles of learners can come from your own resources or you can use the ones provided.

A number of manuals refer to stages or grades to indicate different reading levels. To keep the concept simple, this manual will refer to learners as beginning, intermediate and advanced.

Use of handout, group work

Materials and equipment

Handout 6.6: *Strategies for Reading* from Activity A

Handout 6.7: *Learner Profiles* (4 pages)

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Make copies of the learner profiles handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors work in pairs or in small groups. Give each group the profile of a learner and a flip chart. They are to record their work on the flip chart and then present it to the rest of the group.
2. Ask each group to record the reading level of their learner and to brainstorm what they think the learner's reading needs might be.
3. Have tutors determine what type of strategies would work best with their learner using the *Strategies for Reading* handout from the previous activity. Remind tutors to take learning styles and cultural background into consideration. Different strategies work with different reading needs, learning styles and personalities. Some learners may have a learning disability that will require more effort.
4. Give tutors about 10 minutes to complete the activity.
5. Ask tutors to present their assessments to the rest of the group.

Section 6

Putting It All Together

This section will give tutors an opportunity to develop a lesson plan for a learner. They will learn how to take the information they gained from an informal assessment and use it to develop a lesson plan.

Activity A

Developing a lesson plan

Group work

Materials and equipment

Handout 6.6: *Strategies for Reading from Section 3, Activity A*

Flip chart and markers

Books and other resources that will give tutors ideas about and information on strategies to teach reading

Preparation

Make a list of the reading components to post so tutors can refer to it.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. As a large group, brainstorm how a tutor could use all the components of reading instruction in a tutoring session, even if the focus is just on one text. For example, you may read a text together either at the beginning or end of the lesson to practise fluency. You may take unknown words from that text or another text to build vocabulary. There may be other words in the text the learner had difficulty decoding that you could work on. You may need to do a few comprehension exercises. All the components of reading instruction can come from one text.
2. Using the same groups and profiles as in Section 5, Activity B, ask tutors to plan a tutoring session using the strategies they have selected. Remind them to include all the components of reading in their session. Also, remind them about the training they had on lesson planning and ask them to incorporate that into their lesson plan. (You might need to have a quick brainstorm about lesson planning to refresh their memories.)
3. Have resources available for tutors to look over that use a variety of the strategies listed on the handout. You can use print out sheets or other tutor handbooks you have in your program. You can also use copies of the strategies listed at the end of this unit.
4. Give tutors about 10 minutes for the activity. When they are finished, have them present their lesson plan to the rest of the group.

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*What can be said can be written, what
can be written can be read, what can
be read can be understood and what
can be understood can change the way
someone thinks or feels.*

Beth Ann Herrmann in *The Volunteer Tutor's Toolbox*



Writing

UNIT
7

Unit 7: Writing

SECTION 1. BELIEFS ABOUT WRITING			
A. Experiences of and feelings about writing	Core	Reflection, discussion, work in pairs	20 min
B. Beliefs about writing	Core	Reflection, discussion	20 min
C. Supporting learners in writing	Core	Reflection, use of handout, discussion	15 min
SECTION 2. WHY WE WRITE			
A. We write for a purpose	Core	Option 1. Discussion Option 2. Creative expression, discussion	15 min 30 min
SECTION 3. WRITING PROCESS			
A. The steps involved in writing	Core	Discussion	15 min
B. Mapping	Core	Discussion, use of handout	20 min
C. Drafting	Core	Use of handouts, discussion	20 min
D. Revising and rewriting	Core	Use of handouts, discussion	20 min
E. Editing and proofreading	Core	Discussion, use of handouts	15 min
F. Publishing and sharing	Core	Discussion	5 min
SECTION 4. WRITING STRATEGIES			
A. Language experience	Core	Use of video, handout, discussion	30 min
B. Written conversations	Core	Discussion, role-play	15 min
C. Free writing	Core	Practice	15 min
D. Journals	Core	Discussion	10 min
SECTION 5. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER			
A. Assessing writing needs	Core	Work in pairs, use of handouts, discussion	20 min
B. Developing a lesson plan	Core	Reflection, use of handouts, discussion	30 min

UNIT 7

Writing

Writing can be a frightening experience, even for good readers. We rarely think of our writing as being as good as our reading. We have preconceived notions of what writing is, how we do it and how it should be taught. Through the activities in this unit, tutors will have an opportunity to explore those notions. They will discover how they feel about writing, understand why they write and find out how to support learners in developing their own writing skills. Tutors will look at the process of writing and learn some strategies to encourage their learners to write. They will then look at how to assess their learners' writing needs and develop lesson plans based on those needs.

Writing is almost like reading, except the process is done backwards ... writing is encoding symbols into meaningful text ... reading ... is decoding the text into meaningful ideas.

Saskatchewan Level 1 Tutor Training Kit – Tutor Manual

 **Approx 5 hours**
using core activities

Concepts

- **Why we write**
- **The writing process**
- **How to assess writing skills**
- **How to teach writing**

Builds on

- **Adults as Learners**
- **Planning for Learning**

Facilitation tip

You may want to combine Unit 8, Spelling with this unit because spelling is an important part of editing a writer's work.

Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE / USEFULNESS
Section 1: Beliefs About Writing		
STAPLE '96	Pat Campbell and Flo Brokop	This CD helps explore beliefs about writing.
Section 2: Why We Write		
An Introduction to Literacy Teaching	Rose Gittins	This text uses case studies to show how to incorporate writing into sessions and how to teach writing using different examples from the learners' daily life.
Handbook for Literacy Tutors	Chris Harwood	The handbook includes ideas and tips for writing different items such as cheques and e-mails.
Section 3: Writing Process		
Saskatchewan Level 1 Tutor Training Kit: Tutor Manual	Saskatchewan Literacy Network	See the section on the writing process and using mapping.
Handbook for Literacy Tutors	Chris Harwood	See the section on the writing process with writing ideas and mapping techniques.
STAPLE '96	Pat Campbell and Flo Brokop	This CD helps tutors work through the process of writing.
If You're Trying to Teach Kids How to Write, You've Gotta Have this Book!	Marjorie Frank	This is an inspiring book related to opening up the world of writing. Though the book is directed to those working with young people, a teacher has used the ideas for teaching journalism students in university. It has a set of beliefs and numerous creative approaches for unlocking ideas and stimulating and strengthening writing skills.
Section 4: Writing Strategies		
LITSTART	Patricia Frey	This includes a variety of strategies to teach writing.
Saskatchewan Level 1 Tutor Training Kit: Tutor Manual	Saskatchewan Literacy Network	The manual includes a few step-by-step strategies.
Writing Out Loud	Deborah Morgan	This manual has a collection of exercises and ideas for reluctant writers.
More Writing Out Loud	Deborah Morgan	This manual offers more ideas but also includes strategies for creating safe writing environments and the importance of celebrating writing through publishing and public readings.

Section 1

Beliefs About Writing

In this section, tutors will first explore their experiences and feelings about writing. Then they will explore their beliefs about writing. Finally they will look at the misconceptions their learners may have about writing and brainstorm ways to help their learners overcome them.

Activity A

Experiences of and feelings about writing

People often think that they don't write as well as they read. Many have negative feelings towards writing for one reason or another. This activity will help tutors to assess their own feelings and experiences with writing.

Reflection, discussion, work in pairs

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors imagine a line in the room to be a scale from 1 to 10. Ten represents a really good reader and one is a really poor reader.
2. Ask tutors to stand on the line based on how well they think they read. If they see themselves as good readers, they will be close to the end of the line and vice versa.
3. Then ask tutors to stand on the line based on how well they think they write. Most people will rank their writing lower than their reading.
4. Ask tutors why they think they are better readers than writers.
5. Have tutors pair up and discuss
 - what type of writing they have done
 - how they feel about their writing
 - why they think many people have negative feelings about writing
6. Have each pair record their discussion on flip chart paper. They can either make a list or a picture/diagram to capture their discussion.
7. Have each pair share their list or picture/diagram with the group.

*Writing is a learned activity,
not an acquired skill.*

Anna De Luca

Variation

It might feel too personal for tutors to reveal how well they read and write to the whole group. Instead, for the first part of this activity, they can work in pairs. Each pair can discuss how they see themselves as readers and writers, on a scale of 1 to 10, and why they might be better at one skill than the other. The same pairs then continue with the rest of the activity.

Activity B

Beliefs about writing

Some people may believe that writing is all about the mechanics and that getting the mechanics right is all it takes to be a good writer. This activity will give tutors an opportunity to explore their own beliefs about writing. This, in turn, will make it possible for them to better assist their learners.

Facilitation tip

For tutors, as for learners and everyone else, some beliefs about writing are deeply rooted. It won't be easy to change them just because someone says they are wrong. So instead of setting out to change tutors' beliefs outright, see this as a first step towards that goal. Help your tutors understand their misconceptions and begin to shift their thinking and then do the same for their learners.

Reflection, discussion

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Divide the room into four areas:
 - strongly agree
 - agree
 - disagree
 - strongly disagree
2. Read the following statements and ask tutors to move to the area that best fits with their beliefs. After reading each statement, and once tutors have moved to their selected spot, ask tutors to discuss why they chose that particular area. If you have a large group, you may want to read only a few statements or limit the amount of response to each statement.
 - Reading and writing should be taught together.
 - Writing instruction should be carried out over an extended period. That way, tutors can observe the learners' writing and adjust their teaching strategies based on their observations.
 - Since tutors have more experience writing and more knowledge of the skills necessary for effective writing than learners do, they need to correct all the learners' writing mistakes.
 - It's okay for learners to use temporary spelling (like spelling a word the way it sounds) if they don't know how to spell the word correctly.
 - The main purpose of writing instruction is to develop good editing skills.
 - Lack of spelling, grammar and punctuation makes writing so difficult that it is best to postpone writing instruction until the learners develop these skills.
 - We learn to write by writing.
3. Sum up by saying that some of our beliefs about writing and writing instruction may need to change if we are going to effectively help our learner develop good writing skills.

Activity C

Supporting learners in writing

Tutors should understand that their learners will have some of the same concerns as they do about writing, and so should look at ways to support their learners to make the process of learning how to write as stress-free as possible.

Reflection, use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 7.1: *How to Help Your Learner*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what misconceptions they believe their learners might have about writing and what the origin of those misconceptions could be. Possible misconceptions include the following:
 - They need to know how to spell before they can start writing.
 - They don't know how to write a proper sentence, so they can't even start writing.
 - They are not sure what to write.
 - They are afraid of making mistakes and they can't write if they make mistakes.
 - They are not sure how to start.
2. Brainstorm with tutors how they could help learners become aware of their misconceptions about writing and how they might change them. Tutors may need to change their own misconceptions to be able to support their learners. This might be something that the tutor and learner could work on together. Look over the handout *How to Help Your Learner* and discuss effective ways to help learners with writing. For example:
 - how to support learners in determining an audience
 - how to create an environment to support learners in taking risks.

*There is no reason to write unless
there is a purpose.*

*Saskatchewan Level 1 Tutor Training Kit
Tutor Manual*

Section 2

Why We Write

The main reason for writing is to communicate. When we communicate, we do it for a particular reason. We choose formats such as letters, cards, cheques and forms, depending on what our writing has to communicate.

Tutors will first explore the reasons people write; then they will connect those reasons with the formats they choose. Finally, tutors will explore why their learners need to understand the reason for writing and how to include writing in a lesson.

Activity A

We write for a purpose

Option 1 Discussion

Why choose this option?

Choose this option if you have limited time.

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors why people write. Explore the fact that we write to communicate and for a purpose.
2. Ask tutors to brainstorm the reasons people have for writing. Write their ideas on the flip chart. For example:
 - to convey a message
 - for enjoyment
 - to accomplish a specific goal
 - to get information
3. Make a list of the different items people want to write such as:
 - lists
 - journals
 - letters
 - cards
 - e-mails
4. Some of the writing we do is informal, while other writing is formal. Ask tutors to identify from the list generated what is formal and informal writing.
5. Ask tutors why is it important for the learner to see the purpose and reason for writing. Write their ideas on the flip chart. For example:
 - We use it in our day-to-day life.
 - When learners can see the purpose and reason for writing, they may be more willing to write.
6. Discuss with tutors the possible challenges the learners may have faced with writing and the ways the learners may have dealt with those challenges.
7. Have tutors brainstorm how they could include writing in their sessions. Write their ideas on the flip chart. For example, keeping a journal could be part of the session.

Option 2 Creative expression, discussion

Why choose this option?

Choose this option if you are comfortable with using an arts-based approach to explore a concept.

Materials and equipment

Flip chart

Large piece of newsprint

Markers/crayons

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors why people write. Explore the fact that we write to communicate and for a purpose.
2. Put up a large piece of newsprint. Tell the group that together they will create a mural on it. The activity will provide an opportunity for movement, visual appeal and humour.
3. Ask all tutors to use markers or crayons to simultaneously create images and pictures of the multiple ways writing is part of day-to-day life. Alternatively, if you want to reduce repetition, you could have one group of tutors start the mural and then ask the next group to add more images.
4. Sum up by asking tutors the following questions:
 - How could this visual activity be adapted between a tutor and a learner to open up dialogue on how writing fits into the learner's day-to-day needs?
 - What challenges with writing has the learner encountered?
 - How has the learner managed to deal with those challenges?
5. Ask tutors to brainstorm the reasons people have for writing. Write their ideas on the flip chart or note them on the mural. For example, people write
 - to convey a message
 - for enjoyment
 - to accomplish a specific goal
 - to get information
6. Again using the flip chart or the mural, make a list of the different items people want to write:
 - lists
 - journals
 - letters
 - cards
 - e-mails
7. Some of the writing we do is informal, while other writing is formal. Ask tutors to identify from the lists and/or mural what is formal and informal writing.
8. Ask tutors why is it important for the learner to see the purpose and reason for writing. Write their ideas on the flip chart. For example:
 - We use it in our day-to-day life.
 - When learners can see the purpose and reason for writing, they may be more willing to write.
9. Have tutors brainstorm how they could include writing in their sessions. Write their ideas on the flip chart. For example, keeping a journal could be part of the session.

Section 3

Writing Process

Writing follows a process in the same way that reading does, but in the reverse. As with reading, fluent writers often use this process unconsciously, without thinking about it. Tutors will review the process used in writing and then look at each step more closely. Once they know and understand the steps used, they will be able to teach writing to their learners.

Facilitation tip

Knowing learners will often lack confidence in their ability as writers, you can engage tutors in a dialogue about how to build a learner's confidence at various points in the process of writing.

Activity A

The steps involved in writing

A key concept to remember when choosing writing topics is that it is best to choose topics that matter to the learner. Topics can come from a wide variety of sources that are part of a learner's experience or that touch on something meaningful.

It will help to work with the learner's daily writing needs, such as writing a note to the teacher to say her child cannot come to school or writing a shopping list.

Discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to think about the last things they wrote. What steps did they take? List on the flip chart.
2. Explain to tutors that writing follows a process and that they should therefore teach writing as a process – not a product.
3. List the steps in the writing process on the flip chart:
 - choosing a topic
 - brainstorming
 - drafting
 - revising and rewriting
 - editing and proofreading
 - publishing and sharing
4. Review with tutors where and how to help learners generate ideas for writing. You could use pictures and articles for ideas. You may have some lists of writing ideas in your office. Share them with your tutors.

Activity B

Mapping

In this activity, tutors will learn how to use mapping with their learners.

Facilitation tip

If you haven't done a mapping activity before, you may want to practise one first, before leading this activity.

Discussion, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 7.2: *Brainstorming or Mind-mapping* (2 pages)

Preparation

Be sure you are comfortable with the mapping process. See the example at the end of this unit and use it to practise, if necessary.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors tell you what they know about brainstorming. You may want to write down their ideas.
2. Explain that you are going to work through an activity that helps with brainstorming.
3. Write "My dream garden" or another topic in the middle of the flip chart and circle it.
4. Discuss the topic and write related words and ideas as they come to mind. Draw lines from main words to other related words to create the spokes of a wheel.
5. Place words that are similar next to one another. This is called clustering. Explain to tutors that some people wait until they have finished mapping and then make clusters of related words, but it's fine to do it while you're making the original map.
6. Give each cluster a heading.
7. The clusters can now become sentences and paragraphs.
8. Ask tutors if they have used this process before. Would they be able to use it with their learners? Why or why not?
9. Help tutors problem-solve about using mapping until they seem comfortable with the process. Review with tutors the handout *Brainstorming or Mind-mapping*.
10. In small groups or pairs, have tutors do a mapping activity using a topic of their choice.

Activity C

Drafting

Use of handouts, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 7.3: *Composing: Pre-questionnaire*

Handout 7.4: *How to Assist Composing*

Handout 7.5: *Composing: Post-questionnaire*

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what it means to write a draft.
2. Ask tutors what process they have used in writing a first draft.
3. Have tutors complete the handout *Composing: Pre-questionnaire*.
4. Review the handout *How to Assist Composing*.
5. Have tutors complete the handout *Composing: Post-questionnaire*.
6. Have tutors compare their own pre- and post-questionnaire answers. Ask if anyone is willing to share the differences in their answers and why (if) they changed their answers. (Statements 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8 are true. Statements 3, 4, 6, 9 and 10 are false.)
7. If tutors are still having problems with some of the ideas in the questionnaire, discuss the answers with them.
8. Have tutors brainstorm how they could help their learner compose a first draft.

Activity D

Revising and rewriting

We each have a different way of approaching our writing that is reflected in the way we revise what we have written. This activity will give tutors the opportunity to determine their own style.

Use of handouts, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 7.6: *What Is My Writing Style?*

Handout 7.7: *What Do I Know About Revising?*

Handout 7.8: *Revising*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what they do when they revise a piece of writing.
2. Look at the different writing styles and ask tutors to determine which best describes their own. Use the handout *What Is My Writing Style?*
3. Have tutors complete the handout *What Do I Know About Revising?*
4. Review each of the answers and discuss their beliefs about revising using the handout *Revising*.
5. Have tutors brainstorm how they might help their learner with revising. Write down their ideas on the flip chart.

Activity E

Editing and proofreading

Discussion, use of handouts

Materials and equipment

Handout 7.9: *Writing Checklist*

Handout 7.10: *Writing Sample Analysis* (2 pages)

Handout 7.11: *COPS*

Handout 7.12: *PARAST*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what is involved in the editing and proofreading process. Write their ideas on the flip chart.
2. Look over the *Writing Checklist* and *Writing Sample Analysis* handouts. Ask tutors how they could use these checklists.
3. Review the concepts of *COPS* and *PARAST* using the handouts.
4. Tutors should understand that ESL learners will have difficulty proofreading due to a limited vocabulary and challenges with grammar. Ask tutors how they might help an ESL learner proofread. For example:
 - Tutors can provide a clue to the type of errors.
 - Tutors can correct and explain errors that the learner doesn't identify.
 - Although there are some excellent ESL grammar books the focus should not be on grammar.

Activity F

Publishing and sharing

Discussion

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors if they have ever shared their writing or had it published. How did that feel? Would they want that to happen?
2. What would be the benefit to their learners of asking them to share their writing?
3. Have tutors brainstorm some ways for learners to share their writing. A few places you could suggest are your program's newsletter, *English Express* or a national literacy newsletter.

Each lesson should be a learning experience for both the tutor and the student.

Section 4

Writing Strategies

We can use different strategies to help learners with writing. Choose from the following activities those best suited for your tutors' learners. You could choose to do all of them or only one or two, but remember that tutors are always looking for strategies to use with their learners. They will appreciate knowing these.

Activity A

Language experience

Language experience works well for beginner writers who have limited skill in writing or are hesitant to write. The technique encourages them to write from their own experience. You can then use the material generated by writing the story for further reading and writing exercises.

Use of video, handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 7.13: *Language Experience Procedure*

Video clip: *Creating Learning Partners – Language Experience*

TV and VCR

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Review the process of language experience.

Cue the video to the language experience section.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what they know about using language experience. (If they are new tutors, they may not know anything about this strategy. Seasoned tutors may have heard about this strategy when learning reading strategies.)
2. Briefly describe language experience: a person tells his story, which someone else simultaneously writes down.
3. Explain that the video will demonstrate how to use this strategy with a learner. Watch the video section on language experience.
4. Ask tutors to name the steps they saw outlined in the video. List them on the flip chart.
5. Ask tutors when they would use this strategy and why.
6. Give tutors the handout *Language Experience Procedure*.

Activity B

Written conversations

Written conversations work well for learners who have some experience in writing. They teach the connection between speaking and writing. It's similar to writing notes in school, when a conversation takes place in writing by the speakers/writers passing a piece of paper back and forth between them. Tutors will learn how to use written conversation in their sessions.

Discussion, role-play

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors if they have ever had the kind of conversation where they took turns writing a message and passing the message back and forth, the way children pass notes in school.
2. Explain that written conversations are based on the same idea, but that there are a few things to remember when using this method with their learners.
 - Don't correct any spelling or grammar errors.
 - Tutors should start the conversation and ask questions so the learner has something concrete to write back.
 - Tutors should avoid questions that have a yes or no answer.
 - The learner is free to copy words and phrases tutors have used.
 - When the learner misspells a word, tutors should try to use that word in their response with the correct spelling.
 - Focus on topics of interest that are meaningful to the learner.
3. Ask tutors why this might be a good strategy and which learner needs it would meet.
4. Have tutors pair up and role-play, with one tutor being the learner and the other the tutor. The ones role-playing the learners should make mistakes in their writing and the ones playing the tutors should model good writing in their responses back.
5. Allow two to three minutes and then have the pairs switch roles for another two to three minutes.
6. Ask tutors if they can see this method working for their learners and why or why not.

Activity C

Free writing

Free writing helps to overcome the fear of writing. Tutors will learn how to lead their learners in a free-writing activity. The technique works best for learners who have experience in writing.

Practice

Materials and equipment

Writing paper for each tutor

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Inform tutors that you are all (i.e., coordinator as well as tutors) going to write for five minutes using the following guidelines:
 - Start writing and never stop until the time is up.
 - Write whatever comes into your mind, even if you write “I have nothing to write” over and over again.
 - Ignore all spelling errors.
 - Don’t cross anything out or reread what you have written, just continue writing.
2. When the time is up, read what you wrote. Ask for volunteers who would like to share their writing.
3. Ask tutors how they felt about the writing activity. Why would they use this with their learner as a writing strategy?
4. Share with tutors how free writing can take away the fear of writing:
 - It removes the need to focus on grammar and spelling.
 - It helps a writer to start putting their thoughts on paper.
5. Invite tutors to share what they experienced while writing.

Activity D

Journals

Why choose this activity?

Journal writing can be a way to exchange ideas and to model writing for your learner. Even beginner writers can keep a journal.

Discussion

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask who keeps a journal or has kept a journal at some time.
2. Discuss how often they write in their journals and what types of things they include.
3. Ask tutors how they could help their learners keep a journal and what the benefits would be. Some thoughts might include the following:
 - They can write in their journals every day.
 - They could use a scribbler or other notebook; the journal doesn’t have to be anything fancy.
 - Encourage learners not to worry about errors.
 - Respond to the journal content and not to the format.
 - The tutor could write a sample entry as a model.
 - Writing a journal would help a learner find out what she has to say.
4. Ask tutors if they would use this strategy with their learner. Why or why not?

Tutoring tip

You could provide tutors with creative writing suggestions and have them brainstorm other possibilities. For example, Marjorie Frank states in *If You’re Trying to Teach Kids How to Write, You’ve Gotta Have this Book!* that playing or singing music of “differing styles, moods, rhythms, types, backgrounds and time periods” can inspire people to write. Visual art, family photographs and body movement can stimulate writing, as can a grocery bag of familiar or unfamiliar foods. Taking a walking tour guided by the learner in his neighbourhood could also be a source of ideas.

Facilitation tip

You could have tutors keep a journal (a few sentences per session) as an evaluation for the training series. On the last day, ask tutors to review their journals and add any comments about the series as a whole, what they learned, and so on. Then ask them to hand the journals in to you. They can do this anonymously.

Section 5

Putting It all Together

In this section, tutors will be able to practise how to look at learners' writing samples and determine what writing skills to work on. Tutors can then use this information to develop a lesson plan.

Activity A

Assessing writing needs

Work in pairs, use of handouts, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 7.9: *Writing Checklist*

Handout 7.10: *Writing Sample Analysis* (2 pages)

Handout 7.14: *Profiles of Learners and Their Writing Samples* (8 pages)

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors work in pairs or in small groups.
2. Give each group a profile and sample of a learner's writing.
3. Ask tutors to record on the flip chart what they think might be some of their learners' writing needs. They can use the *Writing Checklist* and *Writing Sample Analysis* from Section 3, Activity E to determine their learner's writing strengths and weaknesses.
4. Have tutors share the profile and what they determined were the writing needs, strengths and weaknesses of the learner.

Activity B

Developing a lesson plan

Reflection, use of handouts, discussion

Materials and equipment

Variety of writing handbooks and strategies (Patricia Frey's *LITSTART*, Deborah Morgan's *Writing Out Loud* and the *Saskatchewan Level I Tutor Training Kit* have some good ideas.)

Handout 7.15: *Writing Topic Sentences*

Handout 7.16: *Sentence Expansion through Questions*

Handout 7.2: *Brainstorming or Mind-mapping* (2 pages)

Preparation

Gather resources from your program that focus on teaching writing skills.
Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors determine what type of strategies would work best with the learner they are matched with or use the learner profiles from the previous activity. Remind tutors to take into consideration the learning styles and/or cultural backgrounds of their learners. Different strategies work for different writing needs. Some learners may have a learning disability that will require the use of specific and consistent strategies.
2. Ask tutors to plan a tutoring session using the strategies they have selected. Remind them about the training they had on lesson planning and ask them to incorporate it into the lesson plan. If tutors need the reminder, brainstorm with them what they know about lesson planning and fill in any missing gaps.
3. Have a variety of strategies available for tutors to look over. Use the resources you have in your program.
4. Give tutors about 10 minutes for the activity. When they are finished, have them share their lesson plans with the rest of the group. To deepen the learning, give them feedback and generate a discussion about the plans presented.

Writing can be understood as a process through which meaning is created, not simply a mechanical exercise focusing on grammatical form, usage and structure.

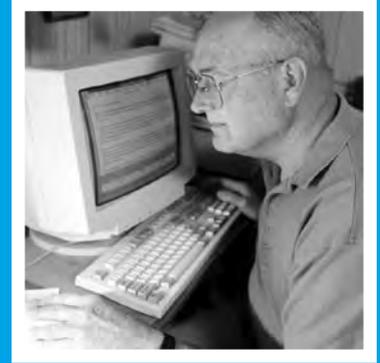
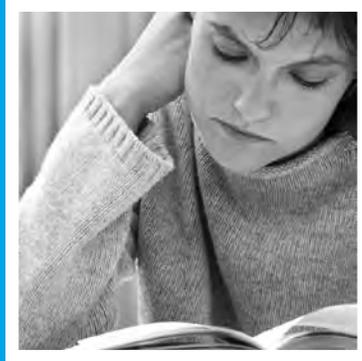
Anna De Luca

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Reading aloud is a good way of helping the student to realize that punctuation is a mechanism to make sense of the passage and is used and controlled by the writer.

Rose Gittins in *An Introduction to Literacy Teaching*



Spelling

UNIT
8

Unit 8: Spelling

SECTION 1. SPELLING AWARENESS			
A. Icebreaker – letter scramble	Optional	Unscrambling words	5 min
B. Reasons for learning to spell	Optional	Discussion	5 min
C. Why it's so hard	Core	Reflection, use of handout, discussion	20 min
D. Many words are not phonetically regular	Optional	Spelling test using phonetics, discussion	5 min
E. How do <i>you</i> learn to spell?	Core	Spelling test to learn approaches to spelling, discussion	10 min
SECTION 2. MEMORY AND SPELLING			
A. Relate memory strategies to spelling	Core	Playing a game	5 min
B. How memory helps spelling	Core	Use of handout, discussion	10 min
C. How to activate long-term memory	Core	Use of overhead, discussion	5 min
SECTION 3. SPELLING TECHNIQUES			
A. Learn general spelling technique	Core	Option 1. Use of video, handout, practice Option 2. Use of handout, practice	15 min 5 min
B. Explore concept of spelling patterns	Optional	Use of overhead, handout, discussion	10 min
C. Learn how to build on a root word	Optional	Discussion, practice, use of handout	5 min
D. Using learning styles to teach spelling	Optional	Demonstration using handout, practice	30 min
SECTION 4. ANALYZING SPELLING ERRORS			
A. Learn to analyze spelling errors	Core	Use of case study, handouts, practice	30 min
SECTION 5. PLANNING FOR SPELLING			
A. Plan mini spelling session	Core	Discussion using handouts, practice	35 min

UNIT 8

Spelling

 **Approx. 2¼ hours**
using core activities

Concepts

- **How spelling works**
- **How to analyze spelling errors**
- **How to teach spelling**

Builds on

- **Adults as Learners**
- **Reading** (*especially phonemic awareness and the use of phonics*)
- **Learning Styles**
- **Writing**

Is spelling an obsolete skill? No, indeed! Even in this age of spell-check software, we need to know how to spell. After all, we don't have our computers with us everywhere; even if we did, we would still need to be able to tell the computer which word was the one that we really wanted.

This unit is built upon the premise that tutors need training to look beyond the traditional spelling list, that they need an appreciation for the difficulties of spelling to understand their learners better, and that they need to be able to analyze spelling errors to build lessons specific for their individual learners.

This unit looks first at spelling difficulties and then presents ways to make spelling easier. Memory tips for spelling, error analysis and using learning styles to teach spelling are highlighted approaches. The unit ends with tutors developing a spelling list and a general approach to spelling and choosing a specific spelling strategy for a fictitious learner. You may want to include handouts from this unit that you don't use in your spelling workshop in a reference booklet on spelling for your tutors to take away.

There are many spelling strategies. It is difficult to cover all of them, so consider using only the more general activities in this unit for your basic tutor training. You could then supplement the basic training with an additional spelling strategy workshop that uses this unit's more specific activities and highlights your own program's resources.

Above all, your tutors need to realize that spelling lists are useless unless they are paired with real writing opportunities and practice. Spelling is a subset of writing and needs to match vocabulary growth.

*My spelling is Wobbly. It's good
spelling but it Wobbles, and the
letters get in the wrong places.*

A. A. Milne

Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE / USEFULNESS
Section 1: Spelling Awareness		
Strategies for Spelling	Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, Adult Learning and Literacy	This is a distance education course that is easy to understand.
Journeyworkers	Mary Norton	This tutor training manual has good background material and appendices. See pages 88-109 and 151-157.
Signposts to Spelling	Joy Pollock	This includes a readable section on the history of spelling, pages 44-56.
History of the English Language	The Answers.com website	This web page gives more in-depth information on the history of English.
English Orthography	The Answers.com website	The web page shows the way the sounds of the English language changed during the course of its history.
Section 2: Memory and Spelling		
Unscrambling Spelling	Cynthia Klein and Robin R. Millar	Pages 16-19 and Resource Sheets 9-12 give a little more background on spelling and some more activities.
Section 3: Spelling Techniques		
Spelling Strategies You Can Teach	Mary Tarasoff	Pages 29-60 cover a variety of spelling techniques.
Section 4: Analyzing Spelling Errors		
Unscrambling Spelling	Cynthia Klein and Robin R. Millar	Pages 26-31 and Resource Sheets 7a and 7b look at error analysis and processing difficulties.
Section 5: Planning for Spelling		
Spelling Strategies You Can Teach	Mary Tarasoff	Pages 1-28 provide some background on approaches to spelling lessons.

Guidelines for developing a spelling program

Cynthia Klein and Robin Millar, in their 1990 book *Unscrambling Spelling*, set out the following guidelines for developing a relevant and effective spelling program for adult literacy students. You may find them useful if you are new to tutoring spelling.

Most students have never been taught a way of learning to spell; more often they have been given lists of words to go away and learn. Although some students do “catch” spelling in this way, many do not. For any spelling program to be effective, especially when a student has not been able to “catch” spelling, the following aspects must be addressed:

- **The program must be meaningful.** It should be related to the students’ *need* to spell and be based on words they use or want to use in their own writing.
- **The program must be individualized.** It is essential that not only the particular words but also the strategies for learning the words are selected and adapted to fit the students’ own spelling style.
- **The program must be multi-sensory.** Students must be encouraged to use all their senses – visual, auditory and kinesthetic/motor – to reinforce one another and to enable them to discover and emphasize their strongest mode of learning.
- **The program must be structured.** Regularity and consistency help students to develop an awareness of word patterns over time and to build a spelling vocabulary that they can use in their writing.
- **The program must be limited.** Students need time to absorb letter groupings and to make links between similar words. Therefore, not too many different letter patterns should be taught in any one lesson.

For the spelling program to be effective, students must also be regularly producing free writing from which spellings can be selected to be learned on a weekly basis.

*It’s a damn poor mind that can think of
only one way to spell a word!*

President Andrew Jackson
while trying to write a presidential paper

Section 1

Spelling Awareness

optional
activity

Activity A

Icebreaker – letter scramble

Have a bit of fun with this version of scrambled words. You can use this to focus on the correct ordering of letters that spelling requires. It will also help participants to learn other tutors' names.

Why choose this activity?

This is an effective opening activity because it is active, it incorporates humour – most likely! – and it doesn't put any one person on the spot.

Facilitation tip

You could invite people to work together to try to unscramble the letters so that tutors connect with one another.

Variation

If you have a small group, just place the letters on a table and have tutors work together on unscrambling the word.

Unscrambling words

Materials and equipment

Letter-sized pieces of paper
Marker
Tutors as letter holders
Name tags

Preparation

Pick two words that tutors will spell together. If you have a large group, pick more words.

Choose the words you will use by thinking about the following points:

- You might want words that represent a literacy topic such as *learning* or *styles*.
- The words should be words that tutors know.
- The words should be long enough that it will take about half the participants, holding up one letter each, to spell each word.

Put each letter of each word on a letter-sized sheet of paper or poster board. Print the letters so they are large. The letters will be held up at the front of the workshop space and all participants must be able to see them.

If tutors don't know each other, it would be useful to have them wear name tags.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Let tutors know that this activity will explore the process of spelling and the challenges that people face when trying to spell.
2. Ask for volunteers from among the participants but also let them know that the whole group will be working on this activity (so tutors don't feel put on the spot).
3. Hand out the letter pages to the volunteers and have them stand in the front of the workshop space in a line so the rest of the tutors can see each letter.

4. Arrange the volunteer letter holders so that the word will be scrambled in this line.
5. Ask the rest of the participants to figure out how to spell this scrambled word correctly. Don't say the word by accident. Tell tutors to not give the answer out loud but to let you know when they have an idea.
6. Get the first person with an idea of the spelling to spell the word by telling each participant with a letter to move to the correct place in the line. They should use names ("Sue, move to the left of Pat."). This should take several steps.
7. Do this with the second word and involve different people as the letter holders. You can also just do this once and not use the second word.
8. At the end of the icebreaker, talk about the fact that spelling is a detail-focused skill because every letter has to be in the correct place. You might want to ask what sensory learning styles would like this icebreaker (kinesthetic and visual).

Activity B

Reasons for learning to spell

This activity could be used to introduce the unit if you have chosen not to use the icebreaker. After the discussion, tutors should be able to tell their learners some reasons for spending time on learning to spell.

Why choose this activity?

This activity will get tutors thinking about spelling in its modern context.

Discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Think about why we should learn to spell. Also think about the pros and cons of using spell-check software.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors why we should spend time on spelling in tutoring sessions. Write tutors' ideas down on the flip chart. Ideas might include having better-looking and more understandable written material for employers, increasing speed in writing when spelling doesn't have to be checked as often, and so on. You could do this in a mapping or web style (see Unit 7, Writing).
2. Make sure that the discussion includes points about the pros and cons of using spell-check software. For instance, most spell-check software doesn't help with finding the correct homonym (words that are spelled the same, sound the same, but that mean different things), but it does enable poor spellers to produce better written work. Encourage those tutor/learner pairs who are comfortable with computers to learn how to use this tool effectively.

optional
activity

3. Wrap up the discussion by stating that some learners may not have identified spelling as a learning goal but may need to work in this area if they want to improve their writing. Better spelling skills result in a wider choice of words to use in compositions, increased writing speed and an easier time for the reader.
4. Some of the ideas mentioned in the discussion may help to give learners reasons for spending time on spelling, even if they don't see its value at first.

Activity C

Why it's so hard

Some tutors are good spellers and they may have trouble understanding why others find it hard. This activity's discussion will help them develop that understanding and enable them to explain to their learners some of the reasons why spelling is difficult.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE HISTORY (in brief)

The following information is taken from Joy Pollock's book, *Signposts to Spelling*, and from articles on the history of English and English orthography on the Answers.com website.

An overview

- Over 350 million people speak English. It is truly an international language as it is often spoken in international business and politics.
- English is a branch of Germanic, which is part of the Indo-European language family.
- English has evolved. Modern speakers would have a lot of trouble understanding the first speakers. It continues to assimilate words from many languages and may have the largest vocabulary in the world.
- There are three main periods in the history of English:
 - Old English AD 450 – 1100
 - Middle English AD 1100 – 1500
 - Modern English AD 1500 – today

Important dates (and comings and goings)

- English still has some words from the Celts. The invasions that followed the time of Celtic domination of what is now England formed the English language.
- The Romans invaded England in AD 43 and stayed for 400 years. (They left their *villas* but the word became *village*.)
- Angles, Saxons, Frisians and Jutes invaded in AD 450 from the area that is now Germany/Denmark. (It must have been a busy time, for they gave us the word *busy*.)
- The Vikings invaded in AD 800 from Norway and Denmark. (They came with their knives and the word stayed. They really did pronounce the *k*.)

- The Normans invaded in AD 1066. They were descended from Vikings who settled in France. (The word *hour* comes from them and we pronounce it in a French fashion. *Fashion* is also a French word.)
- Great Vowel Shift – major changes in the way we pronounce vowels took place as the language modernized from AD 1400 to 1600.
- When the printing press was invented in AD 1477, it marked the start of standardized spelling.
- Modern dialects emerged from the 1600s onward, as English speakers spread across the world. As they spread, they gathered more words, such as *pyjamas* from Urdu, one of the languages of India.

Discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 8.1: *Why Is Spelling so Difficult?*

Preparation

Copy handout.

Read over the brief history of the English language in the introduction to this activity, for your own information.

Carefully read over step three, below.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce the activity by stating that many adults find spelling difficult. You could also use quotations from adult learners that talk about this.
2. Brainstorm as a group some answers to the question, “Why is spelling so difficult?” Record the answers on the flip chart. We suggest you ask tutors to record the answers on the handout *Why Is Spelling so Difficult?* This is important information and our experience is that, if they write it down themselves, they will remember it better.
3. Prompt tutors, as necessary, to include most of the following concepts in some fashion. Use the history of English provided in the introduction to add information if tutors are interested in more details.
 - English is comprised of words from many languages.
 - The Roman alphabet was adopted for English despite the fact that it doesn’t have enough symbols for all our sounds (26 symbols for 14 vowel sounds and 24 consonant sounds).
 - Spoken English never stays the same, but English spelling does. Although our pronunciation continues to change, the spelling of words gradually became static after the printing press was invented. For instance, the word *daughter* used to have a guttural sound like the *ch* in the Scottish *loch* where the *gh* is, but this sound was lost. All that remains of the sound is the spelling.
 - Only 85 per cent of English words are phonetically regular. That is, they can be easily spelled by using the usual sound/letter relationships. Words with more syllables tend to be more phonetically regular.

Facilitation tip

You could start this activity here and complete it at the end of the unit as an opportunity for your tutors to reflect on why spelling is difficult for some people both before and after they go through a number of spelling-related exercises.

Variation

To help make the point about the challenges of phonetically irregular spelling, you might want to use the “spelling test” from the next activity at this point and then return to the discussion.

- Good readers are not necessarily good spellers. Spelling requires more attention to details and is easier for people who are more detail-oriented. Also, reading is a sight-to-sound process and spelling is a sound-to-sight process. Some people are better at processing from sight to sound and others are better at processing in the opposite direction.
 - Although it would be ideal if English spelling rules were useful without exception, in fact they tend to be useful only part of the time. Some so-called rules are only useful 60 per cent of the time. There are many exceptions to the rules. For example, *i* comes before *e* except after *c* and in words like *weir*.
 - Canadians sometimes spell like Americans and sometimes like the British. Do you use *color* or *colour*?
 - There are over 800,000 words in the English language. The good news is that by knowing how to spell 500 words, learners will be able to spell 80 per cent of the words they are most likely to use in writing.
 - We don't write as much as we listen, talk and read so we don't practise spelling very much. If we don't practise new spellings within real writing situations, we won't remember how to spell them. Taking learned spellings from an abstract context like a spelling list and using them within the context of writing, especially writing that is important to the learner, anchors the learning for many people.
 - People need to hear a new spelling word, understand the word, pronounce it and read it in order to have a good basis for spelling the word. English as a Second Language learners especially need help to know a word in these ways.
 - Homonyms and homophones are hard to remember. Homonyms are words that are pronounced the same, spelled the same and mean different things (like *rose*, the flower, and *rose*, the past tense of *to rise*). Homophones are words that are pronounced the same, spelled differently and mean different things (like *hear* and *here*).
 - Dictionaries are hard to use to check spelling unless the learner can spell the first part of the word correctly.
4. Conclude by saying that tutors may want to share some of these facts with their learners if their learners are interested in the background of English spelling.

optional
activity

Activity D

Many words are not phonetically regular

Why choose this activity?

This activity uses a spelling test to emphasize the fact that not all words in English can be spelled phonetically.

Spelling test using phonetics, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 8.2: *Spelling Test!*

Handout 8.3 or Overhead 8.1: *Spelling Test Answers*

Overhead projector

Preparation

Decide if you want this spelling test activity to go with the previous activity or at another point in your session.

Copy handouts and prepare overhead.

Be sure you have the answers to the spelling test handy for your own use.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Tell tutors that this is a spelling activity with a purpose. Their answers are not going to be looked at.
2. Give out the *Spelling Test* handout.
3. Give tutors time to fill in the handout.
4. Show the *Spelling Test Answers*.
5. Talk about the fact that only 85 per cent of English words are phonetically regular, that is, they can be written according to the way they sound. The other 15 per cent will need more than a phonics approach.

Activity E

How do you learn to spell?

This activity puts tutors in the position of having difficulty with spelling. It is unlikely that any of your tutors will spell all of these words correctly. Later in this unit, they will be able to use their answers on this test in other activities that teach various strategies for learning to spell, so be sure to ask them to keep their answers at hand. They will need them for other activities in this unit.

Tutors will also look at how they try to learn to spell words they don't know so that they will see how individualized the approaches to teaching spelling can be.

Spelling test to learn approaches to spelling, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 8.4 or Overhead 8.2: *Five Words* or your own list of words that are difficult to spell

The definitions and pronunciations of the *Five Words* handout/overhead or of your own list of words – these will be for your use only, not to hand out to tutors

Flip chart and markers

Overhead projector

Preparation

Decide whether you like the words provided or not. Make up your list of difficult-to-spell words if you want to.

Copy handout or prepare overhead.

Look over the five words and be sure you know how to pronounce them (which you do at the end of the activity).

Prepare to have an activity or break after step three.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce this activity as a spelling exercise designed to make tutors think about how they approach spelling.
2. Hand out or show on the overhead the list of words that are difficult to spell. Do not pronounce the words or say them out loud. Do not give tutors the meaning of the words. This is because pronunciation and meaning are both tools for learning to spell.
3. Remind tutors that this is not a test. Give them one or two minutes to try to learn these words using whatever techniques they would like to use. During this time, make mental notes of what they do and what they say.
4. Tell them to put away the handout. Do another activity for five or more minutes. This might be a good time for a coffee break or an alternate spelling activity. If you insert this activity into Activity D, finish the discussion about English spelling.
5. After the break, ask tutors to write the words. Say the words aloud and out of order. Pronounce them as indicated and read the definitions. Note that the underlined vowels are long vowels. (These five words come from Mary Norton's 1990 book, *Preparing Literacy Tutors*.)
 - pteridophyte: (ter-id-o-fit) fern or fern-like plant with no seeds
 - quidnunc: (kwid-nunc) an inquisitive person or busybody (from the Latin, "what now?")
 - elegiacal: (el-ij-i-kl) a type of lyric poetry; mournful or sad
 - irreplaceable: (ir-re-plac-a-bul) cannot be replaced
 - sacrilegious: (sac-re-lij-us) disrespectful to things held sacred (from sacred and legere – to take).
6. Ask tutors to take out the handout or show the overhead, *Five Words*. Have them look it over and ask them to write down the correct spelling beside their spelling. Ask them to keep this list.
7. Ask what they did to learn the words. Note down the responses on the flip chart. Also add your comments on what you observed. For example, some tutors may have written down the word several times or tried to say it out loud or wondered what it meant. Title the list "Spelling Approaches." Point out that we approach spelling in a variety of ways.
8. Ask them what you could have done that would have helped them to learn the spellings. Add these responses to the list.
9. End by saying that the rest of the spelling unit will add to this list, so they will be able to help their learners in a variety of ways.

Section 2

Memory and Spelling

Memory strategies are very useful for spelling and other learning situations. This section looks at general memory principles and their relation to learning spelling.

Activity A

Relate memory strategies to spelling

Playing a game

Materials and equipment

14 items: include related items (like those found on a desk) and unrelated items (like soap and a stick of gum) and one unusual item (like a toy butterfly)

A tray

A cloth

Preparation

Collect 14 objects, including a few related ones and an unusual one.

Before the session, place the objects on a tray and cover them with a cloth.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Uncover the objects and show them to tutors for about 20 seconds.
2. Tell them to remember the objects in whatever way is useful for them.
3. Cover the objects up again.
4. Talk about something else for a couple of minutes, such as the current news or joining Literacy Alberta, or have a coffee break.
5. Then ask tutors to write down what objects from the tray they can remember.
6. Uncover the tray and talk about the activity. Most people can remember up to seven objects.
7. Ask whether they would have been able to remember better with more practice, a shorter break, or if the items had been important to them.
8. Then talk about the basic tenets of memory work: frequency, recency and value.

Activity B

How memory helps spelling

This activity uses a handout on spelling and memory to build spelling-specific examples of how to memorize.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 8.5: *Memory and Spelling*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give tutors the handout.
2. Read each point on the handout and ask tutors to give an example of how the point relates to spelling.
3. Following are some examples that you can use. Note that we identify the items below by the same letters as on the handout, so that they are easy to reference.
 - A. Word families, in which the words all have parts that are spelled the same way, can be used to organize words according to patterns. Words for specific tasks can be grouped in themes, such as breakfast food words or a camping list.
 - B. A word like *giraffe* might be easy to remember because of its unusual ending. Remind people of the unusual item on the tray.
 - C. Words that relate to us and our interests will be easier to remember; for example, the spelling of *vermilion* is easier for artists or people who live in Vermilion.
 - D. Spelling lists should be short (5 to 10 words usually). They can be longer if there are words that are spelled similarly. Remind tutors of how many items they remembered in the memory game and how they could remember similar items together.
 - E. Remind tutors of one of the words they didn't spell correctly from the list in the *How do you learn to spell?* activity. Learners should understand a word and have it in their oral vocabulary before they try to spell it.
 - F. Building memory links in spelling can involve several processes:
 - Coming across the word while reading will build familiarity.
 - Talking about the word can activate oral memory.
 - Finding similarities between words will help to link them.
 - When you analyze words, logic can help make sense of them. For example, the word *review* can be analyzed as having two parts – the prefix *re* that means *again* in this word as it does in *retell*; and *view*, which follows the *i* before *e* rule.
 - G. Knowing about the word helps, that is, understanding the meaning or being able to spell part of it already. The word *edition* is easier to figure out if you already know the various ways of spelling the ending.
 - H. Active learners analyze their spelling errors and come up with ways to correct these errors. (An activity on this follows.)

Activity C

How to activate long-term memory

We know that review is essential. This graph details the timing necessary to move what we learn into long-term memory.

Use of overhead, discussion

Materials and equipment

Overhead 8.3: *Time, Review and Memory* (decide if you want to turn this into a handout instead)

Two different-coloured markers

Overhead projector

Preparation

Prepare *Time, Review and Memory* to use as a handout or overhead.

Set up the overhead projector.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Show the overhead *Time, Review, and Memory*.
2. Use different-coloured markers to highlight the difference between the amount recalled with review and the amount recalled without review.
3. If you are not using an overhead, give this out as a handout and have tutors colour in the parts as you would have done.
4. Then talk about how this shows that spelling needs to be practised frequently to move the learning into long-term memory.

Additional idea

Invite tutors to reflect on how spelling and memory challenges would affect people's day-to-day lives as children, adolescents and adults. How would you imagine people compensate for these difficulties without revealing their problem?

Memory is aided by frequency, recency and value.

Cynthia Klein and Robin Millar in
Unscrambling Spelling

Section 3

Spelling Techniques

This section introduces a variety of basic spelling techniques. There are many, many more and you may want to add some that have worked well for you. Only the first activity is a core activity; we recommend the others but if you have ones you'd prefer to use, that's fine.

Activity A

Learn general spelling techniques

This activity introduces two techniques that are widely used. They aren't the only spelling techniques by any means, but your tutors should know at least one of them. Choose which one you want to teach.

Option 1 Use of video, handout, practice

Why choose this option?

Use this option to teach the Fernald-Keller technique. It is more useful than the *See, Say and Spell* technique in Option 2, for learners who need more of a tactile approach to spelling.

Materials and equipment

TV and VCR

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – Learn General Spelling Techniques*

Handout 8.6: *Fernald-Keller Technique*

Letter-sized paper cut in half vertically

A few dictionaries

Tutors' spelling lists from the *How do you learn to spell* activity or a few incorrectly spelled words of your choice

Preparation

Copy handout.

Cue video.

Familiarize yourself with the technique so you can demonstrate it if necessary.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Tell tutors that they will be practising this technique. Watch the video.
2. Ask tutors to pull out their spelling list from the *How do you learn to spell* activity. Tell them to choose one word with which they had trouble to use for this exercise. You can also just give a few sample incorrectly spelled words and their correct versions.
3. Give out handout. Go over the instructions. Point out the use of different senses.
4. Work in pairs, with one person acting as the tutor and the other acting as the learner, to practise the technique.

Option 2 Use of handout, practice

Why choose this option?

Use this option to teach the *See, Say and Spell* technique. This popular, multi-sensory technique is often easy to master.

Materials and equipment

Handout 8.7: *See, Say and Spell* or another handout describing a similar technique (there are many versions of this technique).

Tutor's spelling list from the *How do you learn to spell* activity or a few incorrectly spelled words of your choice

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to pull out their spelling list from the *How do you learn to spell* activity. Tell them to choose one word that they had trouble with to use for this exercise. You can also just give a few sample incorrectly spelled words and their correct version.
2. Give out handout. Go over the instructions.
3. Each tutor should follow the instructions on the handout using the word they have picked. For *See, Say and Spell*, have tutors work alone.
4. Point out that the *See, Say and Spell* approach uses the technique of visualization. Also mention that visualization is difficult for some learners.

Activity B

optional
activity

Explore concept of spelling patterns

Tutors should be aware that language patterns can demystify spelling. This activity will be useful if you have not yet introduced the concept of word patterns to tutors.

Why choose this activity?

Working on words that are alike is a fast way of increasing the number of words a learner can spell. Patterning like this also helps the learners make more sense of spelling.

Use of overhead, handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Overhead projector, or flip chart and markers

Overhead 8.4: *Word Patterns* or the same letters written on flip chart

Handout 8.8: *Word Sorts*

Optional: List of common word families

Preparation

Prepare the overhead or print these letters on the flip chart:
p s r l t f a n i .

Copy handout.

Optional – find a list of common word families.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

The first two steps of this activity come from Mary Norton's 1990 book, *Preparing Literacy Tutors*.

1. Show the overhead or the list of letters on the flip chart. Inform tutors that they are to spell as many words as they can using these letters only. They may use the letters as many times as needed, but only once in each word. Give them about three minutes to finish the task.
2. Encourage some volunteers to read their lists of words. Write the words on an overhead or flip chart. Usually people follow a pattern in their lists (e.g., fan, pan, span). Point out the word patterns people used (e.g., the *an* group). Emphasize that knowledge of patterns is useful for spelling and identifying words.
3. Hand out *Word Sorts* and lead a discussion about it. Point out that sorting words into groups with similar spelling patterns (words sorts) is a way of helping learners develop awareness of patterns in spelling. It is also easier to learn new words if they have the same spelling as one that they already know. Encourage tutors to use word sorts with their learners.
4. You may want to show a list of common word families to your tutors. You can find such a list in the back of many reading instruction books.

Activity C

Learn how to build on a root word

This exercise will encourage tutors to use the spelling technique of building upon root words. This is useful for more advanced learners. It can also be used to expand vocabulary.

The activity is taken from *Preparing Literacy Tutors* by Mary Norton and is used with permission.

Why choose this activity?

This section will be useful if you have not covered the concept of root words yet.

Discussion, practice, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Dictionary

Flip chart and markers

Handout 8.9: *Prefixes and Suffixes* (2 pages)

Optional: List of prefixes and suffixes

Preparation

Copy handout.

Optional: Find a list of prefixes and suffixes and their meanings from your collection.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to give you words that can be made based on the root word *medic*. List these on the flip chart. Visually set the root word off from its prefixes and suffixes. You could box in the root word, circle in red the suffixes and circle in blue the prefixes.
2. In a similar fashion, add any words from this that they miss – medicine, medical, medicinal, premedication, medic, medicable, Medicare, medicate. Note that the root word *medic* is spelled the same in all instances, although the *c* is sometimes pronounced as *s*.
3. Ask for definitions of the words (the following ones come from the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, second edition):
 - medicine: the practice of the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease; also any drug or preparation used for the treatment or prevention of disease
 - medical: of or relating to the practice of medicine in general
 - medicinal: having healing properties
 - premedication: medication to prepare for surgery or other treatment
 - medic: informal name for a doctor or medical student
 - medicable: able to be treated or cured medically
 - Medicare: a federal and state system of health insurance in the United States for those requiring financial assistance
 - medicate: to treat medically
4. Discuss how the endings change the meanings and parts of speech. For example, medicinal describes something (adjective) and medication is a thing (noun).
5. Emphasize that knowledge of parts of words assists in word identification, spelling and vocabulary development.
6. Mention that there are lists of prefixes and suffixes and their meanings. Show an example from your program's collection and give tutors the handout.

Activity D

Using learning styles to teach spelling

Why choose this activity?

This activity ties the concept of learning styles to spelling techniques. The tutors will gain experience in demonstrating spelling techniques and will explore some other spelling ideas related to sensory learning styles. The only drawback is that the activity does require quite a bit of time.

Demonstration using handouts, practice

Materials and equipment

Handout 8.10: *Spelling and Sensory Learning Styles* (3 pages)

Flip chart and markers

Any of the items below that you can find:

File cards

Plasticine

Graph paper

Scrabble game

Scissors

Sandpaper or coarse cloth

Magnetic letters

Other word games that involve spelling

Letter dice

A series of containers and something to put in them (e.g., seven bowls and seven marbles)

Preparation

Copy handout.

Gather as many of the items as possible from the list above as you will use them to demonstrate spelling techniques.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Remind tutors of the sensory learning styles covered in Unit 3, Learning Styles.
2. Tell tutors that they will be presenting and demonstrating a technique to the rest of the tutors. Each technique will be appropriate for one of the sensory learning styles. Explain that this will give them practice in explaining a technique to their learners as well as the chance to learn how spelling can be taught in the learning style of any individual.

3. Demonstrate one of the techniques from the handout with a volunteer who acts as a learner. Ask tutors to note the steps you take in this demonstration; in other words, ask them to watch both what you are demonstrating and how you are demonstrating it.
 - Tell why this technique is useful (for example, it will help develop a visual memory for the word).
 - Show each part of the technique, explaining as you go.
 - Have your volunteer follow your instructions.
 - Ask the “learner” and tutors if they have any questions about the technique.
 - Answer any questions.
4. Tell tutors that now they will demonstrate various spelling techniques.
 - Show the resources that they can use for their demonstrations.
 - Divide tutors into groups. Hopefully, there should be three groups of two to six tutors. Allocate a different learning style to each of the three groups.
 - Give each person in the group the handout for the learning style they will be demonstrating. Tell tutors that they will receive all three pages at the end of the activity but that, for the purposes of this activity, each group uses only one learning style.
 - Within each group, tutors will be role-playing pairs of tutors and learners. (If you are doing individual tutor training, the tutor can practise with you as the learner.)
 - If there are any tutors who prefer not to do a demonstration in front of the whole group, let them gracefully bow out, or look at alternative ways of having them share their technique.
 - Ask tutors to follow the steps they observed you taking when you were demonstrating a technique.
5. Have tutors prepare their demonstration.
 - The tutors pick partners. The pair then chooses a technique to prepare and demonstrate to the rest of the tutors. Give them 10 minutes to prepare.
 - You will have several pairs demonstrating if you have large groups, and you need to be sure that the pairs representing each learning style all demonstrate different techniques. They will have to plan which pairs are doing which techniques. If you don't have much time, consider just having each learning style group show one technique together.
6. Each pair demonstrates a technique from their sheet. Prompt them to follow the steps that you followed in your demonstration.
7. Make sure that each pair is thanked for their participation.
8. Give tutors the other two pages that they did not receive originally. Mention that spelling can also be taught using the other learning styles and preferences covered in Unit 3, Learning Styles.

Variation

Following are some ideas you can use if tutors seem to be uncomfortable demonstrating a technique in front of the class:

- Bring pairs together to share their techniques with one another and then ask a pair from each foursome to rotate to the next pair for another exchange.
- Each of the three groups could brainstorm ideas for using the materials and then take turns demonstrating the group's ideas to the other two groups.
- Use a fishbowl approach by having a tutor and “learner” in the centre and a small group of people, with the style sheets in hand, coaching the tutor on techniques to help the learner.

Variation

You could use the format of this activity to create a separate spelling session. The techniques could be drawn from the handout for this activity and any other techniques that you want to introduce.

Section 4

Analyzing Spelling Errors

Tutors will make an initial analysis of a sample learner's spelling errors. This should give them an idea of how to start with a learner.

Activity A

Learn to analyze spelling errors

Use of case study, handouts, practice

Materials and equipment

Handout 8.11: *Spelling Case Study* (2 pages)

Handout 8.12: *Analyzing Your Spelling* (2 pages)

Handout 8.13: *Spelling Error Worksheet* (2 copies per tutor)

Tutors' spelling errors from the previous activities

Optional: spelling tests that you use in your program

Preparation

Copy handouts.

Familiarize yourself with *Spelling Case Study* and *Analyzing Your Spelling*.

Bring examples of spelling tests that you use in your program (optional).

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to read over the *Spelling Case Study* handout.
2. Ask them how Frank figured out what the learner's spelling problems were.
 - Over a few weeks he looked over the learner's written work and put the errors into categories.
3. If you test the learners in your program on similar error categories, tell tutors about this. If you give these tests to tutors to use, give them copies and show them how to use the spelling tests at this point.
4. Ask tutors how Frank used active learning principles.
 - He planned a general spelling strategy and brainstormed techniques with the learner.
 - The spelling lists he and his learner used were often based on the learner's writing.
 - The learner picked which words to learn.
 - Recording his spelling successes and errors made it easy for the learner to measure his progress.
5. Introduce the first sheet of the *Analyzing Your Spelling* handout. Talk briefly about each type of error. Mention that self-analysis helps active learning.
6. Introduce the second sheet of the *Analyzing Your Spelling* handout as an example of how to analyze individual errors.

7. Ask tutors to pull out their spelling list from the spelling test activities. You may also give a list that you compile of incorrectly spelled words and their correct spellings.
8. Instruct tutors to put the incorrect and correct spelling of two of the words with which they had trouble in the appropriate columns of the blank *Spelling Error Worksheet*.
9. Then ask them to analyze the errors by putting down how the error occurred and how to remember to spell it correctly next time. Tell them that the extra copy of the handout is for them to copy for use with a learner.
10. Conclude by saying that assessment can be done by tutors, but tutors can also help learners do their own analysis and become more active learners.
11. Encourage tutors to keep records of spelling accomplishments to help motivate learners.

*When our spelling is perfect, it's invisible.
But when it's flawed, it prompts strong
negative associations.*

Marilyn vos Savant

Section 5

Planning for Spelling

The tutors will practise planning a spelling segment for a lesson and build their confidence in their ability to tutor spelling.

Activity A

Plan mini spelling session

Discussion using handouts, practice

Materials and equipment

Handout 8.14: *Choosing Spelling Words*

Handout 8.10: *Spelling and Sensory Learning Styles* (3 pages), if you did not already give to tutors

Handout 8.11: *Spelling Case Study* (2 pages) (tutors already have this from the earlier activity)

Handout 8.15: *A Few Useful Spelling Rules*

Handout 8.16: *100 Most Often Misspelled Words*

Handout 8.17: *Profiles of Learners and Their Writing Samples* (8 pages)

Optional: learner profiles and writing samples that you have the learners' permission to use

Optional: diagnostic spelling tests from your own program

Preparation

Copy handouts.

The tutors should already have copies of *Spelling Case Study*.

You may want to use learner profiles, writing samples and diagnostic spelling tests from your own program with your learners' permission.

Review the handouts so that you can share ideas. Make sure you know the spelling mistakes in the writing samples.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Look at the handout *Choosing Spelling Words*. Point out the aspects that lead to active learning, such as using words that are useful for the learner, using words that the learner can already almost spell, using words that are based on the learner's common errors and using words that the learner has asked to learn.
2. Hand out *Spelling and Sensory Learning Styles* (if tutors don't already have it), *A Few Useful Spelling Rules* and *100 Most Often Misspelled Words*. If you haven't done the *Using learning styles to teach spelling* optional activity, (Section 3, Activity D) take time to go over the categories listed and give tutors time to read the information. Also allow them time to look at the handouts *A Few Useful Spelling Rules* and *100 Most Often Misspelled Words*.

3. Hand out one of the learner profiles and writing samples to each tutor, pair of tutors or small group, so that they aren't all working on the same profile. Make sure that you hand out matching profiles and writing samples (refer to the Learner Profile number at the top of each handout).
4. Ask tutors to develop a list of five words for the learner in the profile based on the points in *Choosing Spelling Words*. The profiles should provide ideas for themes in the learner's life that might require writing, and the writing samples have at least one error with which to start.
5. Ask tutors to make notes on one or two general approaches they might use, like focusing on homonyms. Use the case study as an example.
6. Ask tutors to choose one technique that they might use from the *Spelling and Sensory Learning Styles* handout, like becoming a human photocopy machine.
7. Tutors should use the handouts *A Few Useful Spelling Rules* and *100 Most Often Misspelled Words* to assess problems and develop lists.
8. Give tutors ample time to do all this. If you have extra time, talk about the profiles before they start work.
9. Circulate among tutors and offer help.
10. When all tutors have something down for all three tasks, ask if anyone (or any group) would like to share their ideas. Ask them to describe the learner for the benefit of those who worked on a different profile. Then ask them for the spelling word list, general strategies and one technique. Thank them and ask for additional suggestions from the rest of the group.
11. Ask for more people to share as you have time.

Facilitation tip

When people have taken a risk by sharing ideas as individuals, in pairs or in small groups, acknowledge their contribution by saying "thank you" or by remarking on or asking a question about what they have said. As facilitator, you can take more risks in asking for clarification than the other tutors, but model doing so respectfully, so that no one is ever sorry they took the risk of putting an idea in front of the group.

The importance of creating an atmosphere in which there is freedom to "make mistakes" cannot be overestimated.

Tutor Tools

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Numeracy

UNIT
9

Unit 9: Numeracy

SECTION 1. EXPERIENCES WITH MATH			
A. Past experiences with math	Core	Reflection, discussion in pairs and large group	20 min
B. Math myths	Core	Group activity, discussion in large group	20 min
SECTION 2. MATH IN DAILY LIFE			
A. Use of math	Core	Reflection	10 min
B. Numeracy	Core	Artistic expression, discussion, use of handout	20 min
SECTION 3. NUMERACY STRATEGIES			
A. Math framework	Core	Group work, use of handout	20 min
B. Math learning styles	Core	Matching activity, use of handout	10 min
C. Instructional strategies	Core	Reflection, use of handout, discussion	20 min
D. Tips and tricks	Optional	Reflection, use of handout, discussion	15 min
OPTIONAL – SECTION 4. NUMERACY ACTIVITIES			
A. Survey	Optional	Group activity	20 min
B. Estimation	Optional	Use of handout, group work	30 min
C. Dice game	Optional	Group activity	10 min
SECTION 5. PLANNING FOR NUMERACY			
A. Planning for numeracy	Core	Group work, use of handouts	30 min

UNIT 9

Numeracy

 **Approx 2½ hours**
using core activities

Concepts

- **Experiences with math**
- **Numeracy in everyday life**
- **Math strategies**
- **Numeracy activities**
- **Planning for numeracy**

Builds on

- **Planning for Learning**
- **Learning Styles**

This unit will help tutors gain some experience in using numeracy in their tutoring sessions. You may not have many learners in your program looking for specific help with math; however, tutors should be encouraged to participate in the workshop when working with a literacy student since numeracy is part of a well-rounded literacy program. You can use this unit as part of your ongoing professional development for tutors.

Many people experience anxiety when they hear the word *math*. Even you may experience negative reactions to the word. You may even be thinking there is no way you could deliver tutor training on the subject of math. However, you will notice the unit is not titled *Math*, but *Numeracy*.

Some people think that numeracy means basic math, but it actually means more than that. Many practitioners see numeracy as “contextualized practice.” Contextualized practice does include basic math, but there are other important topics to consider. Based on information found at Ontario’s Literacy and Basic Skills Program practitioner training website (included in the bibliography for this unit), these other important topics include

- number and operation sense
- estimation and “mental math” skills
- judicious use of calculators to ease computations
- statistical literacy (the ability to critically interpret statistics in advertisements and articles)
- skills needed to handle functional tasks involving numbers in text, such as schedules, forms and financial statements
- skills needed to plan and optimize resources, such as budgeting, scheduling and managing supplies

You can see that numeracy focuses on how to use information in a variety of ways in everyday life. As our activities change, so does our numeracy. Numeracy is not something you have or don’t have, nor can you say that once you’ve mastered it you now know everything there is to know about it. Rather it is something we are continually learning about.

There are a number of different definitions of numeracy, just as there are a number of definitions for literacy. In fact, the word “numeracy” was coined to fit in with the term literacy.

One definition comes from the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALLS), an international comparative study that measured literacy and numeracy skills in 20

Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE / USEFULNESS
Section 1: Experiences with Math AND Section 3: Numeracy Strategies		
Developing Adult Numeracy: Practitioner Training Course	Literacy and Basic Skills Program of Ontario	This online course is free and has a great overview of numeracy.
Numeracy for Adult Literacy Learners	Lori Herod	There are a number of resources and Internet links listed for games and activities.
Section 4: Numeracy Activities		
Developing Learning Materials for Adult Numeracy	Irene Blayney and Lisa Hagedorn	This report will give you ideas for lots of other math activities.
The Adult Numeracy and Maths Online (ANAMOL) Project	Beth Marr, Betty Johnston and David Tout	The project includes many activities to teach math skills. Go to the website listed in the bibliography and click on "Teaching Ideas."
Numeracy for Adult Literacy Learners	Lori Herod	Check out pages 25-26 and page 59 for numerous Internet sites and resources for teaching numeracy.
Resources and Teaching Activities	The Certificates in General Education for Adults (CGEA) in Australia	Look on their web page, hosted by the SAALT (Supporting Adult and Applied Learning and Teaching) website. Under "Resources and Teaching Activities" there are a number of dice games for practising basic math.
Developing Adult Numeracy: Practitioner Training Course	Literacy and Basic Skills Program of Ontario	This online course is free and has a great overview of numeracy. Look at Module 5: Using Ready-Made Learning Materials. It has links and suggested resources and materials for fun math activities that are worth checking out.
Box Cars and One-Eyed Jacks	Joanne Currah and Jane Felling	This series of books has fun and interactive games using cards and dice for learning math at all levels.

People who are able to solve math problems successfully have often learned how to approach problems and how to work through them.

countries. ALLS defined numeracy as *the knowledge and skills required to effectively manage and respond to the mathematical demands of diverse situations.*

In *Adult Numeracy*, Diana Coben says that *to be numerate means to be competent, confident and comfortable with one's judgments on whether to use mathematics in a particular situation and if so what mathematics to use, how to do it, what degree of accuracy is appropriate and what the answer means in relationship to the context.*

Whatever definition you choose to use, this unit will focus on how to support learners in using numeracy in their everyday lives. So go ahead and don't be shy about exploring numeracy and trying some of the activities in this unit with your tutors. I think you both will be surprised at how much fun math and numeracy can be!

There are a few points to consider before tutoring a learner in math:

- You should determine the level of math you are willing to offer in your program. There may be a place in your community for learners to develop higher levels of math (usually Grade 9 level).
- You need to be aware that some learners may have a math learning disability (dyscalculia). This is the inability to understand numbers, number relationships and the outcome of number operations. It is important to use different learning strategies, similar to those you would use with someone who has other learning disabilities. (See Unit 10, Learning Disabilities.)

The following introduction to numeracy was adapted from Lori Herod's work, *Numeracy for Adult Literacy Learners*, published by Adult Literacy and Continuing Education in Manitoba and available online (see bibliography).

Whole numeracy

Many adults, not just literacy learners, are anxious about numeracy. Math anxiety stems in large part from the emphasis historically placed on the operational or computational side of mathematics. This emphasis led to the belief that mathematical ability was something only certain people had. What was missing from this approach was demonstrating to learners that numeracy has **“real-life” applications** that we use every day. This linking of the operational side of math to its functional side is referred to as “whole math” or “holistic math.” This approach and its components are outlined below.

Active and authentic learning

The first thing that must be said about teaching and learning numeracy is that, like any learning, it should be **active and authentic**. Research into adult learning has demonstrated that learning is most effective when it is useful to the learner and tied to meaningful real-life situations such as grocery shopping, deciding which gas station has the best price and so on. In addition, the learner needs to be actively engaged in his or her learning, rather than passively memorizing formulas and multiplication tables.

This approach helps adult learners to **make abstract concepts concrete**. Applying knowledge and skills in their own lives, in response to their own needs, is **intrinsically motivating**. It also **encourages critical thinking**; that is, the ability to

approach problems using a variety of strategies and to know where mathematics fits into a bigger picture.

Numeracy: Part of a larger literacy program

The second thing that must be said about teaching and learning numeracy is that it is most effective when blended into a larger overall program of developing literacy skills and knowledge. Numeracy taught in isolation from other areas such as reading, writing and spelling will not be as effective. Thus, a mathematics learning session should include components in which the learner reads, writes and spells as part of the session.

For example, a learner **reads** the newspaper to find examples of percentages. He then **writes** out a list of the areas in which percentages are used in the paper, such as the sports section and sales flyers. Finally, he highlights any words he has difficulty spelling. He can then **discuss** areas in his life where he uses percentages, such as when shopping or figuring out employment income and benefits.

Problem-solving and communicating mathematically

The emphasis in mathematics teaching and learning in the past has been to concentrate on number operations and computation. While this is indeed crucial, there are other areas now considered to be equally important. Two skills, in particular, are emphasized for developing well-rounded skills and knowledge that learners can apply in concrete ways every day:

- Problem-solving
- Communicating

Problem-solving refers to the ability of learners to *generate, organize, evaluate* and *apply* mathematics both on paper and in real-life situations. Terms that illustrate the reasoning involved in these stages are contained in the following table. These terms are useful for developing questions that will promote learners' ability to reason and problem-solve mathematically.

Generate data	Organize data	Evaluate data	Apply data
research	tally	summarize	discuss
experiment	arrange	justify	investigate
measure	rearrange	test	illustrate
estimate	order	conclude	describe
calculate	sequence	interpret	display
extend	classify	explain	construct
hypothesize	match	reason	demonstrate
predict	sort	infer	elaborate
manipulate	graph	question	generalize
explore	flow chart	verify	
invent	chart	assess	
discover	diagram		
associate	connect		
brainstorm	relate		
survey			

An example of an activity you might use is as follows:

- Generate data – Conduct a **survey** to find out which of the following comedy shows is most popular among your fellow students:
 - *Third Rock from the Sun*
 - *Dharma and Greg*
 - *That 70s Show*
 - *Frasier*
- Organize data – **Graph** your results.
- Evaluate data – Which show is the most/least popular? **Explain** how you arrived at your conclusion.
- Apply data – **Discuss** factors that might affect a show’s popularity rating (e.g., gender, age, culture, time show is on, marketing).

In order to problem-solve effectively, we need to teach learners the basic steps:

- comprehending the problem
- developing a plan to solve the problem
- implementing the plan
- evaluating the results
- reflecting on the plan, considering alternatives
- communicating the solution(s)

Communicating mathematically refers to the ability of learners to talk about, discuss, brainstorm about and explain the numeracy they are using. Educators recognize that math cannot be learned in isolation, isolation not only from other areas of learning, but also from other learners. In fact, math is a way of communicating.

You may remember your math class as a quiet time in school. Your teacher did most of the talking and you worked out the problems on your own. You had very little opportunity for discussing the math and interacting with others in the class. Communicating in math classes is now recognized as an important process in learning math concepts. Children work together and are encouraged to talk about what they are doing, why they are doing it and what they are learning.

The importance of being able to communicate mathematically can be seen in everyday situations. For example, anyone trying to point out an error on a dinner or utility bill would need to communicate mathematically. So would someone mapping out a landscaping diagram or floor plan for her spouse, helping his children do math homework, negotiating a sale of some sort, or preparing a budget at home or work. Therefore, not only do we need to be able to solve math problems, but we also need to be able to communicate the information to others.

Numeracy “streams”

As the above section suggests, one of the first things we want to find out from learners is their general learning aim regarding numeracy. What do they want or need to use numeracy skills and knowledge for? Do they want to make everyday living easier by learning about tasks such as budgeting and banking? Are they

Coordinator tip

You may also find it helpful to work through the Numeracy module at the Literacy and Basic Skills practitioner training website listed in the bibliography. You can sign up for the online course at no cost.

planning to obtain their General Education Diploma (GED) or high-school diploma? Do they perhaps need a specific mathematical skill for their employment?

Once you determine the answer to these questions, you can decide which of the following streams best fits the learner:

- **everyday living numeracy** – to use in everyday life
- **program-specific numeracy** – to bring skills up to levels needed for a GED or high school diploma program

You may also want to ask the following questions as part of your intake process to gain a better understanding of a learner's abilities:

1. What are your goals as far as improving your numeracy skills?
2. How many schools did you attend while growing up? (Note that frequent moves may have resulted in gaps in learning.)
3. What was the highest grade that you completed in school?
4. What areas of mathematics were most/least difficult for you? Why?
5. What grades were you in when you started to experience these difficulties in mathematics?
6. Did you receive any help for these difficulties? If yes, was the assistance helpful? Why?

Conclusion

Current thinking among educators suggests that numeracy teaching and learning must go beyond a narrow focus on computational and operational skills and knowledge. It must also integrate mathematics into learners' lives in authentic and active ways. This involves a wider range of skills and knowledge on the part of the learners, in particular the ability to reason and communicate mathematically. It also requires that tutors be aware of how to develop and implement numeracy instruction that is active and authentic.

This unit will help tutors to gain a better understanding of numeracy and how they can incorporate it into their tutoring sessions.

To find out how much we are talking ourselves into failure, we have to begin to listen to ourselves doing math.

Sheila Tobias

Section 1

Experiences with Math

Tutors will have the opportunity to explore and share their experience with math while in school. This could be a sensitive topic for some tutors.

Activity A

Past experiences with math

It's important to have tutors explore their previous experiences with math, especially if their experiences have been negative. As they share their feelings about math, they will begin to understand the feelings their learners have towards math, and help their learners overcome those fears.

Reflection, discussion in pairs and large group

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to share with their neighbour their school experience with math.
2. Ask tutors to share with their neighbour what they think when they hear the word *math*. What do they think is the origin of those thoughts and feelings?
3. Have pairs share their feelings and experience with math with the rest of the group.
4. Ask tutors to rate on a scale of 1-10 how well they feel when they do math today.
5. Have tutors share with the group why they rated themselves as they did.

Facilitation tip

By asking people to explore this question with just one other person, you are modelling a process that is important for tutors to notice. People need to feel safe before they will talk openly about something concerning their personal abilities that may have been or continues to be difficult.

Activity B

Math myths

Part of the fear we have of math is based on myths. Tutors will explore some of those myths and have an opportunity to discuss their thoughts and feelings about them.

Group activity, discussion in large group

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Review the five facts or myths in the table below and determine your stand on each one. Be prepared, however, to allow tutors to draw their own conclusions for each statement.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to brainstorm why some people have negative feelings about math. Write their thoughts on the flip chart.
2. Tell tutors you will be reading some statements about math based on B. Sydney Smith's and Wendy Hegeman Smith's online mini-text about math anxiety. The five statements are what they call the most prevalent myths about math. They say that our anxiety over math is an emotional response. When we look at math in a detached way, we can overcome our anxieties.
3. Divide the room in half; one side is the myth side the other side is the fact side.
4. Read either the myth or the fact statement for each set. Ask tutors to move to the side of the room they think the statement best fits, the myth side or the fact side. (Note: The first four myths have fact statements as well and you can choose either one to read to tutors. The last statement has only a myth; it is for you and the tutors to discuss as a group.)

Fact or myth?

Myth 1

Aptitude for math is something you are born with. myth
We all have the ability to learn to reason with abstract ideas. fact

Myth 2

To be good at math you need to be good at calculating. myth
OR
Being a wiz at figures is a mark of success in math. myth
Math is a science of ideas not an exercise in calculation. fact

Myth 3

Math requires logic not creativity. myth
To create the abstract form of numbers requires creativity. fact

Myth 4

The important thinking in math is to get the right answer. myth
It's more important to understand the concept than get the right answer. fact

Myth 5

Men are naturally better at math than women. myth or fact?

5. Ask tutors to share why they chose to move where they did. Tutors may want to first share with the people gathered on their side, and then share highlights from that conversation with the whole group.
6. As a group, you may want to discuss whether you agree with the Smiths or not.
7. The last myth is for you to discuss and share your views. Why do many women think they can't do math as well as men?
8. Ask tutors to think of other misconceptions or myths we have about math.

Section 2

Math in Daily Life

We are constantly using math in daily life. Regardless of how we felt about math in school, we use it all the time. Often we are unaware of the math we use. This section will help tutors to identify the situations where they use math daily and the skills involved. They will also discuss a definition for numeracy.

Activity A

Use of math

Tutors may not at first be able to identify the different situations where they use math. You may need to give a few prompts to help them look beyond the box. Even deciding which gas station and how much gas to put in our tank is a math situation.

Reflection

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors write down when and how they used math in the past week. For example, they may have followed a recipe.
2. Have tutors share their math situations. Write the situations on the flip chart. (Note: save this list of situations to use in a later activity.)
3. Ask tutors to review the list and describe the math skills they needed for each situation. For example, if they followed a recipe, they probably used fractions, measuring, calculating and estimating.

Variation

For the individual activity, you could choose to focus attention on a particular type of activity over the past 24 hours, such as getting from home to another place or eating.

Activity B

Numeracy

You may realize by now that numeracy, like literacy, can be defined in many ways. Allow tutors an opportunity to explore the word through an art form.

Artistic expression, discussion, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Handout 9.1: *Thirteen Ways to Renew Your Relationship with Math*

Playdough, Plasticine, markers, stickers, magazines, pipe cleaners and other craft items

Scissors, glue, paper

Preparation

Review the definitions of numeracy at the beginning of the unit.

Copy handout.

Collect materials.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what they think when they hear the word *numeracy*.
2. Provide tutors with various art materials and ask them to choose a medium to create either a collage or other art form to express what numeracy means to them. Allow time for tutors to complete their project. It would be a good idea if you also created a project to show your own definition of numeracy.
3. Ask if there is anyone willing to share their creation.
4. Share the definitions given at the beginning of this unit. Share your own ideas about numeracy.
5. Use the handout to show how tutors can renew their relationship with math. Tutors can also use this handout with their learners.

Numeracy is the type of math skills needed to function in everyday life, in the home, workplace and community.

Alexandra Withnall

Section 3

Numeracy Strategies

The following activities explore ways tutors can assist a learner in developing math skills. They are applicable no matter what level of math their learner has achieved.

Activity A

Math framework

This provides a way for tutors to help learners see math problems in their everyday situations and how to take that information and create meaningful learning opportunities.

Group work, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Flip chart from previous activity listing situations in which tutors used math this week

Handout 9.2: *Framework for Math Instruction*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Have tutors refer to the situations listed on the flip chart. Ask tutors to choose one situation and describe it further if needed.
2. Ask tutors to develop a word problem based on the description.
3. Have tutors identify the operations need to complete the problem. Then have tutors complete the math operations.
4. Have tutors brainstorm some key words that help us know what operations to use.
5. If you have a larger group, use several different math situations and have tutors work in small groups.
6. Give tutors the handout *Framework for Math Instruction* and review the framework.

Activity B

Math learning styles

Tutors will explore math strategies with different learning styles.

Variation

To give tutors the opportunity to explore each of the learning styles, you could set up three stations, one for each learning style. At each station, there would be materials and instructions for solving a problem using that style. You could ask tutors to circulate in pairs or small groups to each station for about 10 minutes, and try using the suggested methods to solve the problem. After the rotation is complete, tutors can discuss which learning styles worked best for them and why.

Variation

If you have a group of more than four or five participants, and there are multiple questions, you could divide into small groups and provide each group with some of the question cards to discuss. In this way, more people will be able to offer opinions and you will hold people's attention because they are more engaged. The groups could record their key ideas on flip chart paper and bring those back to the full group, where you and others could contribute additional points.

Matching activity, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper
Index cards
Handout 9.3: *Math Learning Style Strategies*

Preparation

Review learning styles: auditory, visual and kinesthetic.
Write the three learning styles on three separate pieces of flip chart paper.
Write each of the learning style strategies from the handout onto separate cards.
Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what they remember about the different learning styles.
2. Review each style as needed.
3. Ask tutors to take a card and place it under the correct heading explaining why it fits in that category.
4. Give tutors the handout *Math Learning Style Strategies* and ask them to use it to determine whether they placed the cards correctly.

Activity C

Instructional strategies

There are some basic strategies tutors can use with all learners. The following activity looks at a few of these strategies.

Reflection, use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 9.4: *Instructional Strategies*
Slips of paper or index cards for questions
Bowl or container

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give tutors the *Instructional Strategies* handout and ask them to name the strategies they have used so far in the workshop.
2. Have tutors write any questions they have about using the different strategies on the slips of paper or index cards.
3. Mix up the questions in a bowl and pull out a question. Share the question and discuss as a group.
4. Have tutors share with a partner the strategies they would feel comfortable using with a learner.

Activity D

Tips and tricks

If your tutors are interested in looking at some tips and tricks, then use this activity.

Why choose this activity?

Depending on their interest and the time you have available, coordinators and tutors may want to explore some of the tips and tricks for remembering different math operations.

Reflection, use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 9.5: *Assorted Tips and Tricks* (3 pages)

Handout 9.6: *Times Table Trick Sheet* (2 pages)

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to share any tips or tricks they have learned in working with numbers.
2. Give tutors the handouts *Assorted Tips and Tricks* and *Times Table Trick Sheet*. Have them look the handouts over and note any they have used themselves or wished they had known when in school.

optional
activity

Facilitation tip

Participants may find it difficult to recall tips and tricks without a trigger. You could provide some of the tips and tricks from the handout to get people started. How did they learn those tips and tricks?

optional
section

This section is optional.
Choose the activities that
will best suit your program.

optional
activity

Section 4

Numeracy Activities

The following are some activities tutors could use with learners. Often, if we have an opportunity to practise a particular activity, we feel more comfortable using it. You can do all the activities that follow or choose the ones you want to use. You may even find other activities to use from the Internet and other resources listed at the beginning of this unit.

Activity A

Survey

You can do this activity on a wide variety of topics. You can decide on your own topic question or use the one provided. If you have a large group, you may want to divide into pairs or small groups and work with a number of questions.

Why choose this activity?

You may want to give your tutors an opportunity to do a survey. Tutors can use surveys with all levels of learners and they are a fun activity. They can be made easy for those with limited skills or more difficult for those with more skills.

Group activity

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers
Paper for a tally sheet
Graph paper

Preparation

Review the activity before using it with tutors.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Inform tutors you are going to conduct a survey. Brainstorm with tutors some possible survey questions. Decide as a group which survey question they would like to use or you can use one of the following questions:

- Where do you shop?
- Why do you shop where you do?
- When do you do your grocery shopping?

With medium to large groups

2. Write the survey question on the flip chart. If you have a larger group, have two or three related survey questions and write them each on a piece of flip chart paper.
3. Ask tutors to create a tally sheet. First, they write one of the questions at the top of the page. Then they draw columns and rows to record their answers. The rows are to record the name of each person they interview and the columns record answers they think they might receive. Allow tutors to figure out how the columns should be named. This is part of the learning experience.

Variation

By walking around asking one another to answer the survey questions, you introduce movement and help energize the group. You could have more than one survey question on the go, with pairs or small groups asking their own survey question. They can then tally and discuss their data.

4. Have everyone walk around and ask one another to answer their survey question. It's okay if you have a few of the same questions as this allows the group to check for accuracy and note any discrepancies.
5. Once the tally sheets are complete, divide tutors into pairs and ask each pair to choose a type of graph. You may need to discuss types of graphs such as bar, line or pie. Each pair then collates their findings on the graph paper. Each pair can present their graph to the rest of the group.
6. Ask tutors to identify the skills a learner would develop and use in doing a survey.

With smaller groups

7. If your group is small, you won't need to create a tally sheet. Instead, you can ask a few questions and record each person's responses on the flip chart. If more than one person agrees with the same answer, put a check mark beside it to indicate more than one person has the same answer.
8. Once everyone has answered the questions, have tutors decide on a type of graph (bar, line or pie). Have someone draw the graph either on flip chart or graph paper and record the findings from the survey.
9. Ask tutors to identify the skills a learner would develop and use in doing a survey.

Activity B

Estimation

We use estimation a lot in our daily lives. The following activity may be familiar to carpenters.

Why choose this activity?

Tutors may want to experience doing an estimation activity.

Use of handout, group work

Materials and equipment

Handout 9.7: *Building a Shed*

Graph paper

Calculators

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give tutors the handout *Building a Shed* and have them complete the assignment working in pairs or small groups.
2. Have each group share their findings with the rest.
3. Have tutors brainstorm why this would be a good activity for them to use with a learner.
4. Ask tutors to identify the skills learners would develop and use in an estimation activity.



Variation

You could introduce materials such as Popsicle sticks to help participants visualize the shed they are building. This will help both the visual and kinesthetic learners. They could talk about other ways to incorporate the three learning styles to help learners understand this exercise.

Activity C

Dice game

Many games develop math skills. You can use the one provided or find one of your own. *Box Cars and One-Eyed Jacks* has a lot of game ideas. You may want to invest in 10-sided dice for your program.

Why choose this activity?

Use this activity to show tutors how games can enhance math skills.

Group activity

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Dice

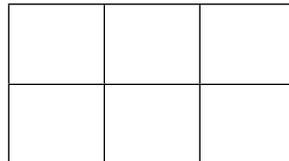
Paper for tutors to create a grid

Preparation

Familiarize yourself with how to play the game.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Explain to tutors you are going to play a game using addition. The object of the game is to get the highest number.
2. Draw a grid with two rows of three squares each on the flip chart, as follows. Have each tutor create the grid on a piece of paper.



3. Throw the dice six times and read out the number after each throw. Tutors are to place each number in one of the six squares. The numbers can be placed in any order, but only one number can go in each square and once a number is placed, it can't be moved. Once all six squares are full, tutors have two three-digit numbers, one above the other.
4. When the grid is full, have tutors add up their two three-digit numbers and see who has the highest number.
5. Ask tutors why they would use games with their learners.

Section 5

Planning for Numeracy

The same principles apply for planning a numeracy lesson as for a reading, writing or spelling lesson.

Activity A

Planning for numeracy

Group work, use of handouts

Materials and equipment

Handout 9.4: *Instructional Strategies*

Handout 9.8: *Profiles of Learners* (4 pages)

Handout 9.9: *Extended Activity*

Handout 9.10: *Examples of Activities for Everyday Living Numeracy*

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors what important points they need to consider when planning numeracy lessons. (Tutors should draw on the concepts they have learned in the workshop.)
2. Give tutors a learner profile. Have tutors work in groups and determine their learner's math abilities. Have tutors develop strategies and activities to use with their learner. Use the handouts already given as well as the *Extended Activity* and *Examples of Activities for Everyday Living Numeracy* for more ideas.
3. Ask the groups to share the strategies and activities they developed for their learner.

Facilitation tip

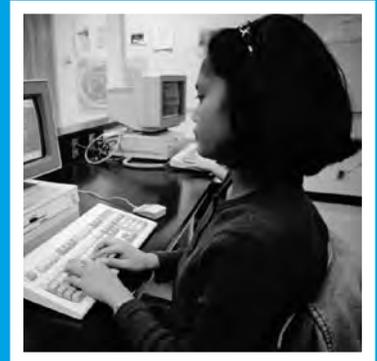
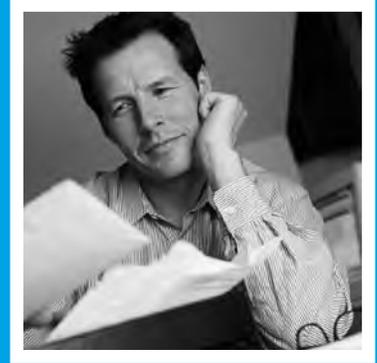
Some learners will feel anxious and feel like failures as they work through various scenarios. They may indicate they do not know how to proceed. Tutors can explore ways of reducing learners' anxiety levels as they work through various problem-solving situations.

Math fear often turns out to be thinly veiled resentment.

Sheila Tobias

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Learning Disabilities

UNIT
10

Unit 10: Learning Disabilities

SECTION 1. DEFINING LEARNING DISABILITIES			
A. Definition puzzle	Core	Small group activity	5 min
B. Lack of direct instruction	Core	Discussion, reflection	5 min
C. Common definitions of learning disabilities	Core	Use of handout, discussion	5 min
SECTION 2. WHAT'S IT LIKE?			
A. Learning disabilities as a disruption of the information-processing cycle	Core	Use of handout, discussion	5 min
B. Three general types of processing difficulties	Core	Use of handout, discussion	5 min
C. Visual processing of an image	Optional	Simulation of problem	5 min
D. Visual processing of text	Optional	Simulation of problem	5 min
E. Oral expression	Optional	Simulation of problem	5 min
F. Visual/motor integration	Optional	Simulation of problem	5 min
G. Debriefing	Core	Discussion	5 min
SECTION 3. WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES?			
A. The famous ones	Optional	Talk	5 min
B. Meeting someone with a learning disability	Core	Option 1. Interview Option 2. Watch video Option 3. Learners' stories	25 min 25 min 10 min
SECTION 4. GENERAL TUTORING STRATEGIES			
A. General tutoring strategies	Core	Use of handout, discussion	10 min
B. Making observations	Core	Use of handout, discussion	10 min
C. Creating strategies	Core	Talk, use of handout	5 min
OPTIONAL – SECTION 5. MORE STRATEGIES			
A. Skill characteristics and strategies	Optional	Use of handout	5 min
B. Case study	Optional	Use of handouts, group activity	20 min
OPTIONAL – SECTION 6. LEARNERS WITH FASD (FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER)			
A. What is FASD?	Core	Talk	5 min
B. A learner's viewpoint	Core	Use of handout, discussion	5 min
C. Tutor tips	Core	Use of handout, lecture	10 min
SECTION 7. PULLING IT TOGETHER			
A. Identify the best ways to work with adult learners who have learning disabilities	Core	Discussion	5 min
B. Compare with best practices for adult learners who don't have learning disabilities	Core	Discussion	5 min

UNIT 10

Learning Disabilities

 **Approx. 1½ hours**
using core activities

Concepts

- **What is a learning disability?**
- **Strategies for helping people with learning disabilities**
- **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**

Core of this unit builds on

- **Adults as Learners**
- **Learning Styles**
- **Planning for Learning**

Additional strategies in this unit build on

- **Reading**
- **Writing**
- **Spelling**
- **Numeracy**

This unit is meant only as an introduction to tutoring adults with learning disabilities. It is important to include this kind of information in your tutor training because we see a larger proportion of people with learning disabilities in our tutoring programs than is normally seen in the general population.

In this unit, tutors will find out what a learning disability is. Then they will get to know a learner with a learning disability and some general characteristics of people with learning disabilities. They will look at some general strategies and work with a case study. There is also an optional section on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

This unit is very general because we are dealing with a complex topic:

1. There are many types of learning disabilities.
2. Learners can have groupings of learning disabilities.
3. Any one disability can affect learners in a variety of ways.
4. The severity of the effect can vary with each individual.

Tutors need to know that learners with learning disabilities may need to try different approaches. The tutor will also need to explain and arrange work in a clear and orderly fashion. Planning should include input from the learner, the tutor and the literacy coordinator; and be based on the results of observations, samples, tests and other resources. In reality, the tutor just needs to follow good tutoring practices.

This unit does not cover working with adults who have difficulties that are more global, due to developmental or intellectual disabilities.

The following background information comes from the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada and is used with permission. Their website offers many resources for those working with adults with learning disabilities.

THE ADULT WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Many adults with learning disabilities are not aware that the difficulties they encountered in school, and the problems in their relationships or jobs, are due to learning disabilities.

It was once believed that a learning disability was a childhood disorder. We now know that this is not true – learning disabilities are lifelong and can affect friendships, school, work, self-esteem and daily life.

Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE/USEFULNESS
For the whole unit:		
Learning Differently: An Introduction to Learning Disabilities and Adult Literacy	Lori Herod	This good introductory material can be taken as a distance education course.
Learning Disabilities Training: A New Approach	Judith Anne Fowler	This comprehensive book includes case studies.
Putting a Canadian Face on Learning Disabilities (PACFOLD)	Alexander M. Wilson et al.	This readable summary of a Canadian study includes quotations from people with learning disabilities and their families.
Section 1: Defining Learning Disabilities		
Learning Disabilities Defined	Learning Disabilities Association of Canada	This web page gives a comprehensive definition of learning disabilities and the history of the definition.
Section 2: What's It Like?		
How Difficult Can This Be? (videotape and guide)	Richard D. Lavoie	This great video really shows what it is like to have a learning disability while in the school system.
Section 3: Who Are These People with Learning Disabilities?		
First Person	L.D. Online	The website has some first-hand accounts and personal stories by people with learning disabilities.
Adults with Learning Disabilities: The Road to Success	Janet Johnston	This is a book and video. Learners share some insights during the first seven minutes of the video (and the rest of the video is also informative).
Section 4: General Tutoring Strategies		
Learning Differently: An Introduction to Learning Disabilities and Adult Literacy	Lori Herod	See pages 30-32 for another look at general strategies.
Learning Disabilities Training: A New Approach	Judith Anne Fowler	See pages 94-116 and 325-333 for a more in-depth look at observation and task analysis and for more information on general strategies.
Adults with Learning Disabilities: The Road to Success	Janet Johnston	This is a book and video. Phases 1 and 2 of the video and pages 112-131 of the book show the creating strategies technique in depth. If you have access to the video, it would help tutors envision how to put the creating strategies technique into practice.
Section 5: More Strategies		
Learning Disabilities Training: A New Approach	Judith Anne Fowler	Pages 17-23 and 173-220 describe what the characteristics of learning disabilities look like and provide more case studies and background on strategies.
Section 6: Learners with FASD		
Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Building Strengths, Creating Hope	Sandra Bernstein Clarren	Although geared towards children in classes, this resource has some good tips and you can download it for free.
Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects: A Resource Guide for Teachers	Dr. Julie Conry	This book is available free online. It is geared towards children in classes, but is a good overview and easy to read.
Planning for Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: A Guide for Educators	Pamela Beatty and Sharon Yuzdowski	This is geared towards children in classes but is more in depth than the above resources. You can download it for free.

Many adults with learning disabilities lead very productive and successful lives. But for many, success is not easy. Even though they have average or above average intelligence, some adults with learning disabilities are conditioned to believe that they are stupid and lazy. Their defeated efforts often result in frustration, disappointment, low self-esteem and failure.

What is a learning disability?

A learning disability is a disorder that affects the ability to either interpret what is seen or heard or to link information from different parts of the brain. Although the individual with a learning disability has an average or above average IQ, the disability becomes evident in both academic and social situations.

Learning disabilities may be divided into five categories:

1. **Visual Problems:** poor visual memory, reversals in writing
2. **Auditory Problems:** poor auditory memory, speech problems
3. **Motor Problems:** poor hand-eye coordination
4. **Organizational Problems:** poor ability in organizing time or space
5. **Conceptual Problems:** poor social skills and peer relations, difficulty correctly interpreting non-verbal language

Learning disabilities need not prevent an individual from leading a productive and happy life. Individuals with learning disabilities can be found in all walks of life. Success may depend on many factors – the severity of the disability, early identification, remediation, career choice, support from family, friends, teachers and employers, etc.

How many people have a learning disability?

Learning disabilities affect approximately 10 per cent of the population. This means more than 3 million Canadians.

Common signs and characteristics

No individual will manifest all of the difficulties listed below:

- difficulty reading, writing, spelling; inability to complete a job application form
- difficulty following written direction and/or remembering several verbal directions
- problems putting thoughts down on paper
- feelings of anxiety, depression and low self-esteem
- difficulty finding or keeping a job
- time management difficulties
- short attention span, restlessness or hyperactivity
- difficulty in remembering and following the sequence of instructions
- difficulty in understanding appropriate social behaviour
- poor coordination and spatial disorientation
- difficulty with problem-solving strategies

Facilitation tip

If you are unfamiliar with this topic, take some time to look over the handouts and the background information. You may want to also read some of the good information on the Internet or in your library (or the Literacy & Learning Resource Centre of Alberta – contact Literacy Alberta for information). See this unit's bibliography for relevant titles.

Coordinator tip

It may be important for you to arrange follow-up sessions for tutors working with learners who have specific learning disabilities. Check with organizations that know more about the disability for more information or to book a session.

It is important to note that these characteristics are often balanced by the presence of significant strengths and creativity.

Using successful coping strategies

Coping strategies are methods, systems or tricks people use to help themselves accomplish what they want or need to do. Examples include:

- identifying and recognizing strengths and weaknesses
- setting realistic goals based on abilities
- using technology to compensate for weaknesses (word processor, spell checker, calculator, books on tape, etc.)
- accepting the disability and knowing that it's quite OK
- being flexible – finding other ways of getting information
- joining activity-centred groups to make friends
- breaking down large tasks into small ones
- identifying deadlines for small manageable tasks
- making to-do lists with deadlines
- prioritizing rather than procrastinating

If these are not enough!

If solid coping skills and compensatory strategies are not developed, the learning disability may continue to interfere with work, education, social relations and basic daily activities. Some suggestions are:

- being assessed by a professional trained in learning disabilities (neuropsychologist, educational psychologist, etc.)
- finding other adults with learning disabilities for sharing strategies, information and support
- seeking counselling from a professional with knowledge about learning disabilities

Things to remember

- Having a learning disability is a lifelong condition.
- Any learner with a learning disability is not alone.
- Support and information is available.
- Celebrate the learner's uniqueness.
- Remember, it is never too late to help!
- Never give up!

Section 1

Defining Learning Disabilities

This section provides a common understanding of what learning disabilities are in general. It provides a foundation for the other sections and introduces tutors to the subject.

Activity A

Definition puzzle

Learning disabilities are a puzzling topic and so some definitions are introduced in the form of a puzzle. This is a hands-on activity.

Small group activity

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.1: *Learning Disabilities Definitions Puzzle* (2 pages)

Envelopes

Preparation

Copy enough of the handouts for each group of two to four tutors to have one.

Cut apart the puzzle on the lines. Mix up the pieces for each puzzle and put each puzzle in a separate unlabelled envelope. Don't put the title of the handout in the envelope. Keep one puzzle intact to show at the end of the activity. Note: Be sure to cut up a copy of the handout so that you can use the original again next time.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce the unit. Say that learning disabilities can be very puzzling. Then give the cut-apart puzzles to each group of two to four tutors. Ask them to put the puzzle together. If they ask you what it is about, tell them, but don't volunteer the information.
2. Don't tell them what the shape of the puzzle is for a while. Ask them to try the puzzle for two minutes before you give this clue.
3. Allow up to four minutes for the activity and then show the correct finished puzzle.

Activity B

Lack of direct instruction

The instructions for the puzzle activity were not very direct. The tutors will look at this problem and be told that direct instruction is often important for learners with learning disabilities.

Discussion, reflection

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors how they felt about the puzzle activity. They should have felt some frustration with not knowing more about the activity in the beginning. Prompt by asking if the activity would have been easier had they known that the puzzle was a question mark inscribed with definitions of learning disabilities.
2. State that learners with learning disabilities often need more direct instruction. These learners should be told exactly how to do an activity and what it will look like in the end. Examples and checklists are useful in direct instruction.

Activity C

Common definitions of learning disabilities

This summarizes the look at learning disabilities definitions.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.2: *What Is a Learning Disability?*

Preparation

Copy handouts.

Look over definitions to see if you wish to add more information or definitions, or if you want to emphasize any particular statement.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out *What Is a Learning Disability?*
2. Talk about the definitions.
3. Ask tutors to circle any of the definitions that particularly make sense to them.

Section 2

What's It Like?

This section will be especially useful for tutors who have little experience working with people who have learning disabilities. The activities should help tutors gain some insight into what it is like to have a learning disability and will enable tutors to empathize with learners who may have learning disabilities.

Activity A

Learning disabilities as a disruption of the information-processing cycle

This looks at common disruptions in the information processing cycle. Looking at learning disabilities in this way will help tutors later on as they start to figure out problems and possible solutions.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.3: *How Learning Disabilities Can Impact the Information-Processing Cycle*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy handout.

Prepare the flip chart diagram ahead of time if you wish.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out *How Learning Disabilities Can Impact the Information-Processing Cycle*.
2. On the flip chart, write the following three elements of the information-processing cycle in a circular pattern:
 - inputting information
 - processing information
 - outputting information
3. Go over the handout.
4. Connect the three elements with arrows as you go through the handout. The last element of *outputting* should connect with *inputting*. Conclude by pointing out that a disruption in one part of the cycle affects the rest of the cycle.

Activity B

Three general types of processing difficulties

This activity looks at processing difficulties from the perspective of our senses.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.4: *Three General Types of Information-Processing Difficulties*

Preparation

Copy handout.

Think about whether you have had any learners with the problems described.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out *Three General Types of Information-processing Difficulties*.
2. Introduce the handout by explaining that it just gives some examples of processing difficulties. Talk about the handout.
3. Ask if tutors know anyone who shows any of these problems. Discourage the use of names as they respond. You can also respond with examples from your program.

Facilitation tip

Discourage the use of names when talking about people with learning disabilities.

Mention the need for confidentiality before getting into discussions that could result in tutors using learner (or other people's) names.

optional activity

Coordinator tip for the next four activities

Choose at least one of the four simulations and follow with the debriefing in Activity G, the last activity in this section.

Activity C

Visual processing of an image

This simulation uses a picture to illustrate a problem.

Why choose this activity?

You should use one of the simulations (Activity C, D, E or F) to give a taste of what it is like to have a learning disability. This simulation divides your tutors into two groups – each group will see something different.

Simulation of problem

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.5: *An Image* or any other image that can be seen in two different ways

Preparation

Look over the simulations and decide if you want to do all four or fewer.

Try out the simulations yourself.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out *An Image*. Make sure that you hand it so that it will look like a face to the tutor. The word *liar* will run vertically on the page to create the outline of a face.
2. Ask one tutor, “What is it?” She will respond either that it is a face or the word *liar*.
3. Whatever the answer, say that it is wrong, and ask other tutors until you get the other answer.
4. Describe how to see the image you wanted, if necessary, to tutors who still can’t see it.
5. State that there are really two images in this picture. However, a learner who has visual-processing difficulties may often not get the “correct” answer. They process the visual information in a different way.
6. Tell them that they have just experienced a visual-processing problem simulation. Learners may not process visual information in the way that is familiar to us. They may need help to make sense of the visual information. Point out that tutors can begin to help learners in a more supportive way than by stating “You’re wrong.”

Activity D

Visual processing of text

This looks at a problem with decoding a reading text.

Why choose this activity?

You should use one of the simulations (Activity A, B, C or D) to give a taste of what it is like to have a learning disability. Tutors will easily relate to this decoding problem by trying to read the strange text.

Simulation of problem

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.6: *Decoding Simulation*

Preparation

Copy handout.

Read the handout yourself.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out *Decoding Simulation*.
2. Ask tutors to read the passage in a round-robin fashion. Remind them to “sound it out.” Help out as necessary (hint – the *p*’s, *d*’s, *q*’s and *d*’s are often flipped around and the words are spaced differently).
3. Tell them that some learners may have visual processing problems that make decoding a text difficult. In this example, there are problems in organizing the position and shape of what is seen. Also the spaces between words are not maintained. Trouble with decoding will lead to trouble with comprehension.

optional
activity

Facilitation tip

It’s always a good idea to try out whatever you are asking tutors to do. You learn the concept and learn how to best facilitate the activity.

Activity E

Oral expression

This simulation involves all tutors in creating a round-robin story with a twist.

Why choose this activity?

You should use one of the simulations (Activity A, B, C or D) to give a taste of what it is like to have a learning disability. This is a fun activity that shows an oral expression problem.

Simulation of problem

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Inform tutors that now they are going to build a group story. One person will start the story and each person will then add a sentence.
2. Give the rules:
 - The story must be interesting and coherent.
 - The story must include character development and a plot.
 - You must use varied sentence structure and interesting vocabulary.
 - By the way, you are not allowed to use the letter *n*.
3. You may start the story or get someone else to start. Don't give tutors much time to think. Make them redo a sentence if an *n* is included.
4. End after one round if you have a large group. Every tutor should have had at least one attempt at the task.
5. Point out:
 - The story didn't follow the rules well.
 - They had trouble at the word level due to the letter restriction and this caused problems in fluency. Also, the sentences tended to be short.
 - They sounded like a person with dysnomia, an expressive language disability, characterized by a word-finding difficulty.

Treat your learner with respect and dignity.

J. A. Fowler in *Learning disabilities training: A new approach*

Activity F

optional
activity

Visual/motor integration

A volunteer will demonstrate a visual/motor integration problem by copying a picture while using a mirror.

Why choose this activity?

You should use one of the simulations (Activity A, B, C or D) to give a taste of what it is like to have a learning disability. This activity focuses on visual/motor integration by making it more difficult to copy a pattern.

Simulation of problem

Materials and equipment

Mirror, preferably one that stands up on its own
Tracing paper, pencil or pen
Pattern to trace
Small table and chair

Preparation

Make a pattern that the tutor who volunteers to do this activity will copy. Using a thick marker, draw on a piece of paper a continuous line that twists and turns. It could look like scribbling or have a definite shape.

Set up the activity as follows:

- Place a table and chair where all tutors will be able to see them.
- On the table, in a place where the person in the chair can easily reach them, put the pattern to be traced with the tracing paper on top of it.
- Put the mirror on the far side of the papers, so that the papers are between the person in the chair and the mirror.
- The angle of the mirror is very important. It should reflect the papers on the table, not the face of the person sitting in the chair. However, the person sitting in the chair must be able to see the reflection of the papers.
- Have a pen or pencil available to the person sitting in the chair.

Try the activity yourself before the session.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Set up the activity as described.
2. Ask for a volunteer to trace the pattern. Tell her that she has to look in the mirror and trace the pattern.
3. She should have some trouble. If she is a whiz at this, ask her some questions while she draws. If you do this, she should have trouble answering or drawing because the difficulty of the task makes it hard to handle more than one task at a time.
4. The tutor might be unable to continue if she gets off the line. In any case, the task will be more difficult than ordinary drawing.
5. Ask her how she felt about her drawing.
6. Say that maybe someone else can do better and get another volunteer (if you can).
7. Say that this is an example of visual/motor integration problems.

Activity G

Debriefing

After the simulation(s), tutors will need to talk about their feelings.

Discussion

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask how tutors felt about each simulation and in general about the exercise.
2. If they talk about difficulty, unfairness and so on, mention that learners sometimes feel that way also.

I have tried to change my internal dialogue from “should” to “could.” ... Negative self-talk is a huge problem for LD individuals, because we already doubt our skills, and many of us think of ourselves as failures.

Toronto focus group participant in the 2007 study,
Putting a Canadian Face on Learning Disabilities

Section 3

Who Are These People with Learning Disabilities?

We need to focus on the person, not the disability. We also need to highlight the importance of looking at learners' strengths as well as their weaknesses. Because most of the general characteristics of learning disabilities relate to difficulties, you can challenge tutors to consider how they can recognize, highlight and reinforce learners' strengths.

Use this section for tutors who are unfamiliar with learners with learning disabilities, to give them a connection to a real person.

Activity A

The famous ones

This activity introduces the interview, video or learner story in Activity B.

Why choose this activity?

This provides an interesting introduction to the core activity that follows.

Talk

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce this section by saying that people with learning disabilities can be found in many parts of our society, including the ranks of the famous. Read off any of the names in the following list of famous people with learning disabilities that might be of interest to tutors.

- Hans Christian Anderson
- Harry Belafonte
- Alexander Graham Bell
- George Burns
- Cher
- Winston Churchill
- Tom Cruise
- Leonardo da Vinci
- Walt Disney
- Thomas Edison
- Albert Einstein
- Henry Ford
- Whoopi Goldberg
- Greg Louganis
- General George Patton
- Nelson Rockefeller
- Auguste Rodin
- Jackie Stewart
- George Washington
- Woodrow Wilson
- Virginia Woolf
- W. B. Yeats



Activity B

Meeting someone with a learning disability

It is important to look beyond the handouts or activities and find a real person. In some way, shape or form, tutors need to meet someone with a learning disability to develop a better understanding and to connect the unit to reality.

Option 1 Interview

Why choose this option?

This is the best option but will require quite a bit of preparation time. You may also have some trouble finding a learner who is willing to talk to tutors.

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.7: *General Characteristics of Learners with Learning Disabilities*

Preparation

See if you can get someone who has a learning disability to come and talk briefly with your tutors.

Go over possible questions with this person before the session. A few questions are suggested below, but it would be best to work with your guest to develop more relevant questions that your guest is comfortable answering. Your guest may also want to give tutors some other information on his learning disability and may need some time to prepare.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce your guest and ask questions as you have arranged in advance. If your guest is a confident speaker, you may feel that tutors can be invited to ask questions also. Check this out with the speaker in advance. Delete questions that the learner is not comfortable answering. Follow the guest's lead.
 - What are your strengths?
 - When did you first think that you had a learning disability?
 - Please describe, in your words, your learning disability.
 - How did your learning disability affect your self-esteem?
 - How did your learning disability affect your school years?
 - How does it affect your work?
 - How does it affect other parts of your life?
 - How do you cope with this disability?
 - Do you have suggestions for tutors working with someone who has a learning disability?
2. Thank your guest. After he has left, ask tutors to read over the handout *General Characteristics of Learners with Learning Disabilities* and think about what characteristics your guest mentioned as some of his learning problems.
3. Discuss the tutors' ideas.
4. State that the characteristics on the handout are very general and some may not reflect the learners that tutors will work with.

Variation

To further understand the significance of these processing challenges, you could open a dialogue with tutors about how these challenges would impact the everyday life of an individual. They could look at the impact on a child, an adolescent and an independent adult or senior with a learning disability. If working with three or more tutors, each person or group could brainstorm ideas about the impact within one of the three life stages. This discussion would provide a valuable backdrop to watching the video or meeting an individual with a learning disability.

Option 2 Watch video

Why choose this option?

This is the next best choice if you don't have a learner who is willing to come for an interview.

Materials and equipment

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – Meeting Someone with a Learning Disability*, or the first seven minutes of the video by Janet Johnston, *Adults with Learning Disabilities: The Road to Success*

TV and VCR

Handout 10.7: *General Characteristics of Learners with Learning Disabilities*

Preparation

Cue the video you have chosen.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Show the video clip you have selected. Ask tutors to listen as if this were their learner.
2. After the video clip is finished, ask tutors to read over the handout *General Characteristics of People with Learning Disabilities* and think about what characteristics are true for the person in the video.
3. Discuss the tutors' ideas.
4. State that the characteristics on the handout are very general and some may not reflect the learners that tutors will work with.

Facilitation tip

Preview all video clips before using them for the first time or if you haven't used them for a while.

*If learning to read was a simple process,
then all people would read easily and we
wouldn't need a million volunteers.*

Training the Reading Team

Option 3 Learners' stories

Why choose this option?

This option takes the least time and may be useful if you don't have access to a TV/VCR unit.

Materials and equipment

Go to www.idonline.org/firstperson to find some wonderful personal stories by people with learning disabilities. Another source is www.fasdconnections.ca/id33.htm, the source for a handout in Section 6. If you look further, you will find out that many learning disabilities groups have websites with a sample learner story and many books on learning disabilities will have a sample learner story as well.

Handout 10.7: *General Characteristics of Learners with Learning Disabilities*

Preparation

Find the story you wish to use.

Make one copy of the story you have chosen. (Either you or a tutor will read it.)

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Read out loud one or more of the stories that you have found on the website or in an article or book. If you are sharing more than one story, consider asking volunteer tutors to read stories out loud to the rest of the group. If you have a large group, consider giving a story for small groups to work with separately.
2. After reading the learner stories, ask tutors to read over the handout *General Characteristics of Learners with Learning Disabilities* and think about what characteristics are true for the people in the stories.
3. Discuss the tutors' (or groups') ideas.
4. State that the characteristics on the handout are very general and some may not reflect the learners that tutors will work with.

Learning disabilities affect approximately 10 per cent of the population. This means more than 3 million Canadians.

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

Section 4

General Tutoring Strategies

This section gives tutors a place to start with some general ideas that will be useful for many learners.

Activity A

General tutoring strategies

This activity provides an active look at the handout on general tutoring strategies.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.8: *Helpful Pointers When Tutoring* (2 pages)

Preparation

Copy handout and preview it.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to read over *Helpful Pointers When Tutoring* and look for items that might be useful if they were tutoring the learner(s) that they met in the previous section.
2. Ask for their ideas.
3. Mention that the handout is very general and not all of the tips will work with every learner.

Variation

There are a lot of critical pointers to absorb from this handout. One way of helping tutors integrate the suggestions into their thinking would be to break into small groups with each group receiving one of the four sections of the handout. (If you choose to do this, you will need to make extra copies of the handout to cut up for each group.) The groups could take a few minutes to create and then present a role-play to demonstrate several of the points in action. Captions could be added to help explain the role-play.

The rest of the tutors have the role of identifying the positive strategies observed in the role-play and “scribes” record the points on a flip chart as they are being named. The participants may go beyond the suggested list. As a follow-up, everyone would receive the handout plus the points generated by the group.

Activity B

Making observations

Tutors can learn a lot about their learners and the learners’ possible learning problems through simple observation. This activity encourages tutors to be active observers.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.9: *Finding Out More While Tutoring*

Preparation

Copy handout.

Think about any examples you can give related to the points on the handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Say that tutors need to gather information during lessons to help develop further lessons.
2. Go over the handout *Finding Out More While Tutoring*. Ask tutors for examples related to the points on the handout or add your own.
3. During the discussion, highlight the following points:
 - Encourage tutors to take notes of important observations after the lesson.
 - Encourage them to keep and evaluate samples of the learner's work.
 - Also encourage them to actively listen to their learner.

Activity C

Creating strategies

We often don't have a handy manual or list of what would fit a particular learner well. This activity provides a framework for tutors and coordinators in creating tailor-made strategies.

Talk, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.10: *Steps to Strategy Creation*

Preparation

Copy handout.

Review handout and envision using this strategy.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Point out:
 - Not every problem has an easy-to-find suggested solution in a book.
 - Sometimes the learner, tutor and coordinator need to create a solution.
 - The next handout gives some ideas on how to start that process.
 - The main steps in this technique are breaking down problem areas or tasks until the specific problem can be pinpointed, and then developing possible strategies for handling that difficulty.
2. Read over the handout *Steps to Strategy Creation*.
3. Conclude by saying that the hope is that learners will eventually be able to use this kind of problem-solving technique on their own if they don't do so already.

Variation

If you have access to the video from Janet Johnston's *Adults with Learning Disabilities: The Road to Success*, Phase 1 and 2 show in detail how the creating strategies technique works. It would help tutors envision how to put the technique into practice.

Section 5

More Strategies

This section provides more concrete examples for tutors. It also gives tutors practice in choosing some specific strategies to help them work with learners' problem areas.

None of the following activities are part of the core tutor training. Because this section is quite in-depth, it is more appropriate if tutors already have been working with learners and have covered units like Reading, Writing, Spelling and Numeracy.

Activity A

Skill characteristics and strategies

Why choose this activity?

This activity introduces tutors to a handout rich in detailed strategies that respond to a variety of learning disabilities and challenges. They can use the handout with the case study in the next activity.

Use of handout

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.11: *Skill Characteristics and Strategies Chart* (7 pages)

Preparation

Copy handout.

Read over the handout yourself.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out the *Skill Characteristics and Strategies Chart* pages.
2. Point out the various headings.
3. Read a sample from the chart.
4. Mention that this is just a sampling of strategies and that the strategies might be inappropriate for some learners.

A direct approach to teaching strategies is more effective than a discovery approach.

J. A. Fowler in *Learning Disabilities Training: A new approach*

optional
section

This section is optional.
Choose the activities that will
best suit your program.

optional
activity

Activity B

Case study

A case study helps tutors envision working with a learner.

Why choose this activity?

This activity allows tutors to explore a real tutoring situation through a case study. Tutors get to use what they already know and the information in the handouts and case study to think of appropriate lesson strategies.

The following information comes from Judith Anne Fowler's 2003 book, *Learning Disabilities Training: A New Approach*. In it, she suggests some strategies that respond to the problems outlined in the case study about Tom (see Handout 10.12).

AREAS TO FOCUS ON AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES – CASE STUDY

Reading:

- Work on vocabulary development by having Tom go through the text and identify unfamiliar words, break down the prefixes and/or suffixes and use the content of the text to help decode the words.
- Work on reading comprehension by building on his strength of predicting and teach him strategies to help increase his comprehension. Point out the difference in his comprehension when reading versus listening and discuss ways to help deal with this. Provide strategies for dealing with more advanced reading (textbooks) to help prepare for credit programs.

Expressive writing:

- Reinforce the writing process and provide editing strategies to help him recognize his errors. Encourage the use of a word processor for his writing assignments.
- To work on spelling, discuss his possible auditory disability and its impact on his spelling and find out what strategies he presently uses. Teach him the basic rules for spelling, develop a personal dictionary with rules and troublesome words, and work on chunking, word groups and syllables.

Math:

- Help Tom manage his errors by making him aware of them, and develop a checklist to “edit” his math work. Suggest that he utilize graph paper to help keep his work organized.
- Work on word problems by helping him highlight the key information in the problem. Encourage him to develop his own word problems from number statements, and teach problem-solving steps with an emphasis on checking his answers for errors.

Listening:

- Help Tom to recognize and be sensitive to his listening skills and the impact of the auditory disability.

- Develop some listening techniques to ensure that he hears all the information the practitioner gives him without asking the practitioner to repeat it frequently. This will build on his listening ability and decrease his tendency to interrupt. Encourage him to write down his thoughts before speaking and to pace himself.

Use of handouts, group activity

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.11: *Skill Characteristics and Strategies Chart* (7 pages)

Handout 10.12: *Case Study – Tom* (2 pages)

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy and review handouts.

Read over the background information for this activity so you can give ideas if tutors are stuck.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Pass out *Case Study – Tom* to tutors. Go over the general points about Tom on the first page.
2. Divide the skill areas as listed on the *Skill Characteristics and Strategies Chart* handout among tutors. Have a few groups so that at least one group will be able to look at reading and one at writing. If you have enough people for more groups, include mathematics, speaking and listening skills.
3. Ask tutors to look at the case study description for the skill you have assigned to them. They are to identify an area within that skill to focus on and then choose an appropriate strategy. They can use the charts they just received or think of something on their own. Tell them that they will be sharing their ideas and will have to give a reason for their choice of strategy.
4. Pass out flip chart paper and markers.
5. Give tutors around five minutes (or more if you have more time) and then ask for their input. Ask the groups to share their ideas and hold up the chart paper with their notes. Indicate that you want only a few strategies because you wouldn't want to overwhelm the learner with a large number of strategies to learn at one time.

*Many adults with learning disabilities
lead very productive and successful lives.*

Claudette Larocque

This section is optional. Use it if you think you have FASD learners in your program and you would like your tutors to better understand this disability.

Variation

If the group seems very interested in this topic, consider inviting a representative from a local FASD group or learning disabilities group to talk to your tutors as an extra session. For a directory of FASD groups, look on the Internet at www.ccsa.ca.

Section 6

Learners with FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder)

Some of your learners may have FASD. The effects of drinking on the fetus are varied and irreversible. Damage may be physical and/or mental. It's an equal opportunity disease that can be found in any race or socio-economic group.

Activity A

What is FASD?

You may want to provide information on FASD because your tutors may have some learners with this disability.

Talk

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask if any tutors are familiar with the acronym FASD. Some may have heard of FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome), FAE (Fetal Alcohol Effect) or ARND (Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder), which fall under the broader FASD definition.
2. You can use the very general definition of FASD in the section introduction or you may want to use a clinical definition from your regional FASD group or from one of the resources for further study.
3. Don't spend too much time on the syndrome, as it is difficult to diagnose. Instead present the following activity as a chance to understand learners with the syndrome and some general tutoring approaches that tutors can use if they suspect this is a problem.

Activity B

A learner's viewpoint

This focuses on a learner's heartfelt words. Tutors will become more connected with a learner by reading her thoughts out loud.

Use of handout, group activity

Materials and equipment

Handout 10.13: *Things I Would Like Teachers to Know* (2 pages)

Preparation

Copy handout.

Cut it into the different numbered statements. (Note: Be sure to cut up a copy of the handout so that you have the original to use again.)

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out the cut-up numbered statements from *Things I Would Like Teachers to Know* in numbered order. Keep the unnumbered ending for yourself. We have typed up the statements in the fashion that the author used (e.g., upper case letters) and have added the numbers for the purposes of this activity.
2. Ask tutors to read the statements expressively. Help tutors to follow the numerical order if your group seating makes this difficult. If you are doing individualized tutor training, just alternate reading the statements. Read the unnumbered end of the handout yourself.
3. When the group has finished, tell them that a 20-year-old adult learner wrote these statements.

Variation

Give half of the statements to each of two groups and ask them to cluster them into statements that belong together, naming each theme. Alternatively, each group could receive the full set of 30 statements to organize. The clustering exercise stimulates discussion and reflection. Each group could then share their clusters with the other for the purpose of an open dialogue on the messages and themes.

Activity C

Tutor tips

The learner's statements are expanded into tutor tips.

In 1997, Deb Evensen and Jan Lutke published *Eight Magic Keys: Developing Successful Interventions for Individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders*. It suggests pragmatic ways of helping individuals with FASD, and from it we offer the following information, adapted with permission.

EIGHT MAGIC KEYS

While there is no recommended “cookbook approach” to working with individuals with FASD, there are strategies that work, based on the following guidelines:

1. **Concrete** – Individuals with FASD do well when people talk in concrete terms. Do not use words with double meanings and do not use idioms. Because their social-emotional understanding is far below their chronological age, it helps to “think younger” when providing assistance and giving instructions to people with FASD. Don't give too many instructions at a time.
2. **Consistency** – Because of the difficulty individuals with FASD experience trying to generalize learning from one situation to another, they do best in an environment with few changes. This includes language: teachers and parents can coordinate with each other to use the same words for key phrases and oral directions.
3. **Repetition** – People with FASD have chronic short-term memory problems; they forget things they want to remember as well as information that they have already learned and retained for a period of time. In order for something to make it into their long-term memory, it may simply need to be re-taught and re-taught. This requires your kindness and patience.
4. **Routine** – Stable routines that don't change from day to day will make it easier for individuals with FASD to know what to expect next. This will decrease their anxiety and enable them to learn.

5. **Simplicity** – Individuals with FASD are easily overstimulated. When they get over-stimulated they may shut down, at which point they can't assimilate any more information. Therefore, a simple environment is the foundation for an effective life.
6. **Specific** – Say exactly what you mean. Remember that individuals with FASD have difficulties with abstraction, generalization and not being able to “fill in the blanks” when given a direction. This leaves them stressed and frustrated. Tell them and show them step by step what to do. If you consistently model appropriate habit patterns, it will be easier for them to develop similar habits.
7. **Structure** – Structure is the “glue” that makes the world understandable to people with FASD. If the glue is taken away, the walls fall down! They can achieve and be successful if their world is appropriately organized for them.
8. **Supervision** – Because of their cognitive challenges, individuals with FASD bring a naiveté to daily life situations. They may need constant supervision to develop habit patterns of appropriate behaviour.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 10.13: *Things I Would Like Teachers to Know* (2 pages)

Preparation

Read over the information given in the introduction to this activity and as part of the step-by-step process.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Tell tutors that you are going to look at some of statements made by a learner with FASD. Give them the full handout this time, not just the sentence strips.
2. If you did Activity B, ask tutors to read the following statements out loud again from their handouts and make a note on the flip chart as follows. If you didn't do Activity B, just read the statements yourself and make the notes.
 - Statements to read:
 - Number 6: Explain things simply.
 - Number 7: I need things to be repeated many, many times.
 - Number 8: I need minimum distractions (noise, people, other sounds and other visuals).
 - Number 10: There are some things I cannot learn no matter what!!! Or who teaches it!!
 - Number 20: I am not good at organization (I need lots of help).
 - Number 23: I need to do things in the same order all the time. If I don't, my whole day gets messed up!!!
 - Notes for the flip chart:
 - Keep it simple.
 - Repeat.
 - Minimize distractions.
 - Work around broken connections.
 - Use structure and consistency.

3. Refer to the above headings as you talk about examples related to tutoring. Use your own experience or use the following notes. Caution tutors that FASD has a wide range of effects so these ideas may not be needed for some learners. Encourage tutors to take notes if you are going to go into a lot of details. Bring out the following points:
- Keep it simple.
 - Do one step at a time.
 - Don't give long, involved instructions or explanations.
 - Use plain language and concrete terms.
 - Say exactly what you mean.
 - Slow down.
 - A phonics reading approach, such as working with vowels, may be too complicated.
 - Model tasks.
 - Repeat.
 - In order to get items into long-term memory, use a lot of repetition. Even items remembered for six weeks can be forgotten.
 - Use reviews over a long period of time.
 - Be patient.
 - Minimize distractions.
 - It doesn't take much to overload the senses of people with FASD.
 - Distractions can be so disruptive that the learners will have to start a task from the beginning again.
 - Find a quiet comfortable place with very little on the walls.
 - Clear the workspace so only the item you are working with is present. If your learners need to move in order to calm down and learn, allow them to use a squeeze ball or another object to move with.
 - Allow more time to finish activities.
 - Don't forget to turn off the phone.
 - Don't leave them unsupervised for a long period of time as they may get distracted and stop work.
 - Work around broken connections.
 - The damage to the brain involves broken connections, so sometimes cause doesn't connect with effect.
 - Help explain the connection between a cause and its effect when that will help with reading comprehension.
 - Avoid "why" questions because this often involves cause and effect thinking.
 - Often items learned in one context will not be used in another similar context until the connection between the two contexts can be made several times in real situations. Provide learning in ways that make these connections for the learners. Practise skills in a variety of situations; for example, fill out specific information on a variety of forms.
 - Make more connections by using activities that involve a variety of senses.
 - Don't think that if learners can repeat the instructions, that means they understand them.

- Sometimes some things are too difficult to learn and should be left alone.
- Fine motor skills may be affected by FASD, so handwriting and sometimes keyboarding will be difficult. Provide writing paper with wider spaces than usual. Try relaxation exercises for hand and arm muscles and make written tasks shorter.
- Use structure and consistency.
 - Create an overall lesson structure that you can use for most lessons. Group similar items together.
 - Use checklists so that learners can refer to a list to keep on track while finishing complex activities.
 - You may have to add more breaks or spend less time on each subject per lesson than you would with a non-FASD learner.
 - Try to keep activities in the same order each time you repeat the activity.
 - Try to use the same wording each time you move the learner from one activity to another.
 - Keep the same tutor as long as possible.
 - Use two of everything (one at home and one at the lesson location), as textbooks and notebooks may be forgotten.
 - Help learners organize their work.
 - Write down homework and next session dates/times every time. Keep sessions at the same time and place as much as possible. Tie the lesson time into another constant activity to help learners remember the time. Even better, get someone else to be responsible for bringing the learner to the lessons and help the learners with scheduling homework. Learners may live very much in the present and be unable to schedule even with phone call reminders.
- 4. End by mentioning that some of these general strategies may be useful for other learners.

Structure is the “glue” that makes the world understandable to people with FASD.

Deb Evensen and Jan Lutke in
*Eight Magic Keys: Developing Successful Intervention for
Individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders*

Section 7

Pulling It Together

Ultimately, tutors will find that working with adults who have learning disabilities is not that different from working with other adult learners. In fact, the best practices for adults with and without learning disabilities have more similarities than differences.

Activity A

Identify the best ways to work with adult learners who have learning disabilities

Tutors work on best practices statements.

Discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Put the heading “Best Practices” on the flip chart.
2. Ask the question “Based on what you have learned in this unit, what do you think are the best ways to work with adult learners who have learning disabilities?”
3. Jot down their ideas.
4. Consider typing up their ideas and mailing the ideas to tutors later as a way of reminding them about the unit themes.

Variation

As an alternative that involves people moving around the room, you could post key themes on flip chart sheets around the room and ask people to rotate individually, in pairs or small groups to contribute ideas (using markers) from what they have learned.

Any learner with a learning disability is not alone. Support and information is available.

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

Activity B

Compare with best practices for adult learners who don't have learning disabilities

Many of the best practices for adult learners with learning disabilities are best practices for all learners.

Discussion

Materials and equipment

The flip chart pages noting the ideas tutors generated in Activity A

Markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Point to the flip chart pages from Activity A and ask “Could some adult learners who don't have a learning disability also benefit from these best practices?” Tutors should agree that many of the best practices are best practices for both groups.
2. Ask which items would be good for both groups. Place a check mark or circle the items that tutors mention. The number of check marks or circles should make the point for you.

Becoming aware of other styles and working to strengthen weaker ones can enhance learning by providing a variety of strategies for taking in and processing information.

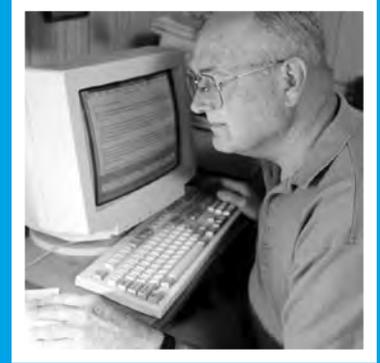
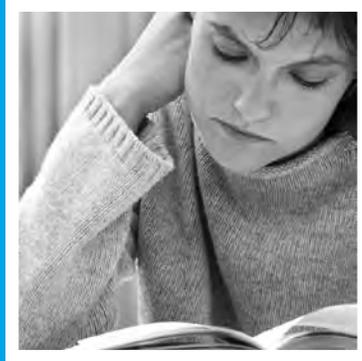
Lori Herod in *Learning Styles and Strategies*

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Often both instructors and students approach learning as though there was a “right” way to learn, not realizing that any learning style that works is the right one.

Lori Herod in *Learning Styles and Strategies*



ESL: Learner and Tutor

UNIT
11

Unit 11: ESL: Learner and Tutor

SECTION 1. GETTING TO KNOW ESL LEARNERS			
A. Icebreaker – Similarities and differences between cultures	Optional	Option 1: Matching proverbs, discussion for larger group Option 2: Matching proverbs, discussion for smaller group	10 min 10 min
B. Walking a mile in someone's shoes: Developing empathy	Core	Use of handout, discussion	5 min
C. Meeting ESL learners	Core	Option 1: Interview with ESL learner Option 2: Use of video, discussion	20 min 15 min
D. What affects the ability to learn?	Core	Use of handouts, discussion	10 min
E. Culture shock	Core	Option 1: Interview with ESL learner, discussion using handout Option 2: Reflection, use of video and handout, discussion	25 min 25 min
SECTION 2. NARROWING DOWN WHERE TO START			
A. Survival language needs	Core	Reflection, discussion	5 min
B. First meeting questions	Core	Use of handout, discussion	5 min
C. Understanding individual learner needs	Core	Option 1: Mapping technique using handouts and discussion Option 2: Role technique using handout and discussion	10 min 10 min
D. Learners' preferences	Optional	Discussion using handout	5 min
SECTION 3. COMMUNICATING AS A LEARNING TEAM			
A. Trying to understand a foreign language	Core	Listening to a foreign language	5 min
B. Making tutoring communication understandable	Core	Discussion using two handouts	5 min

UNIT 11

ESL: Learner and Tutor

 **Approx. 1½ hours**
using core activities

Concepts

- **An introduction to tutoring ESL**
- **Characteristics of ESL learners**
- **Their needs and preferences**

Builds on

- **Learning Styles (section on culture)**
- **Adults as Learners**
- **Planning for Learning**

Note:

Other units (e.g., Reading, Writing, Spelling) can be added later or covered before this unit.

Learning a new language is a huge task and working with someone who has taken on this challenge is an exciting experience. Not only do you have the chance to help someone who really wants to communicate, but you also learn a lot about the intricacies and expressive nature of the English language and about a different country and its culture.

Some tutors find it scary to think of tutoring someone with whom they cannot easily communicate. The coordinator's job is to help tutors feel comfortable working with ESL (English as a Second Language) learners and to make sure they have the resources to do it. Some of the activities in this unit will help you do this.

This unit focuses on the characteristics of ESL learners and their needs and preferences. It can be used with new tutors who are not matched. It might be redundant for tutors who have experience in tutoring ESL learners.

Helping someone learn English as a Second Language may be new to your tutors, but it is a well-established field of instruction with a body of research, knowledge and resources available as well as proven techniques that facilitate second language acquisition. Tutors might benefit from learning about the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) standard which lays out language learning along a continuum of 12 benchmarks. The benchmarks talk about what the learner can do in four strands of language – speaking, listening, reading and writing. They describe competencies that learners need to perform real life tasks. Tutors can refer to the benchmarks to see what competencies their learners need for participation in community, study and work. As coordinator, you can encourage tutors to check out the support materials and information available on the CLB website – www.language.ca.

The following inventory of beliefs may give you an idea of the different perspectives that your tutors may have towards ESL tutoring. It isn't intended as an exercise to do with your tutors, but you may be interested in doing it yourself. It comes from Jack Richards' and Charles Lockhart's book, *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms* (copyright Cambridge University Press, 1994, reprinted with permission of Cambridge University Press).

*He who does not know foreign languages
does not know anything about his own.*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in
Kunst und Alterthum

Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE / USEFULNESS
For the whole unit		
The English as a Second Language Tutor's Handbook	Shawn Conway	If you are not familiar with tutoring ESL learners, this booklet gives an overview of the subject in only 39 pages.
Section 1: Getting to Know ESL Learners		
Taking a Closer Look at Struggling ESOL Learners	Robin L. Shwartz	This will give you other examples of what affects the ability of ESL learners to learn. Go to the site and plug the article's title into the search feature.
The Handbook of Cultural Awareness	Rosalie Bean	This a short book on cultural awareness that is easy to understand.
Section 2: Narrowing Down Where to Start		
Collaborative Language Portfolio Assessment: Manitoba Best Practices Guide	Manitoba Labour and Immigration	This has information on ESL portfolios and sample forms in the appendices.
Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000	Grazyna Pawlikowska-Smith	The benchmarks have many task-based assessment ideas.
Section 3: Communicating as a Learning Team		
Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms	Jack C. Richards and Charles Lockhart	Chapter 9 (pages 182 – 201) provides an interesting look at how teachers modify and use language.

Remember, remember always, that all of us ... are descended from immigrants and revolutionists.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Teachers' Beliefs Inventory

Beliefs about Language Learning¹

Read the following statements about language learning. For each statement indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement (1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = disagree; 5 = strongly disagree). For numbers 22 and 23, circle your answer.

1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.
2. Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages.
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.
4. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.
5. It is important to speak English with excellent pronunciation.
6. It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.
7. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.
8. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.
9. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning a foreign language.
10. It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.
11. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary words.
12. It is important to repeat and practise a lot.
13. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.
14. If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.
15. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar.
16. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.
17. It is important to practise with cassette tapes.
18. Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects.
19. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.
20. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.
21. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.
22. English is:
 - (a) a very difficult language
 - (b) a difficult language
 - (c) a language of medium difficulty
 - (d) an easy language
 - (e) a very easy language
23. If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak the language very well?
 - (a) less than a year
 - (b) 1-2 years
 - (c) 3-5 years
 - (d) 5-10 years
 - (e) You can't learn a language in one hour a day

¹*Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*, written by Jack Richards and Charles Lockhart, © Cambridge University Press, 1994, pages 50-51. Reprinted with permission of Cambridge University Press.

Section 1

Getting to Know ESL Learners

This should help tutors who don't know ESL learners to empathize and feel more comfortable with them. The activities will raise awareness of factors that might affect ESL learners' abilities to learn.

optional
activity

Activity A

Icebreaker: Similarities and differences between cultures

Proverbs reflect their cultural origins. This icebreaker uses proverbs to look at similarities and differences between cultures. Facilitators may have their own favourite icebreakers that would work instead of this one. Although this icebreaker is not a core piece of the unit, it effectively combines a look at cultural differences and similarities with a chance to meet other tutors.

Option 1 Matching proverbs, discussion for larger group

Why choose this option?

This process will work if you have a large group of tutors.

Materials and equipment

Handout 11.1: *Proverb Pairs 1*

Handout 11.2: *Proverb Pairs 2 – Answers*

Preparation

Copy the handout *Proverb Pairs 1*. Cut the copy into sayings, so that the beginnings and the endings of the sayings are separated. Think of another proverb or quote that you would like to share with tutors.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Match proverb endings and beginnings.
 - Hand out either the beginning or ending of a proverb to each tutor. Tell them that these are sayings from around the world.
 - Ask tutors to stand up and find the person with the corresponding piece of the sayings they are holding. When they have a match, they are to stay with that person.
 - Make sure the matches are correct by using the *Proverb Pairs 2 – Answers* sheet yourself.
2. Ask the paired tutors to discuss what the sayings mean or what English sayings there are that mean the same as the ones they have.
 - After each pair has had some time to discuss the saying, ask them to read their pieces in the correct order and tell the other tutors what they think it means or what English proverb is close to it.

3. Use these proverbs as examples of cultural similarities and differences.
 - Point out the concepts that cross cultures, such as the value of lifelong learning, that experience is a teacher, that everyone knows something, that food is a necessity, that action reaps rewards, that death is an equalizer, that things could be worse, and so on. Alternatively, you could ask tutors to identify which, if any, of the concepts cross cultures.
 - Share one of your favourite learning proverbs or quotations and encourage a few tutors to do the same.
 - Summarize by explaining that different cultural groups may be talking about the same concepts but may express those concepts differently. When working with English as a Second Language learners, we will also find similarities and differences.

Option 2 Matching proverbs, discussion for smaller groups

Why choose this option?

This version of the icebreaker will work for a smaller group of tutors.

Materials and equipment

Handout 11.1: *Proverb Pairs 1*

Handout 11.2: *Proverb Pairs 2 – Answers*

Preparation

Copy the handout *Proverb Pairs 1*. Cut the copy into sayings, so that the beginnings and endings of the proverbs are separated. Think of a proverb or quotation that you would like to share with tutors.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Match proverb endings and beginnings.
 - Put the pieces of the proverbs from the handout *Proverb Pairs 1* on the table, with the beginnings and endings in separate piles. Shuffle each pile to make sure that the two piles won't be too easy to match.
 - Ask tutors to work as a group and match the beginnings and endings of these sayings from around the world.
2. As tutors match up the proverbs, discuss their meanings and possible English counterparts as a group. Use *Proverb Pairs 2 – Answers* to check the matches.
3. Use these proverbs as examples of cultural similarities and differences.
 - Point out the concepts that cross cultures, such as the value of lifelong learning, that experience is a teacher, that everyone knows something, that food is a necessity, that action reaps rewards, that death is an equalizer, that it could be worse, and so on. Alternatively, you could ask tutors to identify which, if any, of the concepts cross cultures.
 - Share one of your favourite learning proverbs or quotations and encourage a few tutors to do the same.
 - End by summarizing that different cultural groups may be talking about the same concepts but may express those concepts differently. When working with English as a Second Language learners, we will also find similarities and differences.

Activity B

Walking a mile in someone's shoes: Developing empathy

Here's a simple introduction to English as a Second Language. It sets the mood for the rest of the unit.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 11.3: *One Saying*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce the concept of walking a mile in someone's shoes.
2. Hand out a copy of *One Saying* to each tutor.
3. Ask tutors who do not know any other language but English to guess what the saying is.
4. If these tutors cannot guess the answer, then ask tutors who know other languages to guess.
5. Confirm or give the answer: "Before you judge someone, walk a mile in his shoes."

Activity C

Meeting ESL learners

This should be the highlight of the unit. It provides realism and, more than any other activity, should help tutors who are unsure about working with ESL learners feel more comfortable.

No matter which process you choose, whether you are able to interview an actual ESL learner or whether you need to watch a video, here are some sample interview questions for getting to know ESL learners. Use them as the activities below suggest.

Sample interview questions for getting to know ESL learners

You may want to ask the learner to talk about

1. their English learning experience.
2. what it is like to be an immigrant. (Only if the learner is an immigrant.)

If you want or need to ask more, a few suggestions for follow-up questions are listed below:

3. What is the most important thing to learn in English?
4. What is the hardest thing about English?
5. What makes learning English easier?

Adaptation tip

If you are not able to interview a learner, adapt the questions so that they work for a tutor who is talking about learning another language and living in another country. For example, change the language and country names. Make other changes as appropriate.

6. Did you know some English before coming to this English program (use your program's name)?
7. If so, how did you learn it? (As appropriate, ask the learner if she studied English before coming to Canada, in what type of classes and so on.)
8. What was the hardest thing to get used to in Canada?
9. What is the most important thing that a tutor can do in a lesson?

Your knowledge of the learner's background will help you form more questions or modify the questions so that they are more applicable.

Option 1 Interview with ESL learner

Why choose this option?

Meeting a learner face to face will be more immediate and memorable for tutors than watching a video.

Materials and equipment

Adult ESL learner who will volunteer to be interviewed

The questions listed in the introduction to this activity: *Sample interview questions for getting to know ESL learners*

Preparation

Try to find an intermediate or advanced adult ESL learner who will volunteer to share her experience of learning English and who has been in Canada for over two years. Look over the questions listed in the introduction and adapt or add to them, as necessary. Before the workshop, go over the questions with the ESL learner and allow the learner to practise answering them. Also, talk about how you will introduce the learner. If you do not have an ESL learner who can volunteer, you might have to settle for a tutor or another person. Choose someone who has spent a year or more living in a place where they had to work in a language that they had to learn.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Tell tutors that today they are going to learn more about what it is like to be an ESL learner.
2. Introduce the ESL learner (or person who has lived in another place and used a language that is new to them). You may want to tell tutors the guest's name, first language, country of origin (if appropriate), job, whether she has children, and so on.
3. Guide the interview using the questions that you have selected. If the learner is confident in his or her English-speaking abilities, you may invite tutors to ask questions. Make sure that you obtained the learner's permission to do this before the session.
4. Thank the learner or other speaker.
5. After the learner has left, ask tutors for comments or questions that the interview brought to mind.

Facilitation tip

Taking the time to find just the right learner to interview and then adapting the questions will improve the interview.

If you have time in a previous session, you can involve tutors in generating questions for the ESL learner. They are more likely to tune into responses to questions they have posed. You can still use the sample interview questions to supplement what tutors have suggested.

By seeing the questions in advance, the guest can decide if there are some questions she would prefer not to answer.

If you have a large group, you could invite a panel of three or four ESL learners and divide into small groups in four different corners of the room. The groups can rotate among the guests every 15 minutes. This approach allows more people to speak and may be less intimidating for the guest.

Facilitation tip

Asking a few questions before tutors view the video clip will help them watch it more actively.

Option 2 Use of video, discussion

Why choose this option?

Use this option if you don't have a learner to interview.

Materials and equipment

Video clip: *Creating Learning Partners – Meeting ESL Learners*

The questions in the introduction to this activity: *Sample interview questions for getting to know ESL learners*

TV and VCR

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Look through your video collection for any clips of ESL learners sharing their experiences or use the clip from this manual (*Creating Learning Partners – Meeting ESL Learners*). Cue the tape. Choose a few questions to encourage tutors to view the clip actively.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Tell tutors that today they are going to learn more about what it is like to be an ESL learner.
2. Pose a few questions from the *Sample interview questions for getting to know ESL learners* listed in the introduction or make up your own. The questions should focus on what it is like to be an ESL learner. Repeat the questions as necessary or write them on the flip chart.
3. View the video clip.
4. Ask for answers to the questions you asked, for reactions to the video and for any other comments that tutors would like to make.

Activity D

What affects the ability to learn?

This activity brings out concepts that might be new to tutors. It will help them develop a realistic view of the challenges ESL learners face and of the fact that not all learners will be able to learn English in the same way or at the same speed. They will find that some of the concepts, but not all of them, will apply to their learners.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 11.4: *Factors Affecting ESL Learners' Ability to Learn*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Review the handout.
2. Ask tutors for any examples from Activity C – Meeting ESL Learners that might fit the categories. You might want to emphasize any points that are particularly relevant to your community.
3. Conclude by asking tutors to put a check mark beside a few factors that they want to remember in particular.
4. Depending on the amount of time available, you can take the discussion to deeper levels by helping tutors explore the topic and suggesting strategies to help reduce the barriers and maximize the supporting factors.

Activity E

Culture shock

Culture shock is common to immigrants during the first two years in a new culture. Unless the learner has been here more than three years, the tutor will have to deal with this problem. Therefore, tutors who work with new immigrants should be aware of culture shock and have a few ideas about how to help their learners through this difficult time.

The hands-on approaches mentioned in the *Coping with Culture Shock* handout make the learning stimulating and enjoyable and they are directly relevant to the learner's day-to-day life, both the positive and the negative aspects of adjusting to life in Canada.

The following information about culture shock is taken with permission from *The More-Than-Just-Surviving Handbook* by Barbara Law and Mary Eccles, pages 67 to 70.

CULTURE SHOCK EXPLAINED

Culture shock can be defined as the feeling of disorientation or confusion that happens when people move to a very unfamiliar place.

People who have moved from one country to another (or from one region to another) may have a lot of difficulty. Not only are they learning a new language, but they are also learning a very different way of life. Some people may go through phases where they feel frustrated and humiliated. Some of the issues could include:

- Loss in status
Respected people with positions of power in their former communities may feel they are now labelled as “immigrants.”
- Loss of established support systems
Times of difficulty (i.e., illness or financial difficulties) may be even more problematic when there are no family members or close friends to call upon for support. Feelings of isolation may result when a parent is required to stay home and take care of the children. Without a job (or the opportunity to take language classes), an individual with limited language skills may feel like a prisoner at home.

- Frustration over the inability to do “simple” tasks that were easily completed at home
Not only is the language different but the procedures as well. For example, the procedure for riding a bus differs from place to place. In some countries, payment occurs after the ride is complete. There may also be a man on the bus who takes your money once you are seated. The way in which you signal to get off the bus may also be different. Imagine trying to ride a bus in Edmonton without the proper change or knowing the purpose of the fare box and bell cord.
- Feeling that their identity is threatened
While Canada is a multicultural country, there is still an expectation for those outside “mainstream society” to become acculturated. Keeping traditions and raising children in the manner learners feel is best may be more difficult than they originally anticipated.
Traditional parent-child relationships can be dramatically altered when children know more English than their parents. Having to depend upon children for assistance can cause problems as it may undermine the parent’s authority. In some situations, it can even result in parental abuse.

There are four stages of culture shock:

- Honeymoon
The honeymoon phase takes place when people first arrive. There is genuine excitement about the new place and a belief that life in the new region is an adventure.
- Hostility
This generally takes place four to six months after arrival when the newcomer realizes the limitations of the new environment. For example, she may not be able to get the food she likes or may find it difficult to participate in many of the activities that are important to her. If your learner is suffering from culture shock in this stage you may notice that she may:
 - complain about a variety of things, perhaps even claiming to hate the new environment
 - want to go home regardless of her previous situation
 - spend more time with people who speak the same language
- Humour
In this phase, the learner has resolved, or is in the process of resolving, negative feelings about the new culture. She may have found new friends and has tried to come to terms with both the “old” and “new” way of living.
- Home
Acceptance of the new home; the learner feels that she is here to stay!
Everyone experiences culture shock in different ways, to different degrees. One person may adjust with relative ease, whereas another person may suffer from more pronounced culture shock. Some people never make it to the home stage and may move back to their original country. Others move back and forth through the stages as they deal with new issues. Getting through difficulties will require persistence and a willingness to learn (but not necessarily assimilate).

Additional comments

Depression is a taboo in many cultures. People may use terms that do not directly name depression in their first language. For some learners, seeking help within their

own ethnocultural community is supportive, while others do not want people in their community to know about their problems. Linking learners to service providers needs to take these considerations into account. Let the learners be your guide about what kind of help they want.

Option 1 Interview with ESL learner, discussion using handout

Why choose this option?

The concept of culture shock will be more memorable if tutors can meet someone who has experienced it.

Materials and equipment

An ESL learner who has experienced culture shock and feels comfortable talking about it or a tutor who has had a similar experience while living in another country

Handout 11.5: *Coping with Culture Shock*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Familiarize yourself with culture shock and its implications for learning. Read the explanation of culture shock at the beginning of Activity E.

Copy handout.

Contact possible ESL learners for the interview. The learner you choose should have already experienced culture shock, be comfortable sharing his or her experience and be fluent enough in English to share feelings and be open to the idea of being interviewed.

If you cannot find an ESL learner with the above qualifications, ask a tutor who has lived for at least a year in another country where he experienced culture shock.

Choose a few of the following questions to guide the interview and adapt them to suit your guest, or add your own questions. Give the learner the chance to practise answering the questions either with you or his or her tutor.

- How did you feel when you first came to Canada?
- How did you feel later on?
- What was frustrating for you in the beginning?
- In what ways is Canadian culture different from the culture in (country)?
- What was the hardest part of Canadian culture to get used to?
- Did you have trouble with being tired or sick in that first year in Canada?
- What helped you adjust to living in Canada?

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Tell tutors that this activity will help them learn about culture shock.
2. To engage tutors in thinking about the meaning and significance of culture shock, you could begin by asking them to generate a definition. Track their responses on the flip chart.
3. Compare their ideas with the definition you have or with the following definition: Culture shock is the feeling of disorientation or confusion that happens when people move to a very unfamiliar place.
4. If your tutors are having trouble starting, you could open up the discussion by mentioning experiences like the shock of moving from the city to the country, going to your husband's home for Christmas for the first time and so on.

Variation

This activity could be combined with Activity C, Meeting ESL Learners if you are going to use the same person for the interviews. The interviews would be combined and then the follow-up steps would be used with the culture shock items last.

Another variation

If you have a chance in a previous session, you could also ask tutors to generate questions for the visiting learner so that they have the opportunity to explore questions that come from a place of their own curiosity. Share their questions with the guest prior to the visit, giving your guest the option not to answer any questions that make her feel uncomfortable.

5. Introduce the ESL learner or tutor to be interviewed. You may want to tell tutors the guest's name, first language, country of origin (if appropriate), job, whether or not he has children and so on.
6. Interview the learner or other guest about the experience of culture shock using the questions you've selected. If the learner is confident speaking in English, you may invite tutors to ask questions. Make sure that you obtained the learner's permission to do this before the session.
7. Thank the speaker.
8. Go over the handout *Coping with Culture Shock* with your tutors. Make sure that they don't think they have to do all of these things with every learner who is undergoing culture shock.
9. Ask which of the suggestions in *Coping with Culture Shock* were used by the interviewee or might have been especially useful for the interviewee.

Option 2 Reflection, use of video and handout, discussion

Why choose this option?

Use this if you cannot interview an ESL learner about this topic.

Materials and equipment

Video clip: *Creating Learning Partners – Culture shock*

Handout 11.5: *Coping with Culture Shock*

TV and VCR

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Familiarize yourself with culture shock and its implications for learning. Read the explanation of culture shock at the beginning of Activity E.

Copy handout.

Review the video clip that you will be using.

Cue video clip.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Tell tutors that this activity will help them learn about culture shock.
2. To engage tutors in thinking about the meaning and significance of culture shock, you could begin by asking them to generate a definition. Track their responses on the flip chart.
3. Compare their ideas with the definition you have or with the following definition: Culture shock is the feeling of disorientation or confusion that happens when people move to a very unfamiliar place.
4. If your tutors are having trouble starting, you could open up the discussion by mentioning experiences like the shock of moving from the city to the country, going to your husband's home for Christmas for the first time and so on.
5. Show the video and ask tutors to take note of any coping strategies that the learners mention.
6. Go over *Coping with Culture Shock* with your tutors. Do make sure that they don't think they have to do all of these things with every learner who is undergoing culture shock.
7. Ask which of the suggestions in *Coping with Culture Shock* were used by people in the video or might have been especially useful for the people on the videotape.

Section 2

Narrowing Down Where to Start

The following activities will enable tutors to bring some order and initial planning into what can seem like an overwhelming task. It also gives tutors some simple, informal assessment tools. Hopefully, this will help answer the question “What do I do first?”

This unit does not cover any formal assessment tools like Canadian Language Benchmarks. If you have tutors doing formal assessment or using information from formal assessments, you will need to add an extra section to this unit to cover your program’s approach.

Activity A

Survival language needs

This activity focuses on the basics of survival and should provide an anchor for lessons with beginner speakers and new immigrants who face a new culture and language. It will be most useful for learners who have minimal English skills, but its focus on learner needs will help tutors make lessons more relevant for all learners.

Reflection, discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Work with tutors to find a country in the world no one in the room has visited, where very few people speak English. Ask them to imagine themselves landing there to live and tell them, “You have to survive in this country. What are your immediate language needs?”
2. Write their ideas on the flip chart. Try for 5 to 10 ideas. The list should have language needs around topics like housing, food, clothing, employment, socializing, health, education, religion, emergencies and so on. If you have more time, one person could be creating simple images on a large sheet of newsprint to provide a visual mural of life in the new country instead of a listing of topics.
3. Point out that many ESL learners need to know this kind of survival language. Learning the language needs of their learners will help tutors plan lessons.

Activity B

First meeting questions

Tutors can find the first meeting with their new learners somewhat overwhelming. Here's something concrete to do that helps the tutor learn more about the learner.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 11.6: *First Meeting Questions*, if you choose to use it

Flip chart and markers if you do brainstorming

Preparation

Decide if you want to use the handout or have tutors brainstorm their own questions.

Copy the handout if you want to use it.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Lead a discussion about the possible questions that could be part of a first meeting with an ESL learner.
2. You might want to hand out to tutors the *First Meeting Questions* or have the group brainstorm some questions of their own. Mention that, as a coordinator, you will have met with the learners before the tutors do and will be asking many of these questions. You will pass on some of what you learn to the tutors, but even so, they can ask the same questions again. It will give the tutors and the learners a chance to get to know each other.
3. Help tutors know how to create a safe environment for the first meeting with a learner by mentioning the following points:
 - When a tutor and learner are meeting for the first time, the tutor wants to build trust and comfort for the learner. When asking questions, the tutor is in the lead position and the learner may feel anxious about giving “good answers” or about being asked sensitive questions, particularly if they are refugees.
 - Explore with tutors ways to put the learners in the lead role, for example by asking them, “Tell me a little about your life before coming to Canada” or “What would you like to know about me?”
 - Tutors can give learners a way of saying they would prefer not to answer particular questions.
 - Make sure that tutors realize that they need to share information about themselves.
4. Give tutors some ideas of how to make it easy for the learners:
 - Suggest that tutors start with the simpler questions and stop when the learners find it difficult to answer.
 - Suggest that tutors only ask for more information if the learners seem capable of elaborating.
 - The learners could draw a picture of their families or home settings and use those as triggers to begin to share information and stories.
 - Encourage tutors to make notes on the learners’ answers after the first meeting and to jot down language observations. These notes can then help with lesson planning and can be part of the learners’ portfolios.

Activity C

Understanding individual learner needs

This covers some informal assessment tools that will help tutors plan and give them some insight into their learners' lives.

Option 1 Mapping technique using handouts and discussion

Why choose this option?

Tutors can use the mapping technique even with beginner learners.

Materials and equipment

Handout 11.7: *Mapping Technique*

Handout 11.8: *Language Needs Grid*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Decide if this is the session during which you will talk about any formal assessments that your program uses. If you decide to talk about them now, plan where this discussion would fit in the session. For example, the mapping technique would be a good introduction to the Canadian Language Benchmarks. Pull out samples, plan training activities around these assessment techniques, and increase the expected time for the unit.

Look over the *Mapping Technique* handout. You will be starting the activity by drawing a simple map of some of the places that you visit during a specific day. You might want to draw this map, based on your life, ahead of time.

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Distribute the *Mapping Technique* handout. Introduce the mapping technique as a way to gather information from learners who cannot explain their needs in English.
2. Read over the three introductory paragraphs and the sample with tutors.
3. Explain that they are going to look at language needs for a specific place. Draw on the flip chart a map of some places that you visit in your daily life, or use the map you have already drawn. Pick a particular day where you don't visit a lot of places. As a group, choose one place from the map to use for the exercise.
4. Hand out the *Language Needs Grid* blank chart. Tell tutors that they will be filling out the grid based on the place that the group chose. Ask them to fill in the place name under the "where" column and give a reason for being there under the "why" column.
5. Brainstorm ideas for the other columns as a whole group if you have fewer than four tutors or divide tutors into small groups. Make sure that you cover the language needs for all four of the different language skill areas (listening, speaking, reading and writing). If you have four groups, for example, each group will brainstorm the language needs for one of the skill areas. Ask tutors to give some specific examples. For example, knowing adjectives to describe what kind of haircut someone would like at a hair salon would be a language need.
6. Take only five or so minutes for this, as the list doesn't have to be very long to demonstrate this technique.
7. Get together and have a spokesperson for each group share their list.

8. End this part by pointing out that even the simplest of tasks may require a variety of language skills.
9. If you are working with a task-based assessment tool like Canadian Language Benchmarks in your program, this would be a good time to introduce this assessment tool because this grid leads into thinking about the language needs to accomplish specific tasks.

Coordinator tip

Another resource that can help tutors find a starting point for instruction is the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB). The CLB is divided into three stages.

The Global Performance Descriptors at the beginning of each stage give an idea of the skills learners need in order to handle the tasks at the different benchmark levels. Tutors may also find the Can Do Checklists from the CLB useful.

Option 2 Role technique using handout and discussion

Why choose this option?

The role technique works well with more experienced learners.

Materials and equipment

Handout 11.9: *Role Technique*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Decide if this is the session during which you will talk about any formal assessments that your program uses. If you decide to talk about them now, plan where this discussion would fit in the session. Pull out samples, plan training activities around these assessment techniques and increase the expected time for the unit.

Find an ESL learner profile for an example or use the one included in this activity, below.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Distribute the *Role Technique* handout. Introduce it as an initial step in figuring out what an intermediate or advanced learner might need to know.
2. Read through the instructions with tutors.
3. Read a learner profile to your tutors, either one you've chosen or the one below.

Sample learner profile

- Maria is from a large city in Peru. She married a Canadian doctor (who only speaks English) after two years in a long-distance relationship.
 - She has lived in a small Alberta town for the last year. During that time she has made some friends at church and has finished supervising a move into their new home. She still has landscaping to plan.
 - She is now a homemaker. She doesn't know if she will ever be able to return to her nursing profession.
 - Right now she is pregnant and excited about becoming a mother.
 - She still misses her family, although she is very involved with her husband's family. She also misses speaking in Spanish.
 - She is an intermediate communicator in English.
4. Ask tutors to tell you what roles this person has. Don't go into the communication tasks yet. Make a role diagram like the sample, using just the roles, with tutors' input.
 5. Pick one of the roles and ask tutors to elaborate on the communication tasks that would be part of that role. Add those ideas to the diagram.
 6. If you wish to go further, you could then focus on one task and ask what speaking, listening, reading and writing skills might be involved with it.

Activity D

optional
activity

Learners' preferences

Why choose this activity?

This activity will show tutors how to determine the ways their ESL learners prefer to learn and the ways they have approached learning in the past. It is really only useful with learners who are already quite fluent in English.

Please note: Learning preference checklists used with English-speaking literacy learners aren't as useful for ESL learners. The one demonstrated in this activity is designed specifically to work with ESL learners.

Discussion using handout

Materials and equipment

Handout 11.10: *What Helps You to Learn English?* (2 pages)

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out *What Helps You to Learn English?* Most of the handout is applicable to a one-on-one tutoring situation although it was written for large classes.
2. Introduce this as a way to learn about the preferences and learning practices of learners who are already fairly fluent in English. Side A looks at the learners within a class setting and side B looks at them outside of class. Mention that it is good to get the learner involved in self-assessments like the one in this checklist.
3. Ask tutors to point out a few items that show that the learner is an active rather than a passive learner. Learners could engage many of the strategies on the lists in an active way, but some should particularly stand out as active learning examples, both from list A (3, 12 and 15) and from list B (3 through 6, 8 through 13, and 15). Encourage your tutors to help learners use some of these active-learning practices.
4. This would be a good time to encourage tutors to keep beginning assessments and checklists like this as the start of a portfolio.

Facilitation tip

If tutors have already learned about learning styles/preferences in another session, it would help to tie those concepts to the ideas presented here.

*A different language is a different
vision of life.*

Federico Fellini

UNIT 11
ESL: LEARNER
AND TUTOR

Section 3

Communicating as a Learning Team

This section has some ideas for facilitating communication that are especially useful for new tutors and new learners. It should set tutors at ease about how they will communicate with beginner ESL learners.

Activity A

Trying to understand a foreign language

This short activity introduces the need to learn to communicate effectively with ESL learners. It answers the new tutor's common question about how to communicate with someone who doesn't speak English.

Listening to a foreign language

Materials and equipment

Audiotape or videotape of someone speaking in a language that is not English or any other language that tutors might speak

Tape recorder or TV and VCR

Preparation

Find and cue a short excerpt of someone speaking a language that is not English or any other language that tutors might speak. Try to find an audio clip. You can use a video clip as long as you turn off the picture, since the point is to show how hard it is to understand someone who speaks a different language and you don't want body language cues on a video clip to make it any easier.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce this section by playing a one-minute portion of an audiotape that is not in English or any other language one of the tutors understands. Before starting, ask tutors to listen and try to understand what the person on the tape is saying.
2. After the segment, ask tutors if they found it difficult to understand. Tell tutors that it is difficult to understand another language, but that there are ways to make what is being said more easily understood. Then let them know that they will be looking at some ideas to help them make their instruction more understandable to their ESL learners.

Activity B

Making tutoring communication understandable

These practical tips address the communication fears of new tutors.

Discussion using two handouts

Materials and equipment

Handout 11.11: *Tutoring Communication Tips*

Handout 11.12: *Having Trouble? Helpful Sentences*

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out *Tutoring Communication Tips* and review it with tutors. Emphasize that the most important part is to be relaxed.
2. Emphasize that underlying all the communication tips they use, tutors need to consider how they can communicate their respect for the ESL learners. The learners are competent adults with a lifetime of experience behind them – they just happen to not speak English!
3. Ask tutors to underline one or two of the tips that they really want to remember.
4. Hand out *Having Trouble? Helpful Sentences*. Tell tutors that active learners need to be able to ask for help to make communication understandable. This list includes some phrases that they should teach their learners. They should encourage the learners to use these or similar phrases in tutoring sessions and in their daily lives.

A mouse saved her young from a ferocious cat by barking, "Bow-wow." After the cat ran away, the mouse said to her offspring, "See, children, it pays to know a second language."

Efstathiadis, circa AD 93

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ESL: Tutoring Basics

UNIT
12

Unit 12: ESL: Tutoring Basics

SECTION 1. THE BIG FOUR			
A. Adjective names	Optional	Option 1. Icebreaker using names Option 2. Icebreaker artwork	10 min
B. The four language skill areas	Core	Use of handout, group activity	5 min
C. Functions of language	Core	Use of handout, discussion	5 min
SECTION 2. LISTENING – THE FORGOTTEN SKILL			
A. Various listening activities	Core	Discussion, use of handout	5 min
B. Total Physical Response	Optional	Option 1. Demonstration using the Shona language Option 2. Demonstration using another language	10 min 10 min
SECTION 3. SOUND BITS			
A. Introduction	Core	Discussion	5 min
B. Our sound system	Core	Use of handouts, discussion	5 min
C. Sound production	Core	Use of video and handout, demonstration	5 min
D. Teaching pronunciation	Core	Talk, use of handouts, brainstorming	5 min
E. Stress	Core	Talk, use of handout	5 min
F. Intonation	Core	Talk, demonstrations	5 min
SECTION 4. BUILDING VOCABULARY			
A. Using real objects, games, themes, idioms	Core	Demonstration, use of video	10 min
B. What do I see and feel	Optional	Group work	5 min
C. Using picture files, picture dictionaries and other dictionaries	Core	Talk, use of handout	5 min
SECTION 5. CONVERSATION TIME			
A. Types of conversations	Core	Discussion	5 min
B. Short dialogue	Core	Activity in pairs	10 min
C. Complex dialogue	Optional	Use of handout and video	10 min
D. Small talk	Core	Use of handout, talk	5 min
E. Role-plays	Core	Demonstration, use of handout	5 min
F. Correction concepts	Core	Use of handout	5 min
SECTION 6. GRAMMAR – GO FOR IT			
A. Definition of grammar	Core	Discussion	5 min
B. Tutors' knowledge	Core	Use of handout, demonstration	5 min
C. Where the learners are coming from	Core	Demonstration	5 min
D. Teaching strategies	Core	Talk	5 min
E. Cut-apart sentences	Core	Demonstration	5 min
F. Explaining grammar	Core	Talk, use of handouts	10 min
G. Grammar practice	Core	Use of video	5 min
SECTION 7. READING AND WRITING AND THE ESL LEARNER			
A. What makes reading and writing difficult for ESL learners?	Core	Discussion	5 min
B. Writing systems	Core	Use of handout, discussion	5 min
C. Reading, writing, spelling and the ESL Learner	Core	Discussion, use of handout	10 min
SECTION 8. PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER			
A. Learner profile	Core	Use of handout or video, profile review	15 min
B. Matching approaches or techniques	Core	Practice, using profile	25 min

UNIT 12

ESL: Tutoring Basics

 **Approx 3¼ hours**
using core activities

Concepts

- **ESL techniques**
- **The learning process of ESL learners**
- **Background on English language**

Builds on

- **ESL Learner and Tutor**
- **Adults as Learners**
- **Planning for Learning**

Enhanced by

- **Reading**
- **Writing**
- **Spelling**

Coordinator tip

Consider providing additional, more in-depth workshops for tutors working with ESL learners to focus on areas that tutors are interested in or need more information on.

Tutors are experts in speaking and understanding English even though they may not realize it. It's an integral part of who we are when our first language is English. All tutors need are some ideas on how to help other adults build these skills.

This unit provides a few techniques that tutors can use when working with English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. It takes a general look at language and then focuses on how to develop speaking and listening skills. The unit will give some insight into the learning process from an ESL learner's perspective, but it does not go deeply into this area. Also, though this unit mentions reading and writing, tutors are expected to gain most of what they need from Reading (Unit 6), Writing (Unit 7) and Spelling (Unit 8).

We have included the Teacher's Beliefs Inventory to give you an idea of what your tutors may think about how to tutor ESL learners. It comes from *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*, by Jack Richards and Charles Lockhart (copyright Cambridge University Press, 1994, reprinted with permission of Cambridge University Press).

Beliefs about ESL instruction

The inventory is not meant as an exercise to do with tutors, but rather as a way of letting you know what their unconscious approaches might be. We suggest that you might want to do the exercise yourself and then share the results with someone else who likes to think about learning to see if she agrees with your beliefs. The conversation may stretch your thinking (and theirs too!). The statements reflect a variety of approaches and some are more useful for certain circumstances than others.

*It's a strange world of language
in which skating on thin ice can
get you into hot water.*

Franklin P. Jones

Useful Resources

For complete information on all these resources, see the bibliography for this unit.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE / USEFULNESS
For the whole unit		
English as an Additional Language for Adults	Jane Jordan	If you don't have a background in ESL teaching or tutoring, you might want to read a book like this to get an idea of how to approach ESL work.
English as a Second Language Tutor Training Kit	Myrina Rutten-James	This book will help you understand how to approach teaching ESL if you've never had experience doing so.
ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities (ERPAC)	Lorene Anderson and Dawn Seabrook de Vargas	This resource provides good information on how to approach ESL work if you have no ESL experience.
Tutor Talk: A Training Series for ESL Tutors	Renee Pearson, Phyllis Pankratz and Karen Hammond	As well as giving a good background in teaching ESL, which could be useful if you have no ESL experience, there are sample videos demonstrating techniques you could use with appropriate sections of this unit. Also, tutors could use the resource independently by viewing the videotapes and reading the accompanying manual.
Section 1: The Big Four		
Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy	H. Douglas Brown	Chapter 13 provides information on why the skills you teach should be integrated. See pages 217-219.
Section 2: Listening – The Forgotten Skill		
Zero Prep: Ready-to-go Activities for the Language Classroom	Laurel Pollard and Natalie Hess	This book has more handy listening activities. It also has ideas for all the skill areas that can be adapted to a tutoring situation.
Section 3: Sound Bits		
Pronunciation Pairs: An Introductory Course for Students of English	Ann Baker Sharon Goldstein	Look at this resource for a good variety of pronunciation exercises. It includes a book and a tape.
Clear Speech: Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension in American English	Judy B. Gilbert	This book and tape combination has a lot of samples of stress and intonation.
Section 4: Building Vocabulary		
The Oxford picture dictionaries and workbooks	Norma Shapiro and Jayme Adelson-Goldstein (dictionary) and Marjorie Fuchs (workbook)	Take a look at these dictionaries and companion workbooks to get an idea of what exercises can be done with picture themes.
All Clear! Books 1 and 2 and tapes	Helen K. Fragiadakis	These books give some other ways to learn idioms.
Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs	John Sinclair	This dictionary covers all those two-or-more-word verbs such as take along and take apart.

Section 5: Conversation Time		
Take Part: Speaking Canadian English	Lucia Engkent and Karen Bardy	This gives ways to encourage conversation using Canadian themes.
Take Charge: Using Everyday Canadian English	Lucia Engkent	This gives ways to encourage conversation using Canadian themes.
Town and Country Conversations: Dialogues for Tutoring Adult English as a Second Language Students	Dorothy Lloyd and Linda Weir	These are dialogues related to rural Alberta with tips on how to use them effectively.
Section 6: Grammar – Go For It		
An A-Z of English Grammar and Usage	Geoffrey Leech	This is a great reference book with entries for words such as use, far and then, and grammatical terms and clear examples.
Grammar in Action 1, 2, 3	Barbara H. Foley, Deborah S. Pires, Elizabeth R. Neblett and Gretchen M. Dowling	These books show how grammar can be taught within a theme.
Grammar Practice Activities	Penny Ur	The book has some fun ideas.
ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities (ERPAC)	Lorene Anderson and Dawn Seabrook de Vargas	The grammar sequencing and test in this book is linked to the Canadian Language Benchmarks.
Section 7: Reading and Writing and the ESL Learner		
The Writing Clinic: A Handbook for Developing Writing Skills with ESL – Literacy Students	Denise Theunissen	This is a very complete book on writing and the ESL learner. It is well worth reading through the first sections and glancing at the activities.
The Acquisition of a Second Writing System	Rosemary Sassoon	The text provides a comprehensive look at the subject.
Section 8: Putting It Together		
The English as a Second Language Tutor's Handbook	Shawn Conway	This short handbook provides a good readable summary of the two ESL units. Consider lending this to tutors when you first match them with an ESL learner if some time has passed since the training.
ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities (ERPAC)	Lorene Anderson and Dawn Seabrook de Vargas	Consider going over the learner level profiles and level ideas with tutors once they are matched. This will help them to further define what to work on.

The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't being said.

Author Unknown

Teachers' Beliefs Inventory

Approaches to ESL Instruction

This is not intended as a tutor activity but has been included for your information. This shows some attitudes towards tutoring ESL learners. If you want to try this exercise, please read all 15 statements. Then select 5 statements that most closely reflect your beliefs about how English as a Second Language is learned and how English as a Second Language should be taught.

1. Language can be thought of as a set of grammatical structures that are learned consciously and controlled by the language learner.
2. As long as ESL learners understand what they are saying, they are actually learning the language.
3. When ESL learners make oral errors, it helps to correct them and later teach a short lesson explaining why they made that mistake.
4. As long as ESL learners listen to, practise and remember the language that native speakers use, they are actually learning the language.
5. ESL learners generally need to understand the grammatical rules of English in order to become fluent in the language.
6. When ESL learners make oral errors, it usually helps to provide them with lots of oral practice with the language patterns that seem to cause them difficulty.
7. Language can be thought of as meaningful communication and is learned subconsciously in non-academic, social situations.
8. If ESL learners understand some of the basic grammatical rules of the language, they can usually create lots of new sentences on their own.
9. Usually it is more important for ESL learners to focus on what they are trying to say and not how to say it.
10. If ESL learners practise the language patterns of native speakers, they can make up new sentences based on those language patterns they have already practised.
11. It is important to provide clear, frequent, precise presentations of grammatical structures during English language instruction.
12. Language can be described as a set of behaviours that are mastered through lots of drill and practice with the language patterns of native speakers.
13. When ESL learners make oral errors, it is best to ignore those errors, as long as you can understand what they are trying to say.
14. ESL learners usually need to master some of the basic listening and speaking skills before they can begin to read and write.
15. It's not necessary to actually teach ESL learners how to speak English; they usually begin speaking English on their own.

Section 1

The Big Four

The unit starts with a look at the main components of communication and shows that the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing can be used together in learning activities.

Activity A

Adjective names

These icebreakers focus in a fun way on one of the nuts and bolts of language.

Why choose this activity?

Use one of these icebreakers if tutors do not know each other well.

Option 1 Icebreaker using names

Why choose this option?

This icebreaker requires no preparation and is better suited to a group that isn't interested in drawing.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to come up with an adjective to describe themselves that starts with the same letter as their first name. Some tutors will find that a bit difficult, depending on the letter they need to use, so be prepared to help brainstorm. The adjectives can be common or exotic.
2. In a circle, share the adjectives and names. Don't push tutors to share their adjectives, just encourage them.
3. State that learners need to know lots of adjectives to improve their ability to describe the world around them.

Option 2 Icebreaker artwork

Why choose this option?

This icebreaker provides an artistic outlet and helps tutors get to know each other.

Materials and equipment

Coloured paper
Markers
Glitter

Preparation

Gather materials.

optional
activity

Facilitation Tip

As you look over this unit, decide how you can adapt it to reflect the ESL learners in your community. For instance, a grammar example from the first language of a learner in your program might be more meaningful than the example we have included.

Facilitation tip

If your group knows each other fairly well, you can still use the activity by working together to give an adjective to each person.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to come up with an adjective to describe themselves that starts with the same letter as their first name. Some tutors will find that a bit difficult, depending on the letter they need to use, so be prepared to help brainstorm. The adjectives can be common or exotic.
2. Hand out coloured paper, markers and glitter, and let tutors make a jazzed up version of the adjective and name. They could take these adjective/name posters home or you could post them in the room if you are having another session with them.
3. In a circle, share the adjective/name posters and names. Not everyone has to share the artwork or the adjective but they have to share their names.
4. State that learners need to know lots of adjectives to improve their ability to describe the world around them.

Activity B

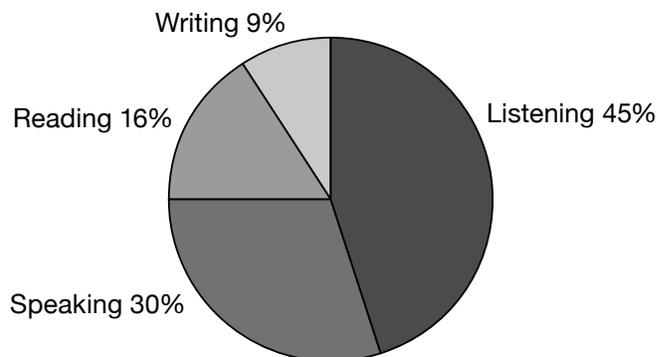
The four language skill areas

There are four main components of communication: listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are introduced here and used together in a learning activity.

The four skills communication charts

The following charts come from *I Speak English* by Ruth J. Colvin (1997), published by New Readers Press, a division of ProLiteracy Worldwide, and used with permission.

How we spend our time when communicating



How the components of our communication work together

INPUT	OUTPUT
Listening	Speaking
Reading	Writing

Use of handout, group activity

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.1: *The Four Skills Communication Chart*. The handout is blank.

Flip chart and markers

Pencil crayons or markers for tutors

Preparation

Copy handout.

Familiarize yourself with the answers for the questions posed in the activity.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out copies of *The Four Skills Communication Chart*. You can refer to the completed chart in the introduction to this activity.
2. Ask “What are the four main language skills?” Confirm or correct their answers. Put the words speaking, listening, reading and writing on the flip chart.
3. Draw a circle on the flip chart. Ask “How much of our time is spent communicating through each skill area?” Ask tutors to take a guess.
4. Then complete the pie chart on the flip chart as it is in the introduction to this activity. Use a different colour for each skill. Ask tutors to do the same on their handouts.
5. Draw a small chart with six boxes, as on the handout. Put the words input and output in the top boxes.
6. Ask which two skills are mainly channels for receiving information and which two skills are mainly channels for providing information. Put the answers under the input and output headings respectively. Correct answers as necessary by posing examples.
7. Expand on the input/output chart by saying that the skills are often combined to facilitate communication. For example, in conversations, speech is useless without listening and active listening encourages speech. It is useful also to combine skills sometimes when teaching, as the skills complement each other.
8. State that tutors have just used all four skills in this activity. Ask tutors the following questions: What part of the activity involved listening? What part involved speaking? What part involved reading? What part involved writing?
9. Turn over the flip chart paper. Ask tutors to turn over their handouts.
10. Ask tutors the following: What are the four main language skills? What skill do we use the most? Point out that using all the skill areas provided more opportunities to learn the material.

Facilitation tip

People are more likely to take in new learning when they are invited to think about how the new ideas fit or do not fit with their experience. In talking about the pie chart, for example, are there cultural differences in how people communicate? What happens for people with low literacy skills?

Activity C

Functions of language

This introduces another way of looking at language. It looks at the purpose of a communication event.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.2: *The Functions of Language*

Preparation

Copy handout and read it.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out *The Functions of Language*.
2. Go over the introduction and ask tutors to give examples of what one function might look like in all skill areas. For example: arguing – listening to find a flaw in the argument, speaking in an emotional way, reading to find corroborating material for one side of the argument, writing a letter to the editor.
3. Then mention, as in the handout, that functions have particular phrases as well. Ask for a phrase to go with an example that tutors have given. For example, using the example of arguing again, a letter to the editor might include the phrase “I feel strongly that....”

*The most basic of all human needs
is the need to understand and
be understood. The best way to
understand people is to listen to them.*

Ralph Nichols

Section 2

Listening – The Forgotten Skill

Listening truly is the forgotten skill. We often forget to purposefully include work on improving listening skills in English lessons. This section highlights listening.

Activity A

Various listening activities

This activity takes time to focus on a variety of listening activities so that tutors will remember to purposefully include listening activities in their sessions. It also introduces the concept of non-verbal clues.

Discussion, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.3: *Listening List* (2 pages)

Preparation

Find a paragraph in an article to read for step 2.

Copy handout and pick a few items to highlight in the discussion.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Remind your tutors that of all the time we spend communicating, we spend 45 per cent of it listening. So listening should be an important part of ESL sessions. The listening portion of the lesson should be purposeful and of some interest to the learner.
2. Read a lengthy paragraph twice. The first time, do it in a monotone without facial expression. The second time, read with expression in your tone and use facial expressions. Ask tutors which reading was easier to understand – they should pick the second reading. Ask them, aside from the fact that the information was repeated, why it was easier.
3. Share the following information with the tutor. In a conversation, the message is delivered in three ways – via words (7 per cent effective), tone of voice (38 per cent effective) and non-verbal clues (55 per cent effective).
4. These non-verbal clues include many visual clues like gestures, facial expressions and body language. Listening, then, is often an auditory and a visual experience. Without the visual clues, ESL learners find it difficult to understand others and express themselves. Ask even advanced learners and most will say that they don't like telephone conversations – they miss the visual clues. Some of these visual clues differ from one culture to another so learners may get the wrong message even when they can see the speaker. Suggest that tutors look into a difference in visual clues if the learner understands the words but not the message.
5. Pass out the *Listening List* handout and talk about a few of the listening activity ideas.

Variation

You might want to refer to the Canadian Language Benchmarks listening benchmarks to see the competency outcomes learners need. Use some of these examples to add to the handouts and discussion.

Activity B

Total Physical Response

Tutors will understand how the technique works because they will be put in the position of second language learners.

Why choose this activity?

This technique gives tutors a concrete listening activity to use. It also lets them experience learning vocabulary in another language. However, this technique is more appropriate for beginner English learners.

Option 1 Demonstration using the Shona language

Why choose this option?

Ruth J. Colvin and Ezekial Makunike of Zambia and Zimbabwe, Africa, developed this activity using Shona, an African tribal language that should be unfamiliar to most tutors. These demonstrations in a language they don't know will help give tutors the "feel" of learning a new language. Embedded in the Total Physical Response activity are the drills of repetition, substitution and physical response.

The activity comes from *English as a Second Language Trainer's Guide: 18-Hour Core Tutor Training* by V. K. Lawson (1995), published by New Readers Press, a division of ProLiteracy Worldwide, and used with permission.

Please note: Even if you don't speak Shona, you can do these demonstrations.

Overview of this option

This activity has several separate components:

- listening
- substitution (listening)
- following directions (comprehension check and physical response)
- speaking, repetition and substitution
- reading
- writing

The first three form the core of this activity and must be completed. The second three are optional. You can use them if you would like to extend the experience.

Shona pronunciation

Here is some help on Shona pronunciation. There are two major tones in Shona. One is in a lower key that will be represented by your normal speaking tone in this activity. The other is in a higher key that will be represented by using a higher tone than normal. Each syllable may have one, two, or three consonants, but only one vowel. Use the higher tone whenever you see an accent mark above a syllable; otherwise use your normal voice.

The following suggestions for pronunciation are approximate:

- a = ah (as in *paw*)
- e = a (as in *make*)
- i = e (as in *feet*)
- o = o (as in *no*)
- u = oo (as in *moon*)

Variation

You can do this activity without the syllable tonal changes.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| • a paper | pepa |
| • a black paper | pepa demá |
| • a red paper | pepa dzwukú |
| • Pick up a black paper. | Nongá pepa demá. |
| • Pick up a red paper. | Nongá pepa dzwukú. |
| • Put a black paper down. | Ísa pepa demá pasí. |
| • Put a red paper down. | Ísa pepa dzwukú pasí. |

Materials and equipment

Three black paper strips and three red paper strips for yourself and one black and one red strip for each tutor

Your instructions for how to pronounce words in Shona

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Read the information above on how to pronounce Shona.

Practise the Shona Total Physical Response activity before the tutor session.

Decide whether you want to add one of the optional components to the Total Physical Response activity to extend the tutors' experience. Add another five minutes to the session time to accommodate this.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Tell tutors that they will be participating in a listening activity called Total Physical Response. Give a definition, either your own or the one on the *Listening List* handout. Make sure they know that Total Physical Response is usually an activity for beginner ESL learners only. Ask that all questions be held until after the demonstration.
2. First component: **Listening**
 - Set the context. Signal the group to be silent and to listen by putting a finger to your lips and saying “shhhhh.”
 - Hold up a red piece of paper and say “pepa.” Hold it up both horizontally and vertically to make the point that you’re using the word for paper rather than for a particular direction.
 - If tutors repeat, discourage them by shaking your head and indicating that they are to listen.
 - Hold up another red piece of paper and say “pepa.”
 - Hold up a black piece of paper and say “pepa.”
 - Continue to hold up individual black and red pieces of paper and say “pepa.”
3. Second component: **Substitution** (Listening)
 - Hold up a black piece of paper and say “pepa demá.”
 - Hold up another black piece of paper and say “pepa demá.”
 - Repeat.
 - Hold up a red piece of paper and say “pepa dzwukú.”
 - Hold up another red piece of paper and say “pepa dzwukú.”
 - Repeat.

Facilitation tip

Sometimes an activity can seem so simple that we don't take time to try it out before using it in workshops or sessions. But it always pays to try out the activity before using it. This activity is a good example. When you try it out in advance, you get ideas on how to present it, you can plan to adapt it, and so on.

4. Third component: **Following Directions** (Comprehension Check - Physical Response)
 - Lay all six pieces of paper on the table.
 - Pick up a black piece of paper, saying “Nongá pepa demá.”
 - Repeat this for all black pieces of paper.
 - Pick up a red piece of paper, saying “Nongá pepa dzwukú.”
 - Repeat for all red pieces of paper.
 - Holding all six pieces of paper in your hand, put one black piece of paper down on the table, saying “Ísa pepa demá pasí .”
 - Alternate with red paper saying “Ísa pepa dzwukú pasí ”
 - Give tutors each a piece of red and a piece of black paper.
 - Encourage tutors to follow your directions.
 - While encouraging them to pick up and put down appropriate papers, say “Nongá pepa demá (dzwukú)” and “Ísa pepa demá (dzwukú) pasí.”
5. Fourth component: **Speaking, Repetition and Substitution**
 - Using “come on” gestures, indicate that tutors repeat after you.
 - Using the words with appropriate actions, say:
 - pepa
 - pepa dzwukú
 - pepa demá
 - Nongá pepa demá.
 - Nongá pepa dzwukú.
 - Ísa pepa demá pasí.
 - Ísa pepa dzwukú pasí
 - Ask tutors to say the words and do the corresponding actions either individually or together.
 - Pair up tutors. Have tutors repeat the action sentences to each other. Comprehension is demonstrated by having correct action follow the directions.
6. Fifth component (optional, to extend the experience): **Reading**
 - Write the words you have introduced through this exercise on the flip chart, repeating the words as you write them.
 - Ask tutors to read the words they now understand and have spoken.
7. Sixth component (optional, to extend the experience): **Writing**
 - Indicate that tutors should write, copying the words they now know.
 - Tell them that a learner’s writing could go into their portfolios.
8. Ask if there are any questions.

Option 2 Demonstration using another language

Why choose this option?

You will find it easier to do the activity if you use a language that you know but tutors do not know. Be sure to choose a language that tutors will not know to better reflect what a beginner ESL learner would experience. This means that, at the very least, you should not use English or French.

The activity comes from *English as a Second Language Trainer’s Guide: 18-Hour Core Tutor Training* by V. K. Lawson (1995), published by New Readers Press, a division of ProLiteracy Worldwide, and used with permission.

Materials and equipment

Three black paper strips and three red paper strips for yourself and one black and one red strip for each tutor, or whatever else you wish to use

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Practise your version of the Total Physical Response activity before the tutor session.

Decide whether you want to add one of the optional components to the Total Physical Response activity. Add another five minutes to accommodate this.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Tell tutors that they will be participating in a listening activity called Total Physical Response. Give a definition, either your own or the one on the *Listening List* handout. Make sure they know that Total Physical Response is usually an activity for beginner ESL learners only. Ask that all questions be held until after the demonstration.

Note: in the following instructions, we write the words tutors need to learn in English. You will substitute the same words in the language you are using for this exercise.

2. First component: **Listening**

- Set the context. Signal the group to be silent and to listen by putting a finger to your lips and saying “shhhhh.”
- Hold up a red piece of paper and say “paper.” Hold it up both horizontally and vertically to make the point that you’re using the word for paper rather than for a particular direction.
- If tutors repeat, discourage them by shaking your head and indicating that they are to listen.
- Hold up another red piece of paper and say “paper.”
- Hold up a black piece of paper and say “paper.”
- Continue to hold up individual black and red pieces of paper and say “paper.”

3. Second component: **Substitution** (Listening)

- Hold up a black piece of paper and say “black paper.”
- Hold up another black piece of paper and say “black paper.”
- Repeat.
- Hold up a red piece of paper and say “red paper.”
- Hold up another red piece of paper and say “red paper.”
- Repeat.

4. Third component: **Following Directions**

(Comprehension Check - Physical Response)

- Lay all six pieces of paper on the table.
- Pick up a black piece of paper, saying “Pick up black paper.”
- Repeat this for all black pieces of paper.
- Pick up a red piece of paper, saying “Pick up red paper.”
- Repeat for all red pieces of paper.
- Holding all six pieces of paper in your hand, put one black piece of paper down on the table, saying “Put down black paper.”
- Alternate with red paper, saying “Put down red paper.”
- Give tutors each a piece of red and a piece of black paper.

- Encourage tutors to follow your directions.
 - While encouraging them to pick up and put down appropriate papers, say “Pick up red (black) paper” and “Put down red (black) paper.”
5. Fourth component: **Speaking, Repetition and Substitution**
- Using “come on” gestures, indicate that tutors repeat after you.
 - Using the words with appropriate actions, say:
 - paper
 - red paper
 - black paper
 - Pick up red paper.
 - Pick up black paper.
 - Put down red paper.
 - Put down black paper.
 - Ask tutors to say the words and do the corresponding actions either individually or together.
 - Pair up tutors. Have tutors repeat the action sentences to each other. Comprehension is demonstrated by having correct action follow the directions.
6. Fifth component (optional, to extend the experience): **Reading**
- Write the words you have introduced through this exercise on the flip chart, repeating the words as you write them.
 - Ask tutors to read the words they now understand and have spoken.
7. Sixth component (optional, to extend the experience): **Writing**
- Indicate that tutors should write, copying the words they now know.
 - Tell them that a learner’s writing could go into their portfolios.
8. Ask if there are any questions.

Section 3

Sound Bits

Being able to produce English sounds clearly and using the correct stress and intonation patterns increases the learner's chances of being understood. The background information presented and familiarity with a few techniques will be useful for tutors working with beginning and intermediate ESL learners.

Activity A

Introduction

Discussion

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

This activity is adapted from the *English as a Second Language Tutor Training Manual* published by the Regina Public Library.

1. Ask tutors, "Why teach pronunciation?" Look for answers that support the goal of having learners speak clearly enough to be understood by native speakers. Be aware that, instead, they might think an ESL learner's English needs to be "perfect."
2. Ask "Can we expect adult language learners to completely master a new sound system?" The tutors will probably reply that that would be difficult. Tell them that adults may never be able to produce certain sounds. That is why people have accents. When immigrants are surrounded by another language, they may unconsciously want to keep a bit of an accent. The way we speak is an essential part of ourselves and they may not want to change everything about their speech because they have many adaptations and changes already to cope with. People also need psychologically to hang onto essential parts of their identity, like their language, and may not want to lose that accent.
3. Talk about analyzing errors in the following way:
 - The first step to success in teaching the sound system is to focus on and teach the sounds that give the learners trouble.
 - In order to do this, we need to listen very carefully to their way of speaking and analyze their errors.
 - Taping some natural conversation is the most effective way of analyzing the errors that occur in normal everyday speech.
 - Reading information about specific sound problems of the learners' language group can also be helpful.
 - If you use some informal sound pronunciation tests, show these to your tutors. Explain how to use them if tutors are expected to give the test.
4. Explain that during this section, you will cover four different areas of pronunciation:
 - our sound system
 - sound production
 - teaching pronunciation
 - stress and intonation

Facilitation tip

Paired conversations allow people to exchange stories in a non-threatening way. You can gather the main ideas that come from the separate stories.

Variation

Knowing tutors will come with different experiences, you can open dialogue by asking if a particular statement fits for them. For example, ask them if they think people with an accent are treated the same as people without an accent when they are looking for work or asking for information.

Activity B

Our sound system

This is a brief review of the sounds in the English language and of important points when learning to speak another language.

Use of handouts, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.4: *Facts About Speaking*

Handout 12.5: *Vowel Sounds in Canadian English*

Handout 12.6: *Consonant Sounds in Canadian English*

Preparation

Copy handouts and look over them.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

This activity is adapted from the *English as a Second Language Tutor Training Manual* published by the Regina Public Library.

1. Distribute the handout *Facts About Speaking* and highlight any points that you think your tutors need to hear. You may want to ask tutors to reflect on their experience trying to learn another language in high school. Would they agree with these “facts”? Do they have any other points to add to the handout?
2. Review the sound system briefly, using the following as a guideline. The tutors should be familiar with this part from the spelling unit.
 - There is a great difference between spelling and saying English words.
 - There are 26 letters in the English alphabet but over 40 different sounds. This is confusing to ESL learners who probably don't have this kind of problem in their first language. For example, in Spanish each letter represents its sound exactly.
 - When thinking about pronunciation, a lot of ESL learners try to visualize the printed word they are trying to pronounce and find it very confusing. Learners need to think about the “sound” rather than the spelling.
3. Hand out the charts *Consonant Sounds in Canadian English* and *Vowel Sounds in Canadian English*. Talk about the large number of vowel sounds in English. Some languages, by contrast, only have five vowel sounds.

Coordinator tip

If tutors have not attended a spelling workshop, you will need to give them more time to look over the material.

Conversation is the slowest form of human communication.

Author unknown

Activity C

Sound production

Tutors learn how sounds are produced and then some simple ways to teach this to learners.

Use of video and handout, demonstration

Materials and equipment

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – Sound Production* or another video clip, computer program or website that shows sound production as it happens within the mouth and vocal chords

TV and VCR

Mirrors that are large enough to see a face, one per four people or so

Large elastic bands, enough for all tutors and yourself

Bookmark-sized pieces of paper, enough for all tutors and yourself

Handout 12.7: *Places of Articulation*

Preparation

Preview the video that accompanies this manual. Or, if you have a computer program, website or different video that shows sound production, preview it and select a short section that has a diagram like the handout that shows the movement as sounds are produced. Cue the clip and set up your equipment.

Practise demonstrating sound production with mirrors, elastic bands, feeling vibration of vocal cords, and strips of paper as in the following instructions.

Find examples of sound production diagrams (called “Sammy” diagrams) in your book collection to share with tutors.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

This activity is adapted from the *English as a Second Language Tutor Training Manual* from the Regina Public Library.

1. Use the diagram in the handout, *Places of Articulation*, and the sample modelling exercises given or your video/computer clips to illustrate the rest of your lecture on sound production.
2. Points to cover about how we make sounds:
 - We use breath as power.
 - The sound changes depending on the use of other parts of our head called articulators. Point out the articulators on the diagram.
 - The seven articulators are: a) vocal chords, b) tongue, c) teeth, d) lips, e) jaw, f) roof of the mouth, and g) nose – only for *m*, *n* and *ng*.
 - Tell tutors that these types of diagrams are called Sammy diagrams and can be used to show learners how to pronounce a sound. Show examples from your program’s collection.
3. Points to cover about consonants:
 - Inform tutors that consonants are divided into two main categories – voiced and unvoiced.
 - Voiced consonants are produced with vibrations of the vocal chords. Examples are *b*, *d*, *g*, *l*, *v* and *z*.
 - Unvoiced consonants are produced with breath alone. Examples are *p*, *t*, *k*, *f* and *s*.

Facilitation tip

Don’t let tutors get too hung up on pronunciation work. Some learners can say all the sounds but yet cannot be understood clearly because they have used the wrong word or the word in the wrong position in a sentence.

- Have tutors feel the difference between voiced and unvoiced consonants by having them place their hands lightly on the front of their throat and say “s” and then “z.” They should be able to feel the voicing of the “z.”
 - Tell them that it is important to note that most voiced and unvoiced consonants fall into pairs; one consonant of the pair is voiced and the other unvoiced. In other words, the sounds are produced in the same way, the only difference being the use or not of the vocal chords. Examples of these pairs are *b-p, d-t, g-k and v-f*.
4. Activity about consonants:
 - Pass out one strip of paper to each tutor.
 - Tell them that some consonants also use more explosive puffs of air.
 - Use Handout 12.6: *Consonant Sounds in Canadian English* and show them how to say each sound with the piece of paper close to your mouth.
 - Ask them to find out which sounds made the biggest puffs.
 - Get their observations (*p, f* and *th* as in *thing* should be obvious).
 5. Points to cover about vowels:
 - All vowels are produced with voice, that is, with vibrations of the vocal chords.
 - They differ from consonants in that the outward flow of sound is largely unrestricted or diverted by one of the articulators.
 6. First activity about vowels:
 - Ask tutors to divide up into groups and give each group a mirror.
 - Ask them to pronounce the vowels in Handout 12.5: *Vowel Sounds in Canadian English*.
 - Ask them to tell you what vowel sounds are easy to see because they have a distinct lip shape and what vowels are produced by movements within the vowel sound such as the *oy* in *boy*.
 - Hopefully tutors will pinpoint the vowels in *beat, bait, boat* and *bought* as easy to see.
 - They should see and feel some movement as they say the sounds in *bough, buy* and *boy*.
 - Suggest the mirrors could be helpful in teaching these sounds.
 7. Second activity about vowels:
 - Tell tutors that some vowels are held longer than their shorter counterparts.
 - Show this with the elastic bands.
 - Demonstrate by saying *bat* and *bait* and pulling the band as long as the word sounds and then ask tutors to copy. They should be able to see and feel a small difference.
 - Tell tutors that this activity might be useful if the learners have trouble distinguishing between long and short vowels.
 8. Remind tutors that a person has to be able to hear a sound before he can reproduce it. Therefore, the ear also plays an important part in pronunciation.
 9. Tell tutors that as adults, our articulatory muscles are accustomed to moving in certain ways and they have a great deal of trouble moving in a new or different way. Those muscles are used to form the sounds needed to speak our first language. For example, some African languages use clicks from the back of the throat that we would have difficulty duplicating, if we ever could.

10. Remind tutors to explain to the learners that they, as adults, will probably never lose their accents, and probably should not want to. Canada is a wonderfully diverse country with a rich cultural heritage that is acknowledged and nurtured. Accents are only a problem when they interfere with communication and are very much a part of a person's unique identity.

Activity D

Teaching pronunciation

This activity takes tutors from the background information on sounds and sound production to thinking about how to approach pronunciation problems.

Talk, use of handouts, brainstorming

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.8: *Minimal Pairs*

Handout 12.9: *Steps to Teaching Pronunciation*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy handouts.

Prepare flip chart for brainstorming session.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

The following activity is adapted from the Regina Public Library's *English as a Second Language Tutor Training Manual*.

1. Introduce teaching pronunciation with some of the following points:
 - Work on pronunciation as it occurs, or if the learner has identified a particular area she would like to improve.
 - Keep in mind that words can be made several ways: either each word is said individually the way it is when we speak formally, or words are linked and less clearly articulated the way they are in general conversation. For example, we might say *party* or *pardy*, or change *going to* into *gonna*.
 - Always start teaching pronunciation with consonants. They are easier because they are usually easier to demonstrate.
 - Sound differences are very subtle with vowels, where the lips and the tongue are the most important articulators. Always exaggerate sounds when teaching vowels. For example, when demonstrating the vowel in *beet*, stretch your lips and smile as you say the vowel.
2. Give tutors the *Minimal Pairs* handout. Points to cover about minimal pairs:
 - Suggest using contrasting sound pairs. These are called minimal pairs. The only difference in sound between the two words is the sound you wish to teach. For example, *tick* and *thick*, or *bead* and *bed*.
 - Use minimal pairs to find out whether the learner hears the difference in sounds and to practise the difference in making the sounds. In some languages, the sounds we hear as very different in English actually can be used interchangeably in that language.
 - Mention that the *th* sound is really difficult for many ESL learners as it is an uncommon sound in other languages.

Variation

Brainwriting is a variation on brainstorming. Through small group discussion, you can post flip chart sheets around the room, each sheet with one problem pronunciation at the top. Choose problems more common in your community. Ask tutors to rotate every 5-10 minutes to add their ideas to each sheet. They can do this as individuals or in small groups. As a whole group, review the collection of ideas.

3. Tell tutors that combining certain sounds can be difficult for some learners, again because those combinations are not found or not found in that position in their first language. Sometimes learners will try to cope by adding a short unstressed vowel called a *schwa* to the combination of sounds. A schwa is pronounced like the *a* in *about* and is written as ə. For example, Arabic speakers might add the schwa to *str* initial combinations as this is an unusual combination in Arabic. The word *street* would then be pronounced as *əstreet* or *səstreet*.
4. Give out the *Steps to Teaching Pronunciation* handout and review it.
5. Ask tutors to brainstorm together on how they would handle the following problem. *Your learner confuses p and b. Describe the steps you would follow to correct this problem.* Tutors can refer to the handouts that they have received. If tutors seem stuck, you could give them a hint, for example, by asking them what the difference is between the two sounds. You might want to do this as a whole group or in smaller groups. When working with smaller groups, make sure that you allow time for each group to finish and give their ideas to the whole group as a summary. Write the tutors' answers on the flip chart. This could also be a homework assignment.

Activity E

Stress

This activity provides a brief look at a part of the English sound system that affects the ease of comprehension.

Talk, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.10: *Guidelines for Teaching English Stress*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

The following activity is adapted from the Regina Public Library's *English as a Second Language Tutor Training Manual*.

1. Introduction

- Stress refers to how loud and long syllables or words in a sentence are spoken. It creates the rhythm of the language.
- Many learners can read and write sentences very well but when they speak or read aloud, their English doesn't sound like English. Often this is because the learner doesn't know the English stress, rhythm and intonation patterns.
- English stress patterns, in particular, seem irregular and unpredictable to most non-English speakers.

2. Stress within a word

- Learners often stress the wrong syllable within a word. For example, they will say “tel e phone” instead of “tel e phone.”
- Using hand signals and clapping as you say the word, have your learner repeat after you.
- This will help her hear the stress and she will then be able to produce it properly.
- It will also help her to know that in two-syllable words, the accent is usually on the first syllable.
- Show tutors the clapping with the examples: fol low, cir cus, but ton.

3. Stress within a sentence

- Say that in English, the syllables or words that are stressed in a sentence usually carry the meaning.
- These syllables or words are louder and are held longer.
- Again show the clapping with a sentence: If it rains tomorrow, I’ll go shopping.

4. Unstressed words

- Talk about how the unstressed words are squeezed in quietly and quickly. This system of stress and timing creates the particular rhythm of English.
- Using clapping and hand signals to show stress and rhythm is effective in practising stress within a word and within a sentence.
- Note also that when some syllables are unstressed, the vowel becomes very short and sounds like the *a* in *about*, which is the schwa sound, ə. For example, the last syllable in *taken* and *pencil* are unstressed and the vowel in the last syllable shortens to the schwa sound. By the way, schwa means “nothing” and the vowels really become almost nothing.

5. Pass out the handout *Guidelines for Teaching Stress* and pick one of the rules to go over. Remind tutors that the handout has other rules and that they can refer to it when they need more information. Remind them also that the rules have exceptions.

Language is the dress of thought.

Samuel Johnson

Activity F

Intonation

This activity looks at two concepts to do with intonation. It shows first that intonation is important for forming questions and second that intonation facilitates expressive speech. Even more experienced ESL learners may want to work on the latter area.

Talk, demonstrations

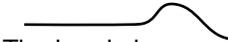
Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

The following activity is adapted from the Regina Public Library's *English as a Second Language Tutor Training Manual*.

1. Introduce intonation as the pitch or the rising and falling of the voice as we speak. Intonation creates the melody and contour of the language.
2. English speakers use the following system of intonation. Three tones are involved – normal, high and low. In English, there are two main intonation patterns.
3. Show the **first pattern** – Rising-Falling intonation
 - English uses this pattern in statements, in questions beginning with question words and in lists.
 - Use an example like one of the ones below.
 - Write the sentences on the flip chart.
 - Ask someone to try to say the sentence without a rise and fall in their voice. It should be difficult.
 - Diagram the sentence by putting a line over it as in the examples. The line goes up and down with the intonation.
 - Mention how the rise and fall cue the speaker into the meaning of the sentence and how to respond to it.

Example:  The boy is lazy.

Example:  What time will you call me?

Example:  I packed an umbrella, a raincoat, and rain boots.

4. Show the **second pattern** – Rising intonation
 - English uses this pattern in questions answered by yes or no and in questions with words in the same order as they are found in statements.
 - Using the flip chart, diagram the questions as in the examples.
 - Suggest to tutors that they practise with their learners, using their hands to show the rising and falling of the voice or using a diagram like the ones you draw on the flip chart.

Example:  Are you coming?

Example:  You can't hear me?

5. For fun, ask tutors to say two words such as “Peas again,” but change the intonation and stress to show the following feelings: a) You can't stand having them again. b) You are delighted to have them again.
6. Tip: Tutors could help learners create their own set of tips for knowing the correct intonation in English.
7. Conclude by talking about the way that stress and intonation make English more expressive. Learners need to be able to use these aspects of language to enrich their conversations. Some learners come from languages that don't use stress or intonation very much (like Cree). When they speak English, they tend to sound bored even when they are not. In some cases, stress and intonation practice can be an important part of tutoring sessions. Also mention that tutors can make recordings of the learners' speech over time and add them to the learners' portfolio.

*The word “good” has many meanings.
For example, if a man were to shoot his
grandmother at a range of five hundred
yards, I should call him a good shot, but
not necessarily a good man.*

G. K. Chesterton

Section 4

Building Vocabulary

Although your tutors should be able to help learners build vocabulary, they may want some extra ideas.

Activity A

Using real objects, games, themes, idioms

These demonstrations should help tutors think more creatively when looking for resources to teach vocabulary.

Demonstration, use of video

Materials and equipment

Real objects: vegetable or fruit, cutting board, knife for cutting vegetable or fruit, family photo, and so on

Card sets with pictures (no words or numbers) if you have any handy

Five slips of paper with the names of sports written on them

Video clip *Creating Learning Partners: Building Vocabulary Using a Theme*
TV and VCR

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Find a selection of the items listed above.

Write down five very different sports on slips of paper.

Pick an idiom (expression) that you like and think of a story that includes the idiom in such a way that the meaning is clear.

Cue video clip *Building Vocabulary Using a Theme*.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce this section.
 - Say that vocabulary builds upon previously learned vocabulary. Learners are constantly learning more words and phrases as they build a base of words and phrases that they can use to access the meaning and pronunciation of more words.
 - Initially, lessons will focus on words related to survival needs but later lessons may include a wide range of themes.
 - Ask your learner to write down or remember any words or phrases that they have heard and need to figure out. Suggest that the tutor could also offer a few topics from daily living (for example, shopping, asking directions) and see if that reminds the learner of words or phrases he has been trying to figure out.
2. Demonstrate the use of real objects to teach vocabulary.
 - Pull out a fruit and vegetable, a cutting board, and a knife to show verbs such as *slice*, *chop*, *dice* or *mince*. (You can hand out the fruit or vegetable pieces to your tutors.)
 - Pull out a family photo and discuss words such as *aunt/uncle*, *mother/ father* and *son/daughter*.

- During these demonstrations, say the word and show the object in action, say the word and have tutors repeat it, write it on the flip chart while saying it, and have tutors write it down. Ask a tutor to use the word in a sentence.
 - State that using real objects helps teach basic vocabulary very well.
 - Depending on the abilities of the learners, you might also give them the written word and have them spell it and use it in their writing.
 - Also suggest adapting the letter scramble game, if you used it during the Spelling Unit (Section 1, Activity A) to work on vocabulary memory.
3. Demonstrate using games.
- Pull out a pack of cards (if you have one with pictures) and start playing “Go Fish” or “Old Maid” with someone.
 - Use the strips of paper on which you wrote the names of different sports to play charades. Give a tutor a choice of the strips of paper. Don’t let anyone else see the one the tutor picks. Have the tutor act out the sport without any sounds. Ask tutors “What is she doing?” Add sounds if they are having trouble figuring it out. Encourage tutors to use games to practise and learn new vocabulary. More advanced ESL learners may be able to play some word games that native English speakers play, like “50 Questions.”
 - Using games offers the tutor the chance to learn about games from the learner’s culture or childhood. The learner could teach the tutor a game, opening up new dialogue with the learner as the teacher.
4. Demonstrate using themes.
- Talk about how themes help with learning new vocabulary because the learner can connect the words and phrases with something meaningful.
 - Give an example like temperature. Draw a thermometer on the flip chart. Put in some temperatures like -30, -10, 0, 10, 20 and 30 and ask what word describes each temperature (e.g., freezing, cold, sweltering). Ask what the temperature is like today. Then say that this could lead into listening to a weather forecast, adding more weather words to the learner’s vocabulary. It could open a conversation about what it is like to live in this climate.
 - Follow up with video clip *Building Vocabulary Using a Theme*. Ask what vocabulary and vocabulary-related activities tutors might add to the theme in the clip.
5. Demonstrate two-word verbs.
- For example: Take an item from in front of one of the tutors. Say “Take away.” Then put it back and say “Put back.” Tell tutors that some phrasal (two or more words) verbs are easy to demonstrate, while others are best shown in context, such as in a story.
6. Demonstrate showing the meaning of an idiom (an expression whose meaning is not literal such as “dead as a doornail”). Pick one of your favourites. Show what it means by making up a short story that includes the idiom.

Activity B

What do I see and feel

Tutors participate in a simple writing exercise based on pictures.

Why choose this activity?

This gives tutors a chance to participate in an exercise that they can use to help learners expand their vocabulary.

Group work

Materials and equipment

Large, interesting picture
Flip chart and markers
Tape

Preparation

Find a large, interesting picture.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

The idea for this activity comes from Denise Theunissen's *The Writing Clinic*, published in 1999 by Bow Valley College in Calgary.

1. Pull out the large and interesting picture that you have found. Tape it on the flip chart.
2. Write "What I See" on the flip chart. Ask tutors to pick one object in the picture to talk about for this part of the exercise. As for a description of the object, ask for a basic word to state what this is and what it is doing. For example, with a picture of a boy flying a kite, they might focus on the kite and describe it as a kite and use the word *flying* to describe what the kite is doing. Repeat the words and write them down (flying kite). State that the learner may only have this to give to the exercise. Then add an adjective, adverb or more descriptive noun or verb yourself. Say that you could add a few more descriptive words if the learner is interested in the picture.
3. Next to where you wrote "What I See," write the words "What I Feel." Then ask "What do you feel about this picture?" Ask for a basic word first and then get tutors to give more detailed feeling descriptions as they might in a lesson. Your tutors might say "happy" for the kite-flying picture and then add more descriptive words or phrases. Suggest that this could lead to paragraph writing for more advanced learners.

Activity C

Using picture files, picture dictionaries and other dictionaries

Tutors often tend to use pictures and dictionaries as resources in teaching vocabulary. This activity gives you some more ideas on how to use these valuable tools.

Talk, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.11: *Pictures and Picture Files*

Examples of picture dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries

Preparation

Copy handout.

Find examples of picture dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries that your program has.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Using pictures
 - You can use photographs for teaching vocabulary, but they can also stimulate stories and dialogue about joys and challenges in the learner's background or current experiences.
 - Talk about developing picture files by sharing a few points on the handout *Pictures and Picture Files*.
 - Show your program's picture dictionaries.
2. Using dictionaries
 - Show tutors a sample of your other dictionaries, English and bilingual.
 - State that dictionaries are useful for more abstract terms.
 - Unfortunately, it can be difficult for the learner to find the right meaning among several choices and many bilingual dictionaries don't cover all the main meanings but give only one or two.
 - Have advanced readers use a thesaurus or an advanced English dictionary that gives more meanings and examples.
3. Using meaningful vocabulary
 - Suggest that tutors work on vocabulary meaningful to the learner's life.
 - Encourage them to review vocabulary in a variety of ways as words need to be practised many times before they become part of our long-term memory.
 - For example, learners can add entries to a personal dictionary. This can be used to assess their learning and to show what they have accomplished.
 - Best of all, when new words are part of stories and conversation, they take on greater meaning.

Coordinator tip

Should your tutors be interested in a separate session on picture files, you could set one up in which participants cut pictures from magazines to create files together using some of the ideas on the handout.

Section 5

Conversation Time

A lot of our speech takes place within conversations; less takes place in lectures or while giving commands. Conversations are very fluid and they are full of pitfalls for the ESL learner. Learners often need extra work so that they are confident conversationalists. Tutors will see some ideas for conversation activities in this section, from structured conversations to free practice.

Activity A

Types of conversations

This discussion helps tutors look at the wide range of conversation formats.

Discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Begin with the following concepts:
 - Often a learner understands reading, writing, grammar and what he hears better than he can communicate orally. This is sometimes because it requires more courage to speak than to communicate with the other skills. This is also sometimes because English classes in some other countries have little conversation practice.
 - Many learners specifically list help with conversation as their first learning priority.
 - Make time for conversation practice.
2. State that conversation takes many forms. Ask tutors to give examples of types of conversations. If they need help to get going, remind them of the functions of language that they looked at in the four skills activity. Write down their ideas on the flip chart. Make sure that they include examples such as small talk, making and responding to compliments, apologizing, politely complaining, describing an emergency and so on.
3. Conclude the discussion by saying that learners will need to be able to handle everyday conversations and they will need to be able to talk in different ways according to the person they are conversing with and what they need to convey. Give examples such as how two friends reminiscing about their first jobs sounds much different from a job interview. Learners can share experiences from their home country to relate to differences in the use of English. For example, learners can describe how language differs in the learner's first language and culture between informal and formal conversations.

Variation

You can find more examples to add to the handouts and discussion by referring to the Canadian Language Benchmarks. They describe skills learners need to acquire in four competency areas – social interaction, instructions, suasion (getting things done) and information.

Activity B

Short dialogue

Tutors create short dialogues, look at the complexity of the task and discuss how to use the dialogue once written.

Activity in pairs

Materials and equipment

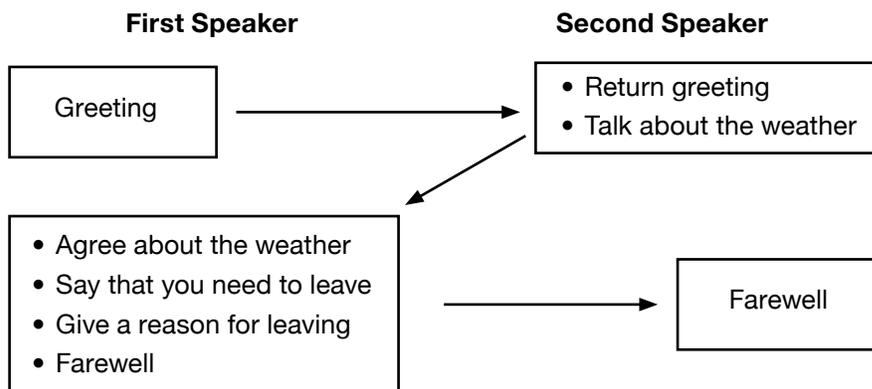
Flip chart and markers

Preparation

You might want to prepare the following drawing ahead of time.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Draw the following on the flip chart, or you may want to develop your own chain dialogue instead.



2. Ask pairs of tutors to develop a dialogue based on the items you have written down. They will decide the scene (e.g., telephone call, walking by on the sidewalk). They need to put phrases or sentences down for each conversation point. For example, the first speaker could say “Hi. How are you?” for the greeting conversation point. The tutors do not have to use a box format, but they should indicate first and second speaker beside the sentences. You could also do this as a group.
3. Have tutor pairs share their dialogues.
4. Cover the following points:
 - The variations in their dialogues are an example of the complexity of conversation.
 - Suggest that simple dialogues like the one that they just wrote can be used to give learners a format to follow until they are ready for real conversation.
 - These dialogues can be varied by, for example, substituting places, people, and other items in the conversation. Suggest a variation based on a tutor pair dialogue that you have just heard.
 - The learner should move from the easier to the harder speaker’s parts.
 - The dialogues don’t have to be memorized, but certain phrases and sentences will probably be important enough to memorize. Ask a few tutor pairs for an example of a phrase or sentence from their dialogue that would be important to memorize.

Variation

To add some humour, you can create a list of places, a list of situations, and a list of characters, and put them on small folded pieces of paper in three bowls. Each pair pulls one slip from each of the three bowls and creates a short written conversation. (This variation on the activity can also be used with the handouts on role-playing in Section 5, Activity E.)

Activity C

Complex dialogue

Why choose this activity?

This kind of dialogue and its dialogue tips will be useful for intermediate ESL learners.

Use of handout and video

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.12: *Drought?*

Handout 12.13: *Tutoring Ideas for Drought Dialogue*

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – Complex Dialogue*

TV and VCR

Preparation

Copy handouts.

Cue video clip *Complex Dialogue*.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out the drought dialogue and the tutoring ideas that go along with it. Talk about it as an example of a complex dialogue more suited to intermediate speakers.
2. Mention a few of the items on the page of tutoring ideas as examples of extra activities or concepts that can be looked at with dialogues. Point out that dialogues provide a useful place to practise stress and intonation so that the speaker uses all the nuances of the language to convey exactly what he wants to say. State that dialogues are structured conversation activities that provide a stepping stone to real conversations.
3. View the video *Complex Dialogue*. Discuss the variety of ways that dialogues are used in the video.

Activity D

Small talk

Learners need to practise small talk in order to gain fluency in this essential skill and they need to learn about which topics are acceptable to Canadians.

Use of handout, talk

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.14: *“News Flash” Activity*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out “*News Flash*” Activity. Go over the handout and cover the following concepts:
 - Small talk is very important for making friends. Part of small talk is sharing and discussing news.
 - Not all topics are acceptable for small talk. Small talk topics vary from country to country. For instance, in Canada it is not acceptable to talk about the age of middle-aged women, but this is quite acceptable in many countries. Learners may need to learn about what is or isn’t acceptable.
 - This activity would be good for practising feedback cues (for example, the listener shows she is listening by nodding), pause fillers (for example, uh, like) and how to interrupt politely. It would be useful to practise these cues as there may be some differences between the Canadian version and the corresponding cues in your learner’s first culture.
 - This can be a structured activity at first, as in the handout, and later tutors can just add small talk into the beginning of their sessions. They can ask “What’s new?” The answers may lead to great lesson ideas, questions and extra practice.

Activity E

Role-plays

Role-play conversations are not as structured as other conversation practice strategies mentioned. They are a good stepping-stone to real conversations.

Demonstration, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.15: *Role-playing*

Handout 12.16: *Role-play Cue Cards*

Appropriate articles of clothing or props, if desired

Preparation

Copy *Role-Playing* handout for all tutors.

Copy *Role-play Cue Cards* handout for the two tutors who volunteer to do the role-play.

Cut apart the sections of the role-play cue cards. Note: Be sure to cut up a copy so that you have the original for next time.

Choose a role-play from the two examples. If you prefer not to use the ready-made scenarios provided on the *Role-play Cue Cards* handout, make up some of your own and cut them into cue cards instead.

Look at the role-play cue cards and pull together appropriate articles of clothing or props, if you wish.

During a break earlier in the session or before the session begins, ask for two volunteers to help with a role-play. Give them a bit of time to look over the role-play cue cards before the role-play. You might want to give the speakers specific characters for a bit of fun.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Go over the *Role-playing* handout and add the following points:
 - Mention that using topics that matter to people adds meaning to learning a new language. Knowing learners often go through challenges adjusting to life in Canada, some role-plays may be about topics such as finding work, finding an affordable place to live or handling racism.
 - Eventually you want the learner to be able to do role-plays without any script. The situation and characters will eventually be all that is needed.
 - Help prepare the learner by practising vocabulary, appropriate small talk, necessary grammar and structured dialogues on the same subject you're using for the role-play.
2. Ask the two tutors to demonstrate one of the role-plays. Read the scene note (talking about the long weekend or the tutor arriving late) to the rest of the class before they start. Tell the other tutors that the role-players have cue cards to assist them as if they were learners who weren't too familiar with role-plays.
3. The two tutors do the role-play.
4. Ask the two tutors to read their cue cards. Ask the other tutors if they communicated well. Thank the two tutors.
5. Say that there are many other ways to work on conversation skills, such as having topic or starter sentence strips to pull out of a container for two-minute talks.

Activity F

Correction concepts

When, in what way and how often should we comment on our learners' errors? Some of these correction concepts apply to the other parts of communication (e.g., writing) as well, and form an important approach when tutoring.

Use of handout

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.17: *Correcting Spoken Language*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out the *Correcting Spoken Language* handout.
2. Ideas to cover:
 - Introduce correction concepts by telling tutors that an important tutoring skill is correcting speech appropriately.
 - Pull out the concepts written in bold in the handout and talk about how and when to correct speech.
 - Also state that these concepts can be adapted to tutoring in other skill areas.
 - If you have more time, ask tutors to give you their opinions on how they like to be corrected.
3. Conclude this section by reminding tutors that the goal of all of this conversation practice is that the learners will be able handle conversations outside of the tutoring sessions. Samples of conversation work should be included in a portfolio, but the learner's ability outside of the classroom is what really counts.

The English language is nobody's special property. It is the property of the imagination: it is the property of the language itself.

Derek Walcott

Facilitation tip

When you want to emphasize a point, you can put it on the flip chart or make a poster of the point so that you can refer to it frequently. For example, you could put the following point on your flip chart or poster for this section: “When teaching grammar, always remember to teach it in the context of a real-world application.”

Facilitation tip

Consider getting local experts (experienced tutors, teachers, etc.) to help in your tutor training. You may not be all that interested or experienced in particular topics but the experts will be.

Section 6

Grammar – Go for It

Tutors are often hesitant about working with grammar. This section starts by showing tutors that they can teach grammar. Hopefully, it will provide the antidote to “I can’t.” A grammar awareness example expands their knowledge of what learners may face. The section then gives tutors a few strategies and practice activities with which to start. This is particularly important because learners sometimes come from previous classes expecting grammar to be a part of each lesson.

Activity A

Definition of grammar

This look at the definition of grammar helps pull tutors together so that they have a common idea of the subject.

Discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Put the following broad definition or one of your choosing on the flip chart:
Grammar = the framework for a language
2. Ask tutors to add to the broad description.
3. Then add to their ideas orally as necessary by stating that grammar involves elements such as the following:
 - word order in sentences
 - agreement between words (he and his)
 - tenses
 - rules on the formation of words (like making plural words)

Activity B

Tutors' knowledge

First language speakers have an internal knowledge of how their language works. This exercise helps tutors realize that they do know something about grammar. Our thanks to Dorothy Lloyd, a tutor from Lac La Biche, who invented this game and gave us permission to use it.

Use of handout, demonstration

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.18: *Fix These* (2 pages)

A large envelope

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Cut apart the sentences of the *Fix These* handout so there is one sentence for every tutor. Place these into a large envelope.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce the *Fix These* activity as a look at sentence word order. Tell tutors that they will each be given a sentence. Some of the sentences are correct, some are incorrect, and some are correct only if used in an informal sense like talking to a friend. They are to analyze the sentence they get and decide whether it is correct, incorrect, or just correct if used informally. They are also to give their corrected (formal or informal) version if the one they have is incorrect. Write the categories *correct*, *incorrect* and *correct in informal use* on the flip chart.
2. Have tutors choose sentence strips from the envelope. They can put any back that they don't like and choose another one.
3. Give tutors a couple of minutes to look over their sentences.
4. Ask for a few volunteers to share their sentences. Have them state the sentence as it is on the paper. Then have them categorize the correctness of the sentence (*correct*, *incorrect* and *correct in informal use*) and give a corrected version if necessary.
5. Involve the rest of the tutors by asking if anyone has a different answer. They may give optional corrections as there are many ways to make a sentence. Point this out if it occurs.
6. Inform tutors that they all know English grammar instinctively. They have an inner compass that points out correct and incorrect grammar for everyday situations. Encourage them to refer to grammar texts when any out-of-the-ordinary grammar is involved for advanced ESL learners.

Activity C

Where the learners are coming from

The readings in this activity show how differently languages are put together. This activity also offers a glimpse of how learners may perceive English grammar.

Demonstration

Preparation

Read over the Korean grammar example below in advance, as it is difficult to read. Or choose another example that suits your community better.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to listen to the following paragraph on grammar, which uses Korean grammar principles with English words. Or use the example that you have developed that will use the grammar principles from that language with English words.
2. Read the following passage or your passage. (Note: This paragraph comes from Myrina Rutten-James's *English as a Second Language Tutor Training Kit*, published in 2003 by the Regina Public Library. The translation is by Ellen Chun Hee Son.) The words in parentheses do not exist in the Korean language. They were added to this particular piece of work to make the meaning a bit clearer for the English reader. Do not read the words in parentheses to tutors.

Grammar your lesson the focus (of) should not be while, (according to) research (has shown that) grammar in a meaningful way teaching to learners helpful can be. Grammatical forms from language to language vary because, (having) a tutor these forms the meaning (of) unravel help for ESL learners (the) learning process quicker will make. Grammar won't understand learners (who) understanding and communicating a lot of difficulty will have since they how (to) English words together put and how (to) they receive (the) words interpret don't know.

3. Ask tutors if they found the passage difficult to understand. They probably will say yes. Remind them that only the word order was different and the words were all English. Tell tutors that some learners will find the word order in English much different than their first language and it will take some time to make sense of English grammar.
4. Read the version with English grammar below as tutors will want to know what the reading “really” said.

While grammar should not be the focus of your lesson, research has shown that teaching grammar can be helpful to learners. Because grammatical forms vary from language to language, having a tutor help unravel the meaning of these forms will make the learning process quicker for ESL learners. Learners who do not understand grammar will have a lot of difficulty understanding and communicating since they do not know how to put English words together and how to interpret the sentences they receive.

Activity D

Teaching strategies

This activity looks at the different ways that tutors can approach grammar instruction.

Talk

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.19: *Parts of Speech*

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Cover the following concepts:

- Tutors teach grammar in different ways.
- Some teach points as they come up in the course of a lesson or conversation. Others formally teach a point and then tie it in with the lessons.
- Some teach rules first. Others provide examples and then assist the learner to discover a rule to be written in the learner's own words.
- Some teachers use grammatical terms. Others avoid the terms.
- The way you approach grammar will depend on your learner's expectations, previous educational experience and learning style. To get this kind of information, make observations during lessons and ask your learner, if possible, about his previous language learning experiences.
- Many learners have received formal grammar instruction and will expect the same from you with formal exercises from a grammar book and formal terminology. Others will not have the educational background to understand grammar terms. Some prefer to find out rules for themselves and others may want the rules upfront.
- Grammar builds a lot on previous knowledge. Check out grammar texts for an idea of grammar teaching sequences. They are also full of many drills and other exercises.
- Grammar elements should be connected to the learner's needs and other speaking and writing parts of the lessons.

2. Hand out *Parts of Speech*. Ask tutors to hang on to this handout to use as a reference if they have learners who want grammar terms for parts of speech. This sheet will give them the basic terms.

Activity E

Cut-apart sentences

This is a useful simple technique.

Demonstration

Materials and equipment

Seven sheets of paper for sample cut-apart sentence

Preparation

For this activity, you will use these words: “grammar involves word order”

Write the words of the sample sentence on four sheets of paper, one word on each sheet of paper. **Don’t use** capitalization or punctuation.

Leave another three sheets blank.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask for four volunteers to help with this activity.
2. Hand out the words (“grammar involves word order”) to the volunteers in random order and ask them to hold the words up and stand up in front of the other tutors. Ask the rest of the tutors to direct the volunteers to stand in an appropriate order to make the words form a sentence. Tell them that they don’t have the capitals or periods, which usually help put the words in order.
3. Put a question mark on one of the pieces of paper you haven’t used yet, and state that the sentence needs to be changed into a question.
4. Ask the remaining tutors to decide on the question’s word order. They may have to move words, take out words and/or add words. Tell them that you have two more sheets they can use for the words they need to add to form the question. Put the words that they suggest on the sheets for them. They should end up with “What does grammar involve?” or something similar. The volunteers may have to move and hold more than one word.
5. Summarize by stating that cut-apart sentences allow the learner to manipulate the words physically and mentally. They can be used to show word order and the relationships between different sentences. They can also show the relationships between verbs and nouns in corresponding sentences. For example, “How **are you?**” and “**I am** fine.”

Facilitation tip

When you can, find a way for people to move around the room. They use more parts of their bodies and minds for learning, it can be more fun, and they may be more alert.

Facilitation tip

To adapt this to groups of fewer than six tutors, just put the sheets on a table and have the participants arrange the sentences together on the table.

Activity F

Explaining grammar

Tutors may need a few ideas on how to explain this complex subject. Here are a few.

Talk, use of handouts

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.20: *Modal Auxiliaries* (2 pages)

Handout 12.21: *Brief Overview of Verbs*

Flip chart and markers

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce the technique “Lines of Progression.” In this technique, the degrees of words (for example, annoyed to mad) or changes in a verb’s tense (for example I said – I say – I will be saying) are placed in a visual continuum. You used a line of progression when you demonstrated the temperature words beside the thermometer picture during the section on vocabulary. There is another example using a change in verb tense. Talk about using lines of progression to make concepts clearer, especially for visually oriented learners.
2. Demonstrate by putting the following sentence on the flip chart (in past perfect continuous tense). Add a timeline. Indicate where on the timeline the action is taking place (as we have with the row of x’s).

I had been going for two years but I don’t go anymore.

3 years in Past Two years in Past Today Tomorrow
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

3. Hand out *Modal Auxiliaries*. Say that this is an example of how charts can be used to explain grammar concepts. They can be simple, or they can be more complicated, like the handout. Simple charts like those showing simple past or present versions of verbs can be done by the tutor. Write an example like the following on the flip chart:

Person	Verb
It/he/she	plays
I/you/they/we	play

4. Hand out the *Brief Overview of Verbs* sheet as information that tutors can hang on to, but don’t look over the handout unless you have extra time.
5. Encourage them to use existing charts in grammar texts if making a chart would be difficult for them to do from scratch. Suggest that tutors also make use of the written explanations and samples in grammar texts when working with learners who know grammar terms. You might want to show some good texts from your program’s collection.

Activity G

Grammar practice

Grammar needs to be practised and it can be done within a variety of activities, not just by filling in exercise sheets. This activity looks at other activities to practise grammar.

Use of video

Materials and equipment

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – Grammar Practice*

TV and VCR

Preparation

Cue video clip *Grammar Practice*.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Before watching the video, *Grammar Practice*, ask tutors to look for examples of how grammar work is embedded in the session. Show the video.
2. Get their feedback on how grammar work is embedded and add your own observations.
3. Remind tutors, before finishing with this section, that grammar needs to be practised in a variety of ways, such as in conversations, in writing assignments, in readings and even with games. For example, board games like those that ask learners to talk about something in the past provide good practice in the past tense.
4. Also suggest that samples of grammar tests and activities be kept in the learner's portfolio.

*Grammar is the logic of speech, even
as logic is the grammar of reason.*

Richard C. Trench

Section 7

Reading and Writing and the ESL Learner

The tutors should have garnered most of what they need for tutoring reading and writing from the reading and writing units. This section merely highlights some of the areas that ESL learners may find difficult.

Activity A

What makes reading and writing difficult for ESL learners?

This discussion reflects on problems that ESL learners might have and uses what tutors have already learned to give them ideas for addressing these problems.

Discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Write “What Makes Reading and Writing Difficult for ESL Learners?” on the flip chart. Ask tutors what they think would make reading and writing difficult for ESL learners based on what they have already covered in their training. Hopefully, they will have a lot of ideas. Write down their answers.
2. State that some of these ideas are related. Then circle all the answers that relate to lack of ability in speaking English. This would include having a small English vocabulary, not knowing how to say words, not understanding words, having word order problems, and so on.
3. Explain that a lot of problems with reading and writing are connected with speaking problems. Tell tutors that it is useful for learners to work with speaking to provide context for reading and writing.

Activity B

Writing systems

This is a look at different writing systems.

Use of handout, discussion

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.22: *Writing Samples*

You may want to include writing samples from the language backgrounds of the ESL learners in your program.

Facilitation tip

When it is possible, ask participants what they already know and add to their knowledge. This engages their interest and reinforces what they already know. For example, when you talk about the three different writing systems, you could ask tutors if they know of a language that has that writing system.

Preparation

Find writing samples from the language backgrounds of the ESL learners in your program if you want to include them.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out *Writing Samples*. Introduce the page by saying that it represents some of the different writing systems found across the globe. Remind tutors that not all languages have a written form.
2. Talk about the main writing systems as follows and ask tutors for examples of each category. (We give examples as well, just in case your tutors can't come up with any.)

Ideographic

- This started with pictures.
- Later it changed into characters/pictures that came to represent an idea associated with the object.
- Examples include Egyptian hieroglyphics or Chinese characters.
- These scripts are not language-specific because they are not tied to pronunciation and can transcend language barriers. For example, the Chinese script was used for Korean until the Koreans invented their own script.
- Ideographic writing systems may be difficult to learn, because a person has to memorize many characters in order to be literate. For example, one needs to know 3,000 to 5,000 characters to have basic literacy skills in Chinese.

Syllabic

- Over time, characters came to represent one syllable. The characters no longer looked very much like the pictures they represented originally, so the characters had to be memorized. This writing system works well for languages with relatively simple syllabic structure.
- Examples include Japanese and Ethiopian.

Alphabetic

- Uses letters to represent sounds and pairs of letters to represent more complex sounds.
- It's easier to achieve literacy in this type of writing as there are few symbols (letters) to learn.
- Misspellings can be generally understood because of the phonetic basis.
- Because the letters are tied to sounds in the language, these writing scripts don't cross language barriers well.
- Examples include English and Vietnamese.

Individual languages can use combinations of these main writing systems.

3. Add that the English idea of paragraphs and some of the other ways we format written work (like newspaper articles) are not universal.
4. Conclude by saying that the closer the first written language of the learner is to English, the easier it will be for that learner to learn and use the English writing system. Also mention that if the learner can write in another language, he will be able to transfer some concepts about the nature of writing and this will make it easier to learn the English writing system. A learner who cannot write or read in his first language will have a harder time.
5. Share written samples from the language backgrounds of the ESL learners in your program if you want to.

Activity C

Reading, writing, spelling and the ESL learner

These three pages provide a quick look at problems ESL learners may have in the areas of reading, writing and spelling that relate to the fact that they are second language learners.

Discussion, use of handout

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.23: *Reading, Writing, Spelling and the ESL Learner* (3 pages)

Preparation

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Hand out *Reading and the ESL Learner*. Go over some of the points in the handout. If any tutors are already working with an ESL learner, ask them to point out any items that apply to their learner.
2. Hand out *Writing and the ESL Learner*. Go over some of the points in the handout. If any tutors are already working with an ESL learner, ask them to point out any items that apply to their learner.
3. Hand out *Spelling and the ESL Learner*. Go over some of the points in the handout. If any tutors are already working with an ESL learner, ask them to point out any items that apply to their learner.

Variation

If you are not planning to have an ESL workshop, you can use these pages to supplement the units on Reading, Writing and Spelling.

A definition is the enclosing of a wilderness of ideas within a wall of words.

Samuel Butler

Section 8

Pulling It All Together

The tutors have covered a lot of material and need to relate what they have learned back to a learner's needs. This section asks them to review an ESL learner's profile and think of one or two approaches or techniques that would be useful to use when tutoring in specific skill areas. It provides a concrete exercise for those who need that for their learning satisfaction.

Activity A

Learner profile

Tutors will review a learner profile (written or video clip) to discover strengths and problems in various skills areas.

Use of handout or video, profile review

Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 12.24: *ESL Learner Profile: Chol Thung*

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – ESL Learner Profile*, if you choose to use it
TV and VCR if using the video

Preparation

You could write the questions on the flip chart sheets before the session (see list in step 1 of the activity, below).

Cue video, *ESL Learner Profile*, or copy handout.

Review the video or written profile and brainstorm strengths/problems/needs that the learner has so you can help tutors as necessary.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Write each question listed below on separate flip chart sheets. Leave room on the sheets to make notes under the questions.
 - What pronunciation or vocabulary problems/strengths do you notice?
 - What grammar problems/strengths do you notice?
 - What listening or conversation problems/strengths (not related to grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary) do you notice?
 - What reading or writing problems/strengths do you notice?
 - What other strengths or needs do you notice (e.g., survival needs, background knowledge)?
2. Tell tutors that they will be matching approaches and/or techniques to a learner's needs. Explain that they will have to list some of the learner's needs and strengths first.
3. Divide tutors into pairs. Assign one question from the list in step 1 to each pair. If you have questions left unassigned, give pairs more than one question until all questions are assigned. Give the appropriate question sheet(s) to each pair.

Coordinator tip

You could develop your own ESL learner profiles to reflect your learner population better.

Variation

You could increase the number of pairs by dividing up some of the categories. You could decrease the number of groups by taking out the questions or just approach the review as a whole group.

4. Ask the pairs to make notes on the answers to the questions during the review of the handout or video clip. The notes should be based on their observations and the expressed needs of the learner.
5. Show the video, *ESL Learner Profile*, or ask the pairs to read the written profile.
6. Have each pair jot down their notes on flip chart paper with markers and then put the paper up on the wall.
7. When all the pairs are finished, ask the pairs to share their work.
8. Ask for additional observations from all tutors after each pair is finished. Note their comments on the list of questions.
9. Keep the flip chart sheets with the questions and lists of problems/strengths for Activity B.

Activity B

Matching approaches or techniques

This activity provides a practice opportunity in relating possible approaches or techniques to an ESL learner. This should consolidate some of the learning that has occurred during this unit.

The following ideas on thematic unit planning come from the *ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities (ERPAC)* by Lorene Anderson and Dawn Seabrook de Vargas, published by Bow Valley College, Calgary, in 2003.

THEMATIC UNIT PLANNING

A good way of planning for instruction, especially at lower levels, is to use the thematic approach. The thematic approach puts language learning into meaningful contexts and situations. It takes an item or topic related to the learners' needs and interests and develops a teaching unit of several related lessons. This approach allows for a range of activities and is a good approach for a multi-level class.

The thematic approach also provides a relevant setting for addressing cross-cultural issues. The best way to get at underlying attitudes is to have open discussions around themes. For example, topics such as divorce, blended families, family democracy or hierarchy, or the meaning of the term *nuclear family* can effectively be handled in a unit on families. Linking discussions with themes may provide opportunity to expose different attitudes.

To use the thematic approach, first choose a topic that relates to learner needs. As you plan, decide what information learners must know about the topic. Brainstorm as many things as possible. Then look at the structures, vocabulary and functions that we use in interactions related to the topic. Next, group this into a unit plan that details the topics and content, the competencies, the activities that will be the stage for learning, and the resources. Your daily lesson plan will grow out of the unit plan.

Let us work through an example.

Example of developing a unit plan

The first step is to use the following questions to help you brainstorm a unit plan.

What topic would best suit my learner?

The theme we will use is *Food*.

What do the learners need to know related to this topic?

- names of foods
- where to buy
- quantities
- meals
- like/dislikes
- meal planning
- location of items in store
- food labels
- recipes
- food allergies
- asking for help
- safe food handling
- cooking food
- working with food (cut, slice, mix)
- nutrition
- going to a restaurant
- food equipment and utensils
- food quality (fresh)
- shopping for food

What vocabulary will learners need to acquire?

- names of food
- names of meals
- action words for working with food: *slice, chop, peel*
- words for social interaction: *please, thank you, excuse me*

What language functions will they need to be able to use?

- asking for help or assistance
- expressing likes and dislikes
- inquiring about price
- indicating a price difference
- expressing want or desire
- getting someone's attention
- making a polite request
- asking for repetition
- asking for explanation of something not understood
- asking for the bill
- indicating a mistake
- asking about ingredients or what something is made of
- expressing gratitude
- inviting someone to go for coffee or a meal

- expressing satisfaction or appreciation
- giving a compliment
- complaining about the quality or taste of something
- asking directions or the location of an item
- refusing something

What grammar do they need to learn to be able to talk about this topic?

- Nouns
 - count/non-count – Count nouns are those you can use a number in front of to count, like *one banana*. Non-count nouns can't take a number in front of the noun, like *flour* (*one flour* doesn't make sense).
 - singular/plural
- Adjectives
 - description (appearance, taste, smell)
 - comparison
- Verbs
 - present continuous tense: *I am eating my supper.*
 - simple present/daily routines: *I eat breakfast at 6:00.*
 - simple past tense: *I ate my lunch.*
- Adverbs
 - frequency
 - qualifiers: *too, very, enough*
- Questions
 - Do you like _____?
 - What is your favourite fruit, vegetable, food, meal?
 - Do you have any _____?
 - How much is the _____?

What resources do I have and does any of their content relate to this topic?

- pictures of food, plastic food, real fruit/vegetables
- flyers
- menus
- dialogue books
- grammar books
- cookbooks
- magazine articles
- food labels

After brainstorming, the next step is to create a time schedule for the unit that outlines how the lessons within the unit could flow. Think about how the instruction will progress from basic to more complex information and skills. For example, at a lower level, learners may start with naming foods, matching pictures with the name, and asking each other questions about what they like and dislike. The next lesson might include a shopping role play. Higher levels may discuss nutrition and how poor nutrition affects us. The lessons may go on to reading labels, recipes, and articles related to the topic.

PLANNING THE LESSON

When you have developed your unit plan, the next step is to plan how to deliver the content in small steps. The learning should build on what learners already know and move them ahead. Decide what the learners should be able to do when they have completed the lesson and how you will know if they can do it. These are your objectives.

Decide what the instructor will do and what the learners must do. Identify the activities and resources you will use for the lesson.

Have a look at the sample lesson plans on the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks website at www.language.ca. Look at the site map and click on “New for Learners: Brochures and Lessons.”

A good way to set out how the lesson will unfold is to use a “time” outline. Let us look at an example of how to do this. We will use the lesson topic: The Family.

Example of a lesson plan

Objectives

The learner will be able to:

- say the months of the year
- identify family members
- answer basic yes/no questions
- request information about another person’s family
- respond to questions about family relationships

8:30-8:40 Welcome and warm-up/review activity. Ask some basic questions.

8:40-9:10 The family. Draw a family tree and identify the different relationships. Find out the family members’ birth dates. Beginning learners will draw a family tree and label it with their own family. Write the birth dates for their family. Advanced learners will role play giving information about family for an application form.

9:10-9:30 Play a game of calendar bingo. The learners will practise reading the names of the months. Have different learners call out the days/ months.

5-10 minute break for conversation

9:40-10:00 Teach the grammar that goes with the topic of identifying family. Review the use of the possessive pronouns *my, his, her, our, your*

Teach possessive nouns – My husband’s name is Juan. My mother’s name is _____.

10:00-10:20 Pair work. Learners work with a tutor on a dialogue about a birthday party for a family member. They read it together. Each person reads each speaker’s part. Learners copy the dialogue.

10:20-10:30 Wrap up with some review questions about who’s who in the family.

When you have your lesson planned, remember that you do not have to stick to it rigidly. There may be occasions when some “event” has happened and the learners need to talk about it and their feelings. Learners may come into class with an important issue to deal with that is not in your plan for the day, but you know that they would benefit from instruction or discussion around the issue. It is important to deal with needs that emerge. However, learners should know that there is a program plan in place that you are following.

Practice, using profile

Materials and equipment

Handout 12.24: *ESL Learner Profile: Chol Thung*

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – ESL Learner Profile*

TV and VCR

Flip chart sheets with questions and notes from the previous activity on strengths/problems/needs

More flip chart paper and markers

Preparation

Before meeting with tutors, review the video or the written profile and brainstorm approaches or techniques that would be helpful, so you can help tutors as necessary.

Look over the information on Thematic Unit Planning and Planning the Lesson from the introduction to this activity.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Based on the needs and interests of an ESL learner in the video or the written profile that you used in the previous activity, pick a theme to focus on. Do this with your tutors.
2. Return the flip chart sheets with the questions and strengths, problems and needs to the tutor pairs who worked on them originally. Tell the tutor pairs that based on the identified needs, problems and strengths written on their sheet, they will choose two approaches and/or techniques for their assigned area. They could brainstorm as pairs to get ideas and refer to the sections of this unit for ideas as well.
3. Explain the following points:
 - *Approaches* are general in nature, such as the suggestion of not using grammar terms for all grammar work with learners who have little schooling.
 - *Techniques* are more specific in nature, such as using cut-apart sentences for grammar practice.
4. Ask for two approaches and/or techniques per strength, problem or needs area that you had tutors work on in the last activity. Ask them to try to work within the theme that has been decided on.
5. They should write their notes on the bottom half of the flip chart that states the strengths, problems and needs that the pair is working on or attach another sheet as needed. At the end of this activity each pair will have one or more sheets stating the following:

Facilitation tip

If you have more time, consider turning this into a lesson planning activity by using some of the tutors' ideas as the basis for a lesson. The background information to this activity gives you an example.

Facilitation tip

As this is the end of the ESL units, you could end by teaching a phrase such as “goodbye,” “see you again” or “good luck” in another language.

- an original question from Activity A (for example, What reading or writing problems/strengths do you notice?)
 - answers to the question based on the learner video or written profile (for example, low comprehension)
 - two approaches or techniques that relate to the theme decided by the group and to their answers (for example, work on expanding oral vocabulary in general to improve reading comprehension or make sure the learner understands the key words for a topic before starting reading).
6. Monitor the work and give each group enough time to finish the task. Give suggestions as necessary.
 7. Ask tutors to report on their ideas. Ask for additional ideas at the end of all the groups' reports if there is time. Applaud their efforts.

The words! I collected them in all shapes and sizes and hung them like bangles in my mind.

Hortense Calisher

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Essential Skills

UNIT
13

Unit 13: Essential Skills

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE NINE ESSENTIAL SKILLS			
A. Essential Skills in everyday life	Core	Brainstorming, matching tasks to Essential Skills and discussion	45 min.
B. Dispelling the myths surrounding Essential Skills	Optional	Pairs work, reflection, discussion and use of handouts	30 min.
SECTION 2. WHY ARE ESSENTIAL SKILLS IMPORTANT?			
A. Transferability of Essential Skills	Core	Option 1: Use of art, discussion, reflection and use of handout Option 2: Discussion, use of handouts and working as a group	60 min. 45 min.
B. Essential Skills are part of everyone's skill set	Optional	Art, discussion and reflection	45 min.
SECTION 3. COMPLEXITY LEVELS AND ASSESSMENT THROUGH THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS LENS			
A. Introducing complexity levels in Essential Skills	Core	Small group work, discussion and use of handouts	60 min.
B. Practising informal Essential Skills assessment	Optional	Use of handouts, pairs work, role play, reflection and discussion	60 min.
SECTION 4. READING TEXT			
A. Understanding Reading Text and complexity levels	Core	Discussion, use of handouts, pairs work and reflection	45 min.
B. Identifying complexity levels in different texts	Core	Discussion, pairs work, use of handouts and reflection	45 min.
SECTION 5. DOCUMENT USE			
A. Document Use in our everyday lives	Core	Discussion, use of handout, pairs work and reflection	45 min.
B. Document Use is more than just reading – Understanding the steps involved	Core	Option 1 (Lower skill level): Discussion, pairs work, use of handout and group work Option 2 (Higher skill level): Discussion, use of handouts and pairs work	60 min. 45 min.
SECTION 6. WRITING			
A. Writing for different purposes	Core	Option 1 (Lower skill level): Use of handouts, writing, reflection and discussion Option 2 (Higher skill level): Reflection, writing, group discussion and use of handout	45 min. 45 min.
SECTION 7. NUMERACY			
A. Practising Numeracy skills	Core	Option 1 (Lower skill level): Pairs work, use of handouts and group discussion Option 2 (Higher skill level): Use of handouts, pairs work and group discussion	45 min. 45 min.
SECTION 8. ORAL COMMUNICATION			
A. 3 in 1: An exercise showing increasing complexity in Oral Communication	Core	Group discussion, role plays and use of handouts	60 min.
B. Oral Communication includes more than speaking	Core	Option 1 (Lower skill level): Use of handout, discussion, small group work and role plays Option 2 (Higher skill level): Use of handouts, discussion, pairs work and reflection	60 min. 60 min.
SECTION 9. THINKING			
A. Thinking skills are a part of everything we do	Core	Option 1 (Lower skill level): Use of handouts, large sticky notes, discussion, and small and large group work Option 2 (Higher skill level): Large group discussion, small group work, presentations and use of handouts	45 min. 45 - 60 min.
SECTION 10. WORKING WITH OTHERS			
A. Working with Others or working alone	Core	Use of handouts, discussion, group work and pairs work	45 min.
B. Dealing with conflict	Core	Brainstorm, discussion, use of handout, pairs work and reflection	45 min.
SECTION 11. COMPUTER USE			
A. Computers are part of our everyday lives	Core	Option 1 (Lower skill level): Brainstorm, discussion, pairs work, role play and view video Option 2 (Higher skill level): Discussion and use of handouts	45 min. 45 min.
SECTION 12. CONTINUOUS LEARNING			
A. Expanding our personal awareness	Optional	Discussion, use of handout, pairs work and reflection	45 min.
B. Understanding lifelong learning from a personal perspective	Core	Discussion, use of handouts, pairs work and reflection	60 min.
SECTION 13. PLANNING LEARNING ACTIVITIES WITH AN ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOCUS			
A. Finding and developing authentic materials	Core	Use of handout, presentation, discussion, pairs work and reflection	30 min.
B. Creating activities designed for different skill levels	Core	Discussion, use of handouts, presentation and reflection	45 min.

UNIT 13

Essential Skills

 **Approx. 14 hours**
using core activities

Concepts

- **Exploring the nine Essential Skills**
- **How Essential Skills connect and intersect**
- **The role and transferability of Essential Skills**
- **Levels of complexity**
- **Strategies for teaching Essential Skills**

Builds on

- **Every previous unit**

Coordinator tip

As a coordinator, you are already teaching the tutors how to work with Essential Skills such as Reading Text, Writing and Numeracy. The intent of this unit is to help you deepen tutors' understanding of those skills by giving them the Essential Skills perspective. We therefore suggest you integrate the relevant sections in this unit into your work with other units in this manual. For example, you can integrate Section 4: Reading Text with the earlier Unit 6: Reading.

In the early 1990s, workplace research by the Government of Canada and national and international agencies in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom identified nine Essential Skills used in all occupations.

These nine Essential Skills are exactly what their name implies: they are the **essential** life skills every individual needs to successfully participate in learning, work and life. They include:

1. Reading Text
2. Document Use
3. Writing
4. Numeracy
5. Oral Communication
6. Thinking
 - Problem Solving
 - Decision Making
 - Critical Thinking
 - Job Task Planning and Organizing
 - Significant Use of Memory
 - Finding Information
7. Working with Others
8. Computer Use
9. Continuous Learning

In the previous units of this manual, we explored some of these skills, namely Reading Text, Writing and Numeracy. Since we published the earlier units, building knowledge and increasing skill levels in the nine Essential Skills has become key in developing a foundation for all future learning. This unit expands on the three Essential Skills areas we already covered, and introduces the six additional Essential Skills.

This unit will help tutors identify the nine Essential Skills and their levels of complexity, understand their importance and their transferability from our personal lives to the workplace and community, and use that knowledge to create lesson plans that are uniquely tailored to an individual learner's needs.

Using the Essential Skills framework as an overlay to their current lesson planning will help tutors increase and enrich their pool of teaching ideas and possibilities. Reading Text, Writing and Numeracy will not lose their importance, but will expand to incorporate components of the other six Essential Skills.

Useful Resources

For complete information on the following resources, see the bibliography for this unit. For additional resources on Essential Skills, refer to the new on-line Essential Skills Resource Guide, www.literacyalberta.ca.

TITLE	AUTHOR	VALUE / USEFULNESS
For the whole unit		
Office of Literacy and Essential Skills website: http://hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/OLES/oles.shtml	Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	This website gives comprehensive information on the nine Essential Skills and how they relate to the workplace. It also offers free resources and tools for teaching Essential Skills.
Literacy and Essential Skills Tools DVD (WP-122-08-09)	Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	This DVD is included with the Essential Skills unit. It provides easy-to-use tools for assessment, learning and training. It includes tip sheets, and practise and learning exercises for most of the Essential Skills.
Ontario Skills Passport website: http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca	Government of Ontario	This website provides information on the Essential Skills and the complexity levels that is easy to understand. The Check-In Tool is particularly useful.
Recognizing Life's Work: Helping Learners Connect Their Essential Skills from Home to Work – A Practitioner's Resource Kit	Alison Wasielewski et al	The QUILL Learning Network profiles 12 leisure and home-based activities using Essential Skills in this excellent resource. The manual includes chapters on developing authentic materials and learning activities.
Through the Worker's Eyes: Developing Learning Activities with Work-Related Documents – A Guide for Workshop Trainers	Cindy Davidson	Another excellent resource from the QUILL Learning Network, this PowerPoint presentation provides clear information on tasks and Essential Skills, complexity levels and using authentic documents to develop learning activities.
Making Essential Skills Work for You: Learning Activities Manual	Jane Tuer and Lorri Sauvé	These learning activities focus on the Essential Skills of Oral Communication, Working with Others and Thinking, at complexity levels 1 and 2.
Essential Skills for Literacy Practitioners: A Guide and Three Workshops	Robyn Cook-Ritchie et al	This resource provides a succinct overview of the Essential Skills and their complexity levels. It includes three PowerPoint presentations that can be adapted for instruction.
Essential Skills Investigation (ESI) DVD Series	BC-Yukon Essential Skills Guiding Team and Bear Image Productions	Modelled after the popular CSI television series, these innovative and affordable DVDs are great tools for teaching the Essential Skills. DVD #1 provides an introduction to the Essential Skills. DVDs #2 and #3 also have facilitator guides, participant workbooks and activity cards for a more in-depth study of the Essential Skills. Order information and a free view are available on the website.
Essential Skills – Have You Used Yours Today?	Linda Hobbs Collier	This comprehensive teaching and learning package includes a training manual, tutor handbook, tutor guides and student skills books for four modules. It is designed to help adult learners increase their literacy and Essential Skills. The first module, for level 1 to 2 learners, introduces the nine Essential Skills and their applications. It may be downloaded free of charge from the website.

Essential Skills for Personal Success: Practitioner Guidelines and Curriculum	Sheila Marshall and Karen Farrar	This excellent teaching resource includes a series of lesson plans on various topics of interest to adult learners. All lessons are in plain language and incorporate Essential Skills. It may be downloaded free of charge from the website.
Bare Essentials: An Introduction to Essential Skills	College Sector for Adult Upgrading, Community Literacy of Ontario, Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators, and Ontario Native Literacy Coalition	A great resource for someone new to the Essential Skills, this manual introduces the nine Essential Skills and gives examples for work, learning and life. It may be downloaded free of charge from the website.
Essential Skills and Literacy Assessment Tools	Douglas College, The Training Group	This resource, available from the website for free, gives coordinators an overview of the tools available for assessing the Essential Skills.
An Aboriginal Essential Skills Journey: Planting the Seeds for Growth – Facilitator Guide and Participant Workbook	Douglas College, The Training Group	This is an excellent resource for coordinators working with Aboriginal tutors and learners. It may be downloaded free of charge from the website.
Relating Canadian Benchmarks to Essential Skills: A Comparative Framework	Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks	Charts present a quick overview of the relationship between CLB and the Essential Skills of Reading Text, Oral Communication, Document Use and Writing. Each chart is followed by a series of skills tables with examples of tasks for the various complexity levels. The tasks give excellent ideas for developing writing lessons and incorporating meaningful workplace content.
Reading Text		
Strategies for Reading	Vicki-Ann Huegeli	This resource is Unit 12 of the Skills for Life series that includes 16 other units on Essential Skills. Coordinators will find it useful for activity and lesson ideas, and can download it free from the publisher's website.
Stories and Activities for English 110 and 120	Edwin Morin et al Northwest Territories Literacy Council	This is one of many great free resources from The Northwest Territories Literacy Council focusing on Aboriginal and northern themes. Check out their website for other Essential Skills resources.
Language for Work: CLB and Essential Skills Lessons for ESL Instructors	Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks	This website provides 25 lessons covering Reading Text, Writing, Document Use, Oral Communication, Thinking and Numeracy.
Document Use		
Tutela, the national ESL website	Citizenship and Immigration Canada	This website was created for and by ESL or EAL literacy teachers. Essential Skills are embedded within each lesson plan. The activities cover all nine Essential Skills. The section on Document Use has over 50 activities. The website associated with this series is an excellent resource for lesson plans for Essential Skills complexity levels 1 and 2.
Making Choices – Teaching Writing in the Workplace (Instructional Activities Manual)	Diane Millar	This comprehensive manual includes activities and worksheets designed to develop skills in Document Use, Reading Text and Writing. The instructional activities are adaptable and equally beneficial to tutors working with learners outside the workplace.

Workwrite: Instructional Resources for Employment-Focused Programming, Book 1: Organizing Information Book 2: Schedules Book 3: Information Forms	Karen Geraci and Aleksandra Popovic	The Workwrite series of instructional workbooks and teachers' guides uses workplace contexts to teach Reading Text, Document Use, Writing and Numeracy skills. The lesson plans are suitable and adaptable for different skill levels.
Writing		
Strategies for Writing	Vicki-Ann Huegli	This resource is Unit 13 of the Skills for Life series that includes 16 other units on Essential Skills. Coordinators will find it useful for lesson ideas and activity plans. It is available for free download from the Quebec Literacy Working Group website.
Tutela, the national ESL website	Citizenship and Immigration Canada	The website associated with this series is an excellent resource for lesson plans for Essential Skills complexity levels 1 and 2. Writing activities are separated into Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels. See also Relating Canadian Benchmarks to Essential Skills: A Comparative Framework.
Numeracy		
On the Job: The Essential Skill of Numeracy	Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks	This publication from the <i>On the Job</i> series, which focuses on ESL and Essential Skills, provides an excellent overview of Numeracy, as well as providing teaching ideas for lower-level and higher-level complexity. See the <i>On the Job</i> series for teaching ideas on the other Essential Skills as well.
Practical Money Skills for Life website: www.practicalmoneyskills.com/foreducators/	Sponsored by VISA	This is a great website full of interactive games, lesson plans and activities for different ages and skill levels. Resources and lessons may be downloaded free of charge.
Oral Communication		
Making Essential Skills Work for You – Activities Manual	Jane Tuer and Lorri Sauvé	Chapters 1, 2 and 5 focus on Oral Communication. Each chapter includes several learning activities complete with lesson plans. The focus is on complexity levels 1 and 2. The manual may be downloaded for free.
Communication Essentials – a modular workshop	Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	This DVD includes workshop modules complete with outlines, templates, lesson plans and handouts for Oral Communication levels 1 to 3. Note: This modular workshop is included on the OLES Literacy and Essential Skills Tools DVD described at the beginning of the resource section.
Oral Communication: An Essential Skill in the Canadian Workplace	Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	This DVD explores Oral Communication in the workplace at levels 1 to 3. It is in two segments: the job interview and workplace conflict. The focus is on students who are newcomers to Canada but is easily adapted for any learner. Note: This information is included on the OLES Literacy and Essential Skills Tools DVD described at the beginning of the resource section.

Thinking		
Making Essential Skills Work for You – Activities Manual	Jane Tuer and Lorri Sauvé	Chapters 3, 4 and 5 focus on Thinking. Lesson topics include time management, problem-solving and reporting to others.
Literacy and Essential Skills Tools	Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	The Literacy and Essential Skills Tools DVD includes a 16-page section called <i>Problem Solved</i> . It covers five different approaches to problem solving. It also includes activities and worksheets. The DVD is included with this unit.
The Mind Tools™ Essential Skills for an Excellent Career website: www.mindtools.com/	Mind Tools™	This website is full of activities, tools and resources for problem-solving, decision-making, time management, project management, communication skills, creativity, learning and study skills, and career skills.
Working with Others		
Mind Tools™ Essential Skills for an Excellent Career website: www.mindtools.com	Mind Tools™	This website has resources and activities in the areas of leadership, team dynamics and dealing with difficult people.
Working Together	Adult Returners Key Skills (ARKS) Team	The ARKS Team includes members from Finland, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Scotland, and their work is sponsored by the EU. The Working Together module in the Keys to Participation package includes 11 lessons on different topics: teamwork, negotiation, consensus, cooperation, working alone or with others, and dealing with obstructive behaviour.
Computer Use		
Keys to Information Technology	Adult Returners Key Skills (ARKS) Team	The ARKS Team includes members from Finland, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Scotland, and their work is sponsored by the EU. The Keys to Information Technology package includes lessons on an introduction to computers, word processing, spreadsheets, databases, the Internet and email.
Recognizing Life's Work: Helping Learners Connect Their Essential Skills from Home to Work, A Practitioner's Resource Kit	Alison Wasielewski et al	In the chapter titled Computers for Personal Use, this resource creates a profile that breaks down the different components of Computer Use into the Essential Skills. It also includes a lower-level and higher-level Computer Use activity.
Computers for Deaf Learners	Workplace Education Manitoba	This excellent curriculum, part of the Deaf for Deaf series, provides education and tips for working with deaf learners. The computer lessons are accessible and useful for all learners.
Continuous Learning		
Clinton True Essential Skills Evidence	Igniting the Power Within	The innovative Igniting the Power Within website is devoted to Continuous Learning and recognizing prior learning. It has an Aboriginal focus, however tutors can use and adapt information for all learners. The Clinton True Essential Skills Evidence model provides a unique way to present past learning and experience. It's available for free on the website.

Disclaimer: All resources and website addresses were current at the time of writing, but websites do change over time. If a website has changed, search for the document name, the author and/or the organization. The National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) Library also has extensive archived resources. Their website address is <http://library.nald.ca/>.

Facilitation tip

This Essential Skills unit includes two or more activities for teaching each Essential Skill. While most of these activities are designed to be used with small groups, almost all of the activities can be easily adapted for a one-on-one training situation. In fact, most of the activities require working in pairs. In those activities, the literacy coordinator can act as part of a pair with the tutor. For activities that are not as easily adapted, we give you an adaptation strategy.

Examples of Workshop Schedules

The following training schedules are examples of ways you can teach this Essential Skills unit. We recommend that you choose from Workshops One, Two or Three depending on the time you have and the needs of your tutors and learners.

Workshops Five and Six provide follow-up training in assessment, finding and developing authentic materials, and creating lesson plans. They may be used in conjunction with the first three workshops or given separately as supplementary training.

If these examples don't meet your program's needs, you may design your own workshops.

See the following section for examples of the agendas you could develop for Workshops Two and Three, outlined below.

WORKSHOP ONE:

Introduction to Essential Skills (3 hours)

Introduction/Icebreaker	10 min.
Section 1A: Essential Skills in everyday life	45 min.
Section 2A: Transferability of Essential Skills	60 min.
Section 3A: Introducing complexity levels in Essential Skills	60 min.
Evaluation	5 min.

WORKSHOP TWO:

Introduction to Essential Skills plus one Essential Skill (4 hours)

Introduction/Icebreaker	10 min.
Section 1A: Essential Skills in everyday life	45 min.
Section 2A: Transferability of Essential Skills	60 min.
Section 3A: Introducing complexity levels in Essential Skills	60 min.
Options (choose one):	
Section 8A: Oral Communication	60 min.
Section 10A: Working with Others or working alone	45 min.
Or choose an Essential Skill that learners have identified	60 min.
Evaluation	10 min.

WORKSHOP THREE:

Comprehensive workshop on Essential Skills (6.5 hours)

Introduction/Icebreaker	10 min.
Section 1A: Essential Skills in everyday life	45 min.
Section 2A: Transferability of Essential Skills	60 min.
Section 3A: Introducing complexity levels in Essential Skills	60 min.
Section 8A or 8B: Oral Communication	60 min.
Section 10A: Working with Others or working alone	45 min.
Section 5A or 5B: Document Use	45 or 60 min.
Section 13A: Finding and developing authentic materials	30 min.
Evaluation	10 min.

WORKSHOP FOUR:

Follow-up (1.5 hours)

Introduction/Icebreaker	10 min.
Section 13A: Finding and developing authentic materials	30 min.
Section 13B: Creating activities designed for different skill levels	45 min.
Evaluation	5 min.

WORKSHOP FIVE:

Complexity Levels and Informal Assessment (3 hours)

Introduction/Icebreaker	10 min.
Developing a learning plan – a review of Unit 4, Section 3 (which experienced tutors may not need)	45 min.
Section 3A: Introducing complexity levels in Essential Skills	60 min.
Section 3B: Practising Informal Essential Skills assessment	60 min.
Evaluation	5 min.

In 2005, UNESCO defined literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. UNESCO believes that literacy involves a continuum of learning enabling an individual to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential, and participate fully in community and wider society.

Sample Agendas

The following sample agendas are for Workshops Two and Three as outlined above. They are intended to be guides only.

Your specific agenda will depend on the needs of your particular program. For example, you may find that the sample agenda for Workshop Three, outlined here as lasting seven hours, is just right for tutors who need to travel a long way to reach the training site, and who would rather come for one long day than travel more than once. On the other hand, it might be best for your tutors to break Workshop Three into two training days. Either is fine. It depends what works best for the program.

In addition, you may need to adapt the activities themselves based on your tutors' experience or your facilitation style. And the time you spend on any given activity will depend on how many tutors attend and how engaged they are in discussions.

WORKSHOP TWO:

Introduction to Essential Skills plus one Essential Skill (4 hours)

9:00 – 9:05 Welcome

9:05 – 11:00 Unit 13: Essential Skills

Introduction/Icebreaker

Section 1A: Essential Skills in everyday life

Section 2A: Transferability of Essential Skills

11:00 – 11:15 Break

11:15 – 12:20

Section 3A: Introducing complexity levels in Essential skills

12:20 – 1:20 Lunch

1:20 – 2:20

Section 8A: Oral Communication

Evaluation

WORKSHOP THREE:

Comprehensive workshop on Essential Skills (7 hours)

9:00 – 9:05 Welcome

9:05 – 11:00 Unit 13: Essential Skills

Introduction/Icebreaker

Section 1A: Essential Skills in everyday life

Section 2A: Transferability of Essential Skills

11:00 – 11:15 Break

11:15 – 12:15

Section 3A: Introducing complexity levels in Essential Skills

12:15 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 2:40

Section 8A: Oral Communication

Section 10A: Working with Others

2:40 – 2:55 Break

2:55 – 4:30

Section 5A: Document Use

Section 13A: Finding and developing authentic materials

Evaluation

Section 1

Introduction to the Nine Essential Skills

Almost every task uses Essential Skills. There are nine Essential Skills and they're rarely used in isolation. Typically several skills are bundled together, giving us the ability to complete most tasks that we encounter across the entire spectrum of our lives, whether at home, at work or in the community. The focus of this unit is to give you a solid grounding in the nine Essential Skills and how they relate to a learner's needs and progress.

Sections 1 to 3 in this unit introduce the nine Essential Skills and discuss assessment through an Essential Skills lens. We expand upon each skill in sections 4 through 12. Section 13 elaborates on lesson planning with an Essential Skills focus, including ideas for developing and using authentic materials. Each section includes activities for you to use when you train tutors and that they can then adapt to use with the learners.

The following summary of the nine Essential Skills explains what is included within each skill. We based this information on the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* from the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills and on *Essential Skills for Practitioners: A Guide and Three Workshops* by Robyn Cook-Ritchie et al.

Essential Skill	Summary of the skill	Skill is used to:
Reading Text	Reading materials in the form of sentences and paragraphs, for example, notes, letters, memos, manuals, specifications, regulations, books, reports and journals	Scan for information Skim for overall meaning or to "get the gist" Read to understand, learn or critique
Document Use	Finding, understanding or entering information in various types of documents including forms, tables and lists	Read signs, labels, lists, forms Complete forms Create tables and schedules Enter information on tables and schedules Understand information on graphs, charts and maps Create or read schematic drawings
Writing	Communicating by arranging words, numbers and symbols on paper or a computer screen	Record and organize information Inform and persuade Request information Analyze and compare
Numeracy	Using numbers and thinking in quantitative terms	Make calculations Take measurements Schedule or budget Do accounting Estimate Analyze data

Concepts

- Nine Essential Skills
- Summaries of skills and how they are used
- Myths about Essential Skills

Builds on

- Planning for Learning
- About Literacy

Oral Communication	Using speech to exchange thoughts and information	Greet, reassure or persuade people Resolve conflicts Give and obtain information Discuss, facilitate and instruct
Thinking	Sub-categories of Thinking include: Solving problems Making decisions Thinking critically Planning and organizing Significant use of memory Finding information	Identify problems and their solutions Make a choice among several options Plan and organize tasks for the day Remember procedures, codes or information Use texts, people or computers to find information
Working with Others	Interacting with others to complete tasks	Work alone consulting with others Work as part of a team Work independently to complete a group project Work with willingness and understanding within the culture of a group Act as a supervisor or leader
Computer Use	Using computers and other forms of technology	Operate cash registers, fax machines and printers Use software applications such as word processing, graphics, financial or statistical analysis, and communications Send and receive emails Create spreadsheets Do research on the internet Do programming, and systems and software design Do computer-assisted design, manufacturing and machining
Continuous Learning	Participating in an ongoing process of improving skills and knowledge	Learn on the job, through formal training or through self study Understand own learning style Work with new ideas Gain access to a variety of materials, resources and learning opportunities Develop a greater willingness and ability to learn and change

Activity A

Essential Skills in everyday life

The following activity will give tutors an opportunity to examine the Essential Skills they use every day.

Brainstorming, matching tasks to Essential Skills, use of handout and discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Sticky notes (enough for at least 10 per participant)

Handout 13.1: *Nine Essential Skills*

Preparation

Review the handout.

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask tutors to think about the activities and tasks they do in a day. These will include things such as planning and cooking meals, banking, shopping, working at a job, etc., all of which use the Essential Skills. Getting tutors to think about the skills relative to their own lives will make the skills more meaningful and easier to remember.
2. Hand out the sticky notes and ask each tutor to write one activity or task on each note. Give the tutors a few minutes to do this.
3. When they finish noting the tasks and activities they do in a day, ask them to stick the notes up on a blank wall. As more and more notes show up on the wall, invite them to work with you to move the notes into clusters that reflect similar thematic content. For example, “make breakfast” and “put the casserole in the oven” and “feed the kids” could be part of the theme of “Preparing Meals.” Once all the notes are in clusters, stand back as a group and review them. Name the theme, or content, of each cluster.
4. What skills are needed to do the tasks required by each cluster? For example, “Preparing Meals” might require planning, reading recipes, using math to double recipes, working with family members to organize schedules, and so on. On a flip chart sheet, begin to list the skills required. If a skill shows up in more than one content cluster, put a check mark by it. The most commonly used skills will have several check marks by them.
5. What you have done is list a series of activities/tasks and the skills required for each of them. Explain to the tutors that the Essential Skills do much the same. They were designed for and are focused on the workplace, but we use them at home and in the community too. Essential Skills are the foundational skills we need for work, learning and life.

optional
activity

6. Distribute the Handout 13.1. Review each skill and compare them with the skills listed on the flip chart sheet. Be sure to cover the following points:
 - How the nine Essential Skills connect back to the tasks on the sticky notes.
 - How their lives might be different if they did not have all the Essential Skills they needed and what they could do about it.
 - Whether there are areas in their lives that are causing difficulties or frustration. Would enhancing their Essential Skills help in any way?
 - Essential Skills are life skills and they have a huge impact on the quality of our total lives – at home, at work, in the community.
7. Introduce the concept of complexity levels:
 - Ask the tutors to name tasks on the list that are easier or more complex than others. Does each task have gradations in complexity? For example, looking up the phone number of a friend is easier and less complex than finding a plumber who is in the area and is available to come to your house on the weekend.
 - An important concept discussed in greater depth later is that within each Essential Skill there are complexity levels. Working with the different complexity levels will help tutors tailor lessons to the capacity of individual learners.

Activity B

Dispelling the myths surrounding Essential Skills

In this activity, tutors will discuss some common myths surrounding Essential Skills. This activity will help them identify their own misconceptions.

Pairs work, reflection, discussion and use of handouts

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers

Handout 13.2: *Dispelling the Myths*

Handout 13.3: *Dispelling the Myths: Answer Key*

Preparation

Review the handouts.

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give each tutor Handout 13.2. Ask tutors to pair up and discuss the myths, taking notes as they talk.
2. After five minutes, discuss their answers as a group. (You will have the answer key for your part of the discussion.) Ask if there were any surprises or insights.
3. Distribute Handout 13.3. Discuss the answers from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Do tutors have anything to add?

Section 2

Why Are Essential Skills Important?

If we imagine ourselves as a house, the Essential Skills serve as our foundation. They help us participate fully in our families, our work and our communities. They are the basic skills that help us respond to our rapidly changing world.

As explained on the website *Bare Essentials: An Introduction to Essential Skills*, the development of Essential Skills:

- Increases our ability to work independently
- Improves problem solving and communication
- Increases self-confidence
- Contributes to better health and safety at home and on the job
- Increases our ability to use technology
- Supports flexibility and the ability to adapt to change

Concept of transferability

It is important to understand that the nine Essential Skills can be applied across different contexts. In fact, one of the most important qualities of Essential Skills is that they are transferable from one context to the next. This means that the Essential Skills used at home to perform tasks may be used at work or in the community. For example, many people organize and plan activities for their day and week. They estimate how much time different activities take and plan accordingly. The Essential Skill of Planning and Organizing is one also used at work, such as when planning and prioritizing tasks and coordinating activities with others.

The transferability of Essential Skills from our everyday lives to work settings is at the core of this unit.

QUILL Learning Network in Ontario has produced *Recognizing Life's Work: Helping Learners Connect their Essential Skills from Home to Work*, an excellent resource kit by Alison Wasielewski and others. The kit shows how the Essential Skills that we use in our daily life activities are transferable to the workplace. The authors examine 12 common leisure and home-based activities and identify the Essential Skills used in each. Using the *Essential Skills Profiles* and the *National Occupational Classification* (NOC) on the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website, they make the connection between the Essential Skills used in these 12 home-based activities and the Essential Skills needed for various occupations.

If your program has learners with employment-related goals, the *Essential Skills Profiles* and the *National Occupational Classification* can give you in-depth information on the specific Essential Skills required for many occupations.

Concepts

- **Emphasis on Essential Skills as foundational skills**
- **Transferability of Essential Skills between home and work**

Essential Skills profiles

Although the Essential Skills profiles are of particular interest to coordinators working with learners who are interested in employment, it is useful for all learners to see how the Essential Skills they use at home can be transferred to the workplace.

The Essential Skills profiles developed by the Government of Canada examined the skills people use at work. Using this information, they interviewed workers, managers, coordinators and leading researchers to develop approximately 250 Essential Skills profiles for various occupations. To date, profiles have been developed for all occupations that need a high school education or less. Research is ongoing to complete profiles for occupations requiring university, college or apprenticeship training.

The Essential Skills profiles include:

- A brief description of the occupation
- A list of the most important Essential Skills used in that occupation
- Examples of tasks that show how each Essential Skill is used
- Complexity ratings for the skill that indicate the level of difficulty

As a coordinator, the profiles can help you learn more about the skills needed in various occupations. From there, you can develop learning plans and educational tools that will help learners build the Essential Skills they need. You can also use the profiles to explore the requirements for different careers.

National Occupational Classification (NOC)

The Essential Skills profiles are contained in the National Occupational Classification or NOC. It is an additional resource developed by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada to organize over 30,000 job titles into 520 occupational group descriptions giving information on wages, qualifications and availability throughout Canada. Based on extensive research and consultation, it is updated in partnership with Statistics Canada in conjunction with the five year census. The NOC tool classifies occupations with a four-digit code according to skill type and skill level. The digits of the NOC code provide important information about the occupation in question.

For a complete overview of the classification system, please consult the online NOC Training Tutorial on the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website. We recommend you take the time to do this. You may be surprised at how relevant it is to your life and that of your learners.

Activity A

Transferability of Essential Skills

This activity will help tutors understand how the Essential Skills they use in their personal lives are transferable to other contexts such as work.

Option 1 Use of art, discussion, reflection and use of handout

Why choose this option?

Choose this option if you have a larger group and more time.

Materials and equipment

Nine index cards

One poster board for each Essential Skill

Magazines and scissors

Art supplies such as glue, coloured paper, ribbons, felt pens

Handout 13.4: *Essential Skills in Families, Community and Workplace* (6 pages)

Preparation

Write one Essential Skill on each of the nine index cards.

Set out supplies: poster boards, magazines and scissors, art supplies (see list above).

Copy handout.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Divide the tutors into nine pairs so that all nine Essential Skills are represented. The number of tutors in each group will depend on how many you have in any given training session. In some cases, the tutors may be working as individuals.
2. Discuss the concept of transferability of Essential Skills: Ask tutors for other examples of Essential Skills used at home. Are these skills also used at work or in the community? If so, how? Discuss several examples so that tutors understand the concept.
3. Give each pair or individual one of the cards on which you've written one of the Essential Skills. Alternatively, you could put the cards in a pack and have each group or person draw one.
4. Distribute a poster board to each pair or individual. Ask them to use the magazines and art supplies provided to draw or illustrate the Essential Skill they were assigned. They are to show all the life activities (leisure, home, work, community) that use that specific Essential Skill. For example, for the Essential Skill of Reading Text, they might cut out pictures that illustrate the different places and ways people read text in their lives.
5. Ask groups to hang their posters up on the wall and present them to the rest of the tutors.
6. Notice and discuss the overlaps and the differences.

7. Distribute Handout 13.4. Ask tutors to note how the Essential Skills are transferable between family, community and workplace. Are there any surprises or insights?
8. Ask tutors now to apply the concept of transferability to their learners. Ask them to identify their learners' leisure activities and the associated Essential Skills. How can they incorporate this concept of transferability into lesson planning?

Option 2 Discussion, use of handouts and working as a group

Why choose this option?

Use this option if your time is limited and if your group is small.

Materials and equipment

Handout 13.5: *Chart of Transferability*

Handout 13.6: *What are Essential Skills? Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Human Resources and Skill Development Canada (2 pages)*

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Distribute Handout 13.5. Discuss the concept of transferability of Essential Skills.
2. Review the examples on the chart. Ask tutors to identify other examples first using the examples on the chart and filling in the blanks. Next, ask them to remember their first jobs. What skills did they have and which of those skills did they carry into future jobs?
3. Next, get tutors to talk about their daily work. What are their job tasks and which of the Essential Skills they use would transfer into other jobs? Which are skills they might need more training in for future employment?
4. Some discussion questions that will help tutors become aware of the transferability of the Essential Skills:
 - Can I perform this skill in another setting outside of this context?
 - Will I continue to need this skill if I get a job at another company or move up within my current company?
 - Will I need a higher level of complexity in this skill in order to get a promotion?

If any answer is “yes,” you are probably dealing with an Essential Skill because it’s being transferred from one context to another. If the answer is no, then it’s not an Essential Skill because, by definition, Essential Skills are transferable.
5. Give tutors a copy of Handout 13.6 and discuss. Here are some ideas for discussion:
 - Look at the examples for each Essential Skill and ask the group for personal examples from leisure, home or work.
 - Ask tutors to think about their learners. Identify the learners' leisure activities and the associated Essential Skills.
 - How can tutors incorporate this concept of transferability into lesson planning?

Activity B

optional
activity

Essential Skills are a part of everyone's skill set

This activity will energize the group with humour and encourage tutors to start thinking about the Essential Skills learners already possess. This activity is a precursor to thinking about learner assessment.

Art, discussion and reflection

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers
Index cards

Preparation

Write names or roles on index cards: Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, Robin Hood, the Tooth Fairy, homemaker, parent, Easter Bunny, literacy tutor and so on. Use your imagination to think of others. The number of characters you create will depend on the number of tutors in your group.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Ask the tutors to move into pairs and give each tutor or pair of tutors (depending on the number of people in your group) one of the prepared index cards, a marker and two sheets of flip chart paper.
2. On one sheet of the flip chart paper, ask them to draw the person or people named on their card and to write a job description for him or her. This will include things they do at home, in the community and at work.
3. On the second flip chart sheet, ask the tutors to identify the Essential Skills needed for the particular job description.
4. After 15 minutes, ask tutors to present their personalities, job descriptions and the Essential Skills needed to perform that job. Ask which personality uses the most complex skills.
5. Discuss how Essential Skills are a part of the many tasks we do in our lives.

As adult educators, one of the most significant ways to boost learning transfer is to be explicit about the skills learners are employing in completing activities and to show how they can use those skills in other applications.

*Essentially Yours, Bulletin #1, 2009
Ontario Literacy Coalition*

UNIT 13
ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Section 3

Complexity Levels and Assessment Through the Essential Skills Lens

Concepts

- Introduction to complexity levels in Essential Skills
- The importance of tasks in complexity levels
- Types of assessment
- Tools and resources for Essential Skills Assessment

Builds on

- Adults as Learners
- Learning Styles
- Planning for Learning
- About Literacy
- Reading, pg. 18-20
- Writing, pg. 16-17
- Numeracy, pg. 1-6
- ESL Learner and Tutor
- ESL: Tutoring Basics, pg. 44-50

Essential Skills assessment enhances the assessments and evaluations already done by coordinators when learners initially enter literacy programs.

This Essential Skills unit is built on other units and pages in this manual, and in the sidebar at the beginning of each Essential Skills section, we refer you to the relevant earlier units and pages. Before you begin training tutors, we suggest that you review that earlier information. You could also offer the tutors a review of that material if it is new to them. Such a review could be helpful for the discussion of assessments for learners working on their Essential Skills.

COMPLEXITY LEVELS IN ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Assessing learners through the Essential Skills lens involves becoming knowledgeable about the learners' ability to do tasks within various complexity levels. It is important to remember that the Essential Skills complexity levels measure the complexity of a task, not the level of the learner.

What are complexity levels?

Complexity levels are a rating tool for measuring Essential Skills tasks. Most of the Essential Skills have complexity rating scales. These scales have four or five levels depending on the Essential Skill. There is a wide range of complexity between each level, with level 1 being least complex (basic tasks) and levels 4 and 5 being most complex (advanced tasks).

It is important for tutors to understand complexity levels so they can plan appropriately sequenced instruction for their learners.

Complexity levels are based upon

- the complexity of the material
- the complexity of the skill or knowledge needed to use the material
- the context for using the material
- the degree of risk involved if a mistake is made

Using the criteria above, consider the following examples:

- Both pastry chefs and nurses use Numeracy skills to measure liquids. What is the difference? Which task has a higher complexity level? Why?
- Both story tellers and politicians use Oral Communication skills. What is the difference? Which task has a higher complexity level? Why?
- A personal support worker uses Document Use skills to read patient names and their requirements, and to fill in hospital admission forms. What is the difference? Which task has a higher complexity level? Why?

In the following sections on each Essential Skill, we focus on the complexity levels 1, 2 and 3 with examples. The skills of most learners in literacy programs will fall into these categories.

If you would like to have more in-depth information on the Essential Skills complexity levels, including levels 4 and 5, we encourage you to look at the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* on the Office for Literacy and Essential Skills website.

TASKS AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS

The assessment of the learner is based on the level of the tasks s/he is able to successfully complete in a given Essential Skill.

What is the difference between a task and a skill?

Cook-Ritchie, Geraci and Mazzulla in *Essential Skills for Literacy Practitioners: A Guide and Three Workshops* define tasks and their relationship to Essential Skills as follows: A task is first defined as something individuals are likely to use their skills to do outside the classroom, either at home, at work or in the community. In other words, a task is something a person does in real life not just in the classroom. Secondly, a task is an activity considered complete in itself, one that:

- uses a skill or skills
- describes what is being produced or acted upon
- includes a purpose

For example:

Skills	Tasks
Count up to 100	Count out money to pay for groceries. (This uses the skill to perform a task.)
Read	Read instructions on a medicine bottle. (This uses the skill to perform a task.)
Measure	Measure ingredients for a recipe. (This uses the skill to perform a task.)

Let's take "Count out money to pay for groceries" as an example. The skills used are Thinking and Numeracy. Payment is being produced. The purpose is to pay for groceries. This is a real life activity.

The skill of being able to "Count up to 100" is not a task as we have defined it, however, because although counting to 100 uses the skill of Numeracy, it is not used for a purpose and nothing is produced or acted upon. It is simply counting for counting's sake.

Coordinator tip

Coordinators may find it helpful to choose one or two Essential Skills previously identified by the learner and tutor, and focus assessment and subsequent learning activities on those two skills.

Tasks and complexity levels

Here are some examples of Reading Text tasks in the first three complexity levels:

Level 1

- Read instructions on a laundry detergent bottle
- Read a short email from a friend inviting you to a party

Level 2

- Read an article in the community newspaper to get information about an event
- Read a short memo from your boss about changes in schedules

Level 3

- Read newspapers and magazines to stay informed about world news
- Consult product manuals to find information on solving equipment problems

Thinking about tasks can help coordinators consider the skills individuals need and for what purpose. For meaningful learning experiences, learners need to be clear about what skills they want to develop and why they need these skills – how they are applying the skills in real life.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR ASSESSING ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Essential Skills can be assessed formally and informally by coordinators and through self-assessment by learners. There are several different tools available to help coordinators and learners assess Essential Skills.

Formal Essential Skills assessments

Formal assessments use performance-based assessment tools that align with the International Adult Literacy Survey 500-point scale. We recommend formal assessment tools in situations such as screening individuals for work or training. Many formal assessment tools require that assessors are trained and certified, and may have a cost associated with them. One of the more common formal assessment tools is TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills), which you can find at www.towes.com.

Informal Essential Skills assessments

Informal assessments measure the complexity levels of tasks a learner can perform within the Essential Skills five-point complexity level scale. Informal assessment tools include:

- *Readforward: A Series of Easy-to-Use Adult Reading Tests Referenced to IALS* by Audrey Gardner
- Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) website
- Measure Up website
- It's Essential website from the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks Essential Skills in the Workplace
- *Common Assessment of Essential Skills (CAES)*

- *CAMERA Communications and Math Employment Readiness*
- *Passport* from the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills

Informal Essential Skills assessments are very useful for coordinators and tutors. They can identify the complexity level an individual is working at so that appropriate learning activities can be developed. Remember that Essential Skills assessment measures the complexity levels of tasks. It does not measure the learner or the learner's intelligence.

The Ontario Skills Passport website is an accessible and comprehensive resource. This website is an excellent resource for learners, coordinators and tutors wanting more information on assessing specific Essential Skills. The OSP describes the nine Essential Skills along with complexity levels for each. To get started, click on Getting Started on the left side of the home page, and then view the OSP webcast. It will give you a complete overview of the site and how people are using it.

In particular, coordinators will find the OSP Check-In Tool a flexible and valuable resource for intake, referral and lesson-planning. The tool is designed to be used with learners to informally assess their Essential Skills and work habits, and to develop learning action plans accordingly.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment tools are tools that learners themselves can use to rate their own skill levels. Self-assessment helps learners explore their skill levels and gives them a gentle introduction to the Essential Skills framework.

The federal government's Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) has a *Literacy and Essential Skills Tools* DVD available that is included as part of this unit. The DVD has all the OLES tools and resources mentioned here, including resources for

- Self-assessment (and informal assessment): Essential Skills indicators and self-assessment sheets
- Learning: practise learning exercises and tip sheets
- Training supports: workplace training

Another resource that many organizations have found useful is the *ESPORT™* Essential Skills Portfolio website. This website helps learners do Essential Skills self-assessment, an interest inventory, learning plan development, occupational exploration, and Essential Skills portfolio and resume preparation. Learners can work independently or with a literacy organization. There is a fee for this resource; however, there are many other resources available for free on the site.

The Measure Up website and the Ontario Skills Passport website also have self-assessment tools. The Measure Up website focuses on Reading Text, Document Use and Numeracy skills as they relate to over 200 different occupations. The site includes self-assessment tests, practise exercises and activity ideas for learners and coordinators. The Ontario Skills Passport website provides self-assessment tests, easy to understand descriptions of the different complexity levels and associated tasks, and a comprehensive resource section.

Activity A

Introducing complexity levels in Essential Skills

Understanding how the complexity levels work in the Essential Skills framework is key to creating learning activities that meet a learner's needs. The Essential Skills profiles will help learners who have work-related goals identify the skills needed for a given occupation.

Small group work, discussion and use of handouts

Materials and equipment

Handout 13.7: *What are Complexity Levels in the Essential Skills?* (2 pages)

One Essential Skills Profile for each tutor (see Preparation, below)

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Preparation

Read the information about the Essential Skills profiles at www10.hrsdc.gc.ca/es/english/ES_Profiles.aspx.

Familiarize yourself with the way the profiles are organized.

Look through the profiles and choose some to use in the training. Select ones that are relevant to your community, and to your learners' goals and skill levels. (There are many, many possibilities, including bookkeepers, carpenters, cashiers, cleaners, food and beverage servers, taxicab drivers, visiting homemakers and housekeepers.) Select enough of them for each tutor to have a unique profile for a different occupation.

Print out the profiles you have chosen.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Explain the concept of complexity levels to the tutors.
 - Complexity levels are a rating tool for measuring Essential Skills tasks.
 - Most of the Essential Skills have complexity rating scales. These scales have four or five levels depending on the Essential Skill.
 - There is a wide range of complexity between each level, with level 1 being least complex (basic tasks) and levels 4 and 5 being most complex (advanced tasks).
 - Complexity levels are based on:
 - the complexity of the material
 - the complexity of the skill or knowledge needed to use the material
 - the context for using the material
 - the degree of risk involved if a mistake is made
2. Give each tutor one Essential Skills Profile. Walk through the organization of the profiles so that tutors become familiar with their format. For example, explain that the bracketed numbers, such as (2), after each job task represent the complexity level of that task.

3. Ask tutors to read through the profiles. You can ask them questions to help guide their reading, such as:
 - Does the particular occupation use all the Essential Skills?
 - Is the increase in complexity between the levels obvious?
 - Do you notice any difference in the language used to describe the tasks at various complexity levels?
4. Tell them they are now going to get a sense of how various occupations are similar and different for any given skill.
5. Ask the tutors to break into small groups. (If you are working with a relatively small group, you could do this as a whole.) Give each group some flip chart paper and markers. Ask each group to choose someone to take notes.
6. As a group, the tutors will have many different occupational profiles, but they will all refer to the same nine Essential Skills. Ask each small group (or the group as a whole) to choose one Essential Skill to focus on. For example, with four different occupations represented in a group, the tutors may choose to look at Oral Communication.
7. Explain to the tutors that:
 - They will be comparing and contrasting the words used to describe that particular Essential Skill at each complexity level in each occupation.
 - They will, for example, find words like *listen*, *share*, *interact*, *mentor*, *exchange information*, *discuss*, *comfort*, *provide direction*.
 - These words describe the skills needed at the various levels of complexity, and tutors are likely to find them repeated across occupations.
 - In each occupation the content will be different, but the skills will be the same. For example, different occupations may require listening to different things in different ways, but they will still require the skill of listening.
8. Ask the tutors to read aloud the examples listed in their profiles for the particular Essential Skill their group is focusing on, one complexity level at a time. Note: We only focus on the first three complexity levels in this unit because these are the levels at which most literacy learners are working. You may want to limit your discussion to those levels.
9. Ask tutors to write which skill is being discussed at the top of the paper. As the tutors read out the tasks, ask them to note the words used to describe the skills required at each complexity level. When words are repeated, they can just put a checkmark next to them so that their list becomes organized and repetitions are easy to see.
10. If there is time, the groups can choose another Essential Skill and do the same exercise.
11. Have each group post their list of words on the wall.
12. Lead a discussion on the difference in words across skills and across complexity levels.
 - What do the tutors notice?
 - Are there any surprises?
 - Can they see the skills building in complexity as they move from levels 1 to 3?
 - Does it become clear that learners need to develop level 1 skills before they can move to levels 2 or 3?
 - What are the implications of this for working with learners?
13. Distribute Handout 13.7 to tutors for their files.

Activity B

Practising informal Essential Skills assessment

This activity will familiarize tutors with some of the different resources available for informal and self assessment.

Use of handouts, pairs work, role play, reflection and discussion

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Handout 13.8: *Ontario Skills Passport: Check-in Assessment Tool for Reading Text* (2 pages)

Handout 13.9: *Reading Self-Assessment, Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Human Resources and Skill Development Canada* (2 pages)

Handout 13.10: *Learner Profiles*

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give tutors copies of all the handouts. Briefly review the two different assessment tools. Discuss how each is set up and how to fill in the answers.
2. Tutors work in pairs. Give each pair two sheets of flip chart paper and markers.
3. One of the tutors acts as a learner using one of the learner profiles and the other acts as a tutor. Choosing one of the assessment methods, assess the learner's needs.
4. Switch roles and use a different assessment method for the same learner profile.
5. Ask tutors to take notes on the flip chart sheets on their process.
6. Come together as a group to discuss the different assessment methods and the group's observations.
 - Which ones did they find more user-friendly?
 - Do the tools follow plain language guidelines? For example, are the tools easy to read, well written and set up in an uncluttered way?
 - Could learners do the assessment by themselves or would they need some assistance?
 - What are the differences between the tools?
 - Which tool would you use?
 - What, if anything, surprised you about the assessment tools?

Facilitation tip

This activity is recommended for tutors who have more experience.

Section 4

Reading Text

In the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles*, Reading Text refers to reading and understanding materials written in sentences and paragraphs. It generally involves reading notes, letters, memos, manuals, specifications, regulations, books, reports or journals.

We also use this skill when we read a text to scan for information, to skim for overall meaning, to critique or evaluate, and to integrate information from various sources.

Reading Text can include:

- Forms and labels if they contain at least a paragraph of text
- Print and non-print media, for example texts on computer screens and microfiche
- Paragraph-length text in charts, tables and graphs

Reading Text has a five-level complexity scale. The scale is determined by the type of text and the purposes for reading. The five levels are compatible with the scale used in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), except that level 4 in IALS has been broken down into levels 4 and 5 in the Essential Skills complexity scale.

We will only give examples of how the Essential Skill of Reading Text might be used for the first three levels of complexity, as most learners in literacy programs will be working at these levels.

Essential Skills help practitioners and learners see the connections between tasks that they do in a program and the tasks that they do at work, home or in the community.

*Essential Skills for Literacy Practitioners
A Guide and Three Workshops
Robyn Cook-Ritchie et al*

Concepts

- **Introducing the Essential Skill of Reading Text**
- **Reading tasks and complexity levels**
- **Identifying complexity levels in different texts**

Builds on

- **Reading**

Using the Essential Skill of Reading Text	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Read relatively short texts to locate a single piece of information.</p> <p>Follow simple written directions.</p>	<p>A homemaker finds a recipe to use for baking a cake without using flour and follows the directions.</p>	<p>A construction worker follows directions on a can of paint, making sure the paint is suitable for use in bathrooms.</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Read more complex texts to locate a single piece of information or read simpler texts to locate multiple pieces of information.</p> <p>Make low-level inferences.</p>	<p>Parents read their child's report card to understand the child's progress.</p>	<p>Security guards read security incident reports left by the preceding shift to get a picture of any looming problems.</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Choose and integrate information from various sources or from several parts of a single text.</p> <p>Make low-level inferences from multiple sources.</p> <p>Identify relevant and irrelevant information</p>	<p>Parents refer to books and manuals on parenting to gain information on how to deal with their teenager.</p>	<p>Branch managers may refer to several human resource manuals to locate and integrate information on topics such as pay scales and job descriptions.</p>

Descriptions and complexity levels of nine essential skills, Levels 1-3 and some examples, published in Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 1996 and 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012.

Activity A

Understanding Reading Text and complexity levels

This exercise will help tutors understand the different Reading Text complexity levels and introduce an activity that they can adapt for their learners.

Discussion, use of handouts, pairs work and reflection

Materials and equipment

Five copies of the local paper including the classifieds section

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Computers (if available)

Handout 13.11: *Reading Text Complexity Levels 1 to 3 with Examples*

Handout 13.12: *Instructions for Apartment Hunting Exercise*

Handout 13.13: *Four Family Scenarios*

Preparation

Copy Handouts 13.11 and 13.12.

Copy Handout 13.13 for your own use.

Cut up Handout 13.13 into the four family scenarios. (Each pair of tutors will receive one of the scenarios to work with. If there are more than 8 tutors, you will need to make an extra copy of the handout and cut out the scenarios you need. It won't matter if two groups have the same scenario.)

Set up three stations around the classroom using a table and chairs for each station, and have one station for each of the three complexity levels. The third station needs to include computers if you have enough available.

Summarize the three complexity levels for Reading Text on three sheets of flip chart paper, one level on each sheet of paper. Add the task you will want the tutors to perform at each station to the relevant flip chart sheet, as follows.

- Station One: Reading text complexity level 1
 - Description of level: Read short texts to locate a single piece of information and follow simple directions.
 - Task: Read the table of contents in the newspaper. Locate the classified section, and then locate and identify apartments in your budget range.
- Station Two: Reading text complexity level 2
 - Description of level: Read more complex texts to locate a single piece of information or read simpler texts to locate multiple pieces of information and make low-level inferences.
 - Task: Once you have identified apartments in your budget range, determine the requirements you have for an apartment (number of bedrooms, bathrooms, laundry, pets, etc.). Looking at the apartments in your price range, identify those that meet your requirements.
- Station Three: Reading text complexity level 3
 - Description of level: Integrate information from various sources or from several parts of a single text, make low-level inferences from multiple sources, and identify relevant and irrelevant information.

Reading Text:
both higher and lower
complexity levels

Other Essential Skills used

- Document Use
- Oral Communication
- Thinking
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

- Task A, using the newspaper: After you have identified the apartments that meet your requirements in terms of price, number of bedrooms, etc., decide which area of town you would like to live in. Identify three apartments that meet all of your criteria.
- Task B, using the newspaper and a computer: Using the Internet, search the website www.rentfaster.ca for homes that meet all of your criteria in terms of price, layout, district, etc. Choose the top three apartments using information from both the newspaper and the computer. (Skip Task B if you do not have a computer available for tutors to use.)

Hang the three sheets of flip chart paper up at the corresponding stations. Have a local newspaper available for each pair of tutors and, if it's available to you, a computer for Station Three.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Distribute Handout 13.11.
2. Introduce the Essential Skill of Reading Text and the first three complexity levels.
 - Stress again that the Essential Skills complexity levels measure the complexity of a **task**.
 - It is not the skill itself or the learner that is rated, but the required task and the skill needed to do the task.
 - If the learner is able to do a level 1 task as it is set out within the guidelines for level 1 complexity, the learner is working within that complexity level. For example, if a learner is able to read, understand and follow a simple recipe, he or she is working within a level 1 complexity for Reading Text. The next task would be to read more complex texts to locate a single piece of information and to make inferences.
 - Using a task-based approach is important when we begin to integrate Essential Skills within lesson plans that reflect real life activities.
 - It is helpful to mention that Reading Text complexity levels are also affected by context and the degree of risk involved if the information is misunderstood. For example, medical information might be written in plain language at a lower complexity level so that it would usually be understood by the reader. If there is a degree of risk involved in getting the information wrong (as with understanding a prescription), however, the complexity level bumps up.
3. Ask tutors to pair up.
4. Tell tutors that they will be asked to do three tasks at increasing levels of complexity. Each pair of tutors will use a copy of the local paper and/or a computer to complete the reading tasks.
5. Give each pair of tutors Handout 13.12 and a family scenario from the cut-up Handout 13.13.
6. Review the family scenarios and make sure the tutors understand the requirements each family has. Give them time to read over their scenarios, talk about them and ask questions. If there are more than four pairs, all those with the same scenario could discuss it and break into pairs for the next step.
7. Ask the pairs of tutors to proceed from station to station performing the tasks as described on the flip chart sheets you prepared.
8. Bring the group together and ask for observations.
 - How do they identify the three complexity levels for Reading Text?
 - Can they think of similar exercises at progressively higher levels of complexity that relate to their learners' lives?

Tutor tip

Ask learners to bring in reading from their lives: children's report cards, instruction manuals, memos from school or work, newspapers, books, brochures. Use these materials to create reading lessons for learners.

Activity B

Identifying complexity levels in different texts

Tutors will practise identifying complexity levels in the different reading materials they typically use at home or in leisure activities.

Discussion, pairs work, use of handouts and reflection

Materials and equipment

Samples of reading materials found at home or used in leisure activities. As we suggest, ask tutors to bring in some reading materials from their own lives. Since you don't know what the tutors will bring in, provide examples of materials at varying complexity levels, such as newspapers, magazines, notes from school, letters, memos, how-to instructions, cookbooks, instructions on a box of pasta or other food, or prescription information from a pharmacy. Set aside examples of each complexity level. The following list will give you some ideas:

- Level 1: Simple recipes, simple instructions on how to put something together, a short note to the teacher, table of contents from a book or newspaper
- Level 2: Memos from school or work, flyers advertising an event, report cards, prescription information that is relatively simple but requires you to locate dosage and frequency
- Level 3: Car operator's manual, parenting magazines, books, feature articles in newspaper on current events

Flip chart sheets prepared for Activity A summarizing the complexity levels

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Handout 13.11: *Reading Test Complexity Levels 1 to 3 and Examples*

Handout 13.14: *How to Set Up the Microsoft Office Word 2003 Readability Tool*

Handout 13.15: *How to Set Up the Microsoft Word 2007 Readability Tool*

Preparation

Review the complexity levels for Reading Text on Handout 13.11.

Use the flip chart sheets with the summaries of reading complexity levels and the examples from previous exercise.

Copy Handouts 13.14 and 13.15.

Facilitation tip

Prior to this activity ask tutors to bring reading materials from home and, if they are working with learners, ask them to bring materials they are using with the learners.

Coordinator tips

The DVD from the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills that is included with this unit has a tip sheet for Reading Text. You may want to make copies for your tutors for future use.

If there is interest, you may want to organize or facilitate a plain language workshop.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Review the Essential Skill of Reading Text using Handout 13.11 as a guide.
2. Present the samples of text with varying complexity levels you have gathered. Discuss how you determined the complexity levels using Handout 13.11.
3. Ask tutors to pair up. Ask each pair to examine several samples of reading materials, either ones they each brought in or ones that you provided. Ask them to rate the complexity levels using Handout 13.11 and explain their reasoning.
4. Come together as a group and have each pair present their findings. Discuss each of the texts and why they chose the complexity level they did. Tape the sample documents on the flip chart sheets of the corresponding complexity level. What types of texts are tutors using with their learners? What complexity levels?
5. After the discussion, invite everyone to walk around and look at the other examples.
6. Come together as a group again. Ask for observations and answer any questions.
7. Distribute Handouts 13.14 and 13.15. Ask tutors if they are familiar with readability tools. Do they have them set up on their computers?
8. The readability tool helps check the use of language, sentence length and structure in reading materials. It can therefore help tutors choose reading materials that are at appropriate levels for their learners. This is useful because plain language is an important component of clear communication. Plain language guidelines suggest:
 - Keeping readability at a grade four to six level for the general public
 - Using smaller words
 - Having no more than four sentences per paragraph
 - Using short sentences with a maximum of 15 to 20 words per sentence

Effective adult educators:

- *Involve learners in planning and implementing learning activities*
- *Draw upon learners' experiences as a resource*
- *Cultivate self-direction in learners*
- *Create a climate that encourages and supports learning*
- *Foster a spirit of collaboration in the learning setting*
- *Use small groups*

*Learner Centered Intake and Assessment Process
for Literacy Programs in Saskatchewan Manual*

Section 5

Document Use

The *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* defines Document Use as accessing information in which words, numbers, icons and other visual characteristics such as line, colour and shape are given meaning by their spatial arrangement.

Applications of Document Use include reading, interpreting, completing or producing graphs, lists, tables, maps, drawings, signs, labels, blueprints and non-print media such as computer screens, clocks and flags.

Reading a document that includes at least one paragraph of text is also classified as Reading Text. If completing the document requires the entry of words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs, it is also classified as Writing. Lastly, if completing a document requires mathematical calculations, as would, for example, a personal income tax form, it is also classified as Numeracy.

By now it is becoming clear that many tasks use a combination of Essential Skills. In fact, an Essential Skill is rarely used in isolation; several skills are used together to complete most tasks. Document Use illustrates this concept beautifully.

We use documents everywhere during a regular day: at home, at school, at work and in our communities. We make family schedules to keep track of appointments and activities in our lives. Most of us have followed a map to find the best route to our destination or filled out a registration form. Bus schedules, medical forms at the doctor's office, report cards and permission slips from school, personnel forms, memos and safety manuals at work – all these are examples of the documents in our lives.

The *MythBuster!* column in the Ontario Literacy Coalition's 2009 *Essentially Yours* bulletin #2 reports that Essential Skills research has found Canadian workers spend more time interpreting documents than they do reading text. If you think about the documents you see between the time you get up in the morning and the time you get to work, you'll see how accurate the research is. You might check your calendar for scheduled meetings, sign your daughter's report card, scan the sales flyer as you have breakfast, make a to-do list for evening chores and read a detour sign as you drive to work. The skill of navigating documents and extracting the information we need is one we use every day.

Having good reading skills is simply not enough to ensure good Document Use skills. Document Use is in a category of its own for many reasons. It requires different skills to take information from the various forms of documents we encounter on a regular basis and make sense of it. As literacy coordinators, we need to make sure learners have many opportunities to practise their Document Use skills on a variety of documents, both ones they are already familiar with and others that they might well encounter.

Concepts

- Introducing the Essential Skill of Document Use
- Complexity levels in Document Use
- Document Use in our everyday lives
- Document Use is more than just reading – understanding the steps involved
- Identifying the common elements of forms

Builds on

- Reading
- Writing
- Numeracy

Complexity levels in Document Use

The levels of the Document Use complexity scale are compatible with those used in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), with IALS level 4 being broken down into levels 4 and 5 for the Essential Skills complexity scale. Again, we only focus on the first three levels of complexity as the skills of most learners in literacy programs fall within these levels.

The Document Use complexity scale applies to the interpretation of documents and the entry of information into documents.

The different levels of complexity are based on three dimensions of Document Use:

1. The structure of the document, number of documents and type of document
2. The information search and information entry that needs to take place to complete the task
3. The prior knowledge and thinking process required to complete the task

Each level of the scale is defined referring to all three dimensions. A document may be more difficult in one dimension and less in another. The complexity rating assigned to the task is the summary of the complexity ratings of the three dimensions.

Let's look at an example. You have a two-page medical form that asks for your complete medical history including dates for surgeries, diseases, allergies and current medications.

1. The structure of the document is two pages with lists to check off and blanks to fill in. The first dimension (structure of document, number of documents and type of document) may have a complexity level 2.
2. The second dimension involves information search and information entry that needs to take place to complete the task. Do you have the information you need to complete the information entry and do you understand the questions? Let's say you have the information with you in your medical records file and the questions are clearly written. If that's the case, we will say that this dimension has a complexity level of 2.
3. Lastly, what prior knowledge and thinking is required to complete the task? This third dimension may include remembering past history of diseases, medication dosages and dates of diagnostic tests. Depending on your memory and the records you keep, this may be more complex. We assign it a complexity level of 3. The overall complexity level of filling in this medical form is between 2 and 3. Given that there is some risk to your life involved in getting the information wrong, the complexity level bumps up to 3.

To keep things simple, the following table illustrates only the first dimension of Document Use – the structure of the document, number of documents and type of document – in the first three complexity levels.

Using the Essential Skill of Document Use	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Document is very simple. Brief text with simple structure: simple signs, labels, lists.</p> <p>One document and one document type.</p>	<p>Driving students use their memory of road signs and interpret their meanings during a driving test.</p>	<p>Bylaw enforcement officers read lists of subpoenas and court dates.</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Document is simple. Multiple pieces of information: simple tables.</p> <p>One document or multiple documents of the same type.</p>	<p>Students scan their course time-table to locate room numbers and teachers' names.</p> <p>Parents interpret and fill out several medical forms for their child prior to surgery.</p>	<p>Dry cleaner workers read and interpret colour codes to determine the correct amount of chemical to use to remove a stain.</p> <p>A cashier uses a currency chart to calculate foreign cash deposits.</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Document is somewhat complex. Multiple pieces of information are organized in sections with sub-headings: complex tables.</p> <p>Or may be multiple simple documents that include more than one document type: a pie chart and bar graph.</p> <p>May be specialized document types: Pareto charts, isometric drawings, Gantt charts.</p>	<p>Kayakers read tide tables to determine whether the tide is ebbing or rising and to determine the depth of tide waters at a particular time.</p> <p>Tourists locate their departure time on the departures and arrivals screen at the airport.</p>	<p>Motor vehicle inspectors refer to graphs to compare the number of rejects from week to week.</p> <p>Computer operators read and interpret the trouble-shooting chart and diagnostic table in their computer manuals.</p>

Descriptions and complexity levels of nine essential skills, Levels 1-3 and some examples, published in Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 1996 and 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012.

In addition to the complexity of the text, when working with a learner you need to consider the complexity of the task. Robyn Cook-Ritchie et al explain in *Essential Skills for Literacy Practitioners* that to understand the complexity of a Document Use task, you can ask yourself these questions:

- What does the task require the document user to do?
- How long is the document? What is the form of the document?
- How familiar is the content and context?
- Is the document user required to draw on background knowledge?

Activity A

Document Use in our everyday lives

The following activity will help tutors understand how common Document Use is in our everyday lives. In many jobs, people read documents more frequently than they read text alone.

Discussion, use of handout, pairs work and reflection

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Handout 13.16: *Document Use Complexity Levels 1 to 3 and Examples*

Preparation

In the week prior to this activity, collect as many samples of documents as possible and ask tutors to collect documents from their daily lives as well. Documents include forms, graphs, lists, tables, maps, drawings, signs, labels, blueprints and non-print media such as computer screens, clocks and flags. (You could give tutors a copy of Handout 13.16 to guide their choices.)

Set up a table with these document samples displayed.

Copy handout.

Prepare a flip chart sheet with the following:

To understand the complexity of a Document Use task, you can ask yourself these questions:

- What does the task require the document user to do?
- How long is the document? In what form is the document?
- How familiar is the content and context?
- Is the document user required to draw on background knowledge?

Prepare two small prizes for the winners of the activity.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Discuss the different kinds of Document Use required by the collected samples you have displayed on the table. Some discussion points include:
 - Notice the information categories needed in each document. For example, a Tylenol bottle will list ingredients and give directions for use.
 - Notice any specialized symbols, language and abbreviations. For example, a map will have symbols for roads, hospitals and campgrounds.
 - Notice the design and information types. For example, Ikea furniture has assembly instructions with text and diagrams.
 - Notice the entry modes for forms. For example, simple forms may require checking off the responses.
2. Discuss the complexity levels of Document Use using the questions on the flip chart sheet. Use one of the documents you have as an example to illustrate and stimulate discussion.
3. Distribute Handout 13.16
4. Ask tutors to pair up and discuss their day prior to coming into the workshop. Give each pair of tutors a flip chart sheet and ask them to identify examples of Document Use during their day. You could make this into a contest to see who comes up with the most examples within a five minute time period and award a small prize to the winning pair.

Tutor tip

Tutors can ask their learners to bring in examples of the documents they encounter in their daily lives, and can practise working on Essential Skills using those authentic documents.

5. Come together as a group, and ask the pairs to post their flip chart sheets and share their findings.
6. Discuss the different documents they encountered and consider the following questions:
 - What type of documents might their learners encounter during their day?
 - What similarities do the documents have?
 - How complex are they? How can you tell?
 - How is Document Use different from Reading Text? While having good reading skills helps in Document Use, it is not enough. Document Use requires different skills to allow the user to interpret, find and enter information. For example, you need very different skills to read a book and interpret a map.
 - What skills should tutors teach their learners so they can effectively use documents? Tutors could brainstorm here. Ideas include information search skills, information entry skills and new vocabulary found in documents learners use.

Activity B

Document Use is more than just reading – Understanding the steps involved

Option 1 Discussion, pairs work, use of handout and group work

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a lower skill level. This exercise is designed to help tutors understand the many steps involved in Document Use: entering information, Reading Text, Numeracy, extracting and interpreting information. Once learners develop a way to read and interpret documents, they can use these skills with all documents.

Materials and equipment

Handout 13.17: *Best Buy Furniture – Work Schedule*

Flip chart paper and markers

Tape

Preparation

Copy handout.

Write out the discussion questions from the handout on flip chart sheets: one sheet for questions 1 to 4, a second sheet for questions 5 to 9:

1. What kind of workplace is this?
2. How much is the hourly wage here?
3. How long is this schedule for?
4. Who are the workers here?
5. Who worked the most hours?
6. Who worked the least hours?
7. Who worked full-time hours?
8. Who worked part-time hours?
9. Who worked overtime hours? How many extra hours?

Document Use:
lower complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Thinking
- Continuous Learning

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Distribute Handout 13.17. Talk about work schedules in general, and the importance of tracking your hours and pay. Ask if anyone has ever had a mistake made with their pay in past jobs.
2. Ask the first four questions on the flip chart sheet/handout and discuss.
 - How did they find this information?
 - Look at the way the document is organized. Does this make it easy to find the information?
 - What are the steps you take to finding information on this document? Identify the steps on a flip chart sheet.
3. Ask tutors to pair up and answer questions 5 to 9. Ask them to track the steps they took to answer the questions. What Essential Skills did they use?
4. When they are done, come back together as a group and review the answers.
5. Ask the group to identify the steps they used to come up with the answers and write these on a blank flip chart sheet. Steps will include searching, interpreting, adding, entering information, extracting information and multiplying.
6. Debrief:
 - Document Use skills serve us in both our personal and professional lives.
 - The more practice learners have in working with documents and forms, the more skilled they become.
 - Again, encourage tutors to ask learners to bring in forms, charts and other samples of documents they encounter.
 - Employment applications, medical forms, children's report cards and vehicle registration forms are just some examples of Document Use in our daily lives.
 - Newspapers are a great source for charts.

McKenzie, L. (2010). *Work schedule*. Essential Skills Activities Teacher download and feedback site. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Winnipeg School Division, Adult English as an Additional Language Program. www.tutela.ca. Adapted and used with permission.

Option 2 Discussion, use of handouts and pairs work

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a higher skill level. This activity will give tutors a framework for working with forms with their learners.

Materials and equipment

Handout 13.18: *Guidelines for Forms and Sample Forms* (2 pages)

Handout 13.19: *Tips for Teaching Document Use* (2 pages)

A variety of different forms, enough for each pair of tutors to have at least two
Flip chart paper and markers

Preparation

In the week prior to the activity, collect examples of different forms. Ask tutors and learners to bring in forms they encounter in their lives.

Choose several of the more difficult forms and make copies for each tutor.

Document Use:
higher complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Use of Memory
- Thinking
- Numeracy

CREATING LEARNING
PARTNERS

LITERACY ALBERTA

More difficult forms tend to:

- Have more organizing categories: for example, an employment application has categories for personal, work history, education, references.
- Use specialized symbols or language: for example, credit card applications use financial terms.
- Include varied design: for example, medical forms commonly use multi-column lists.
- Use a number of different entry modes: for example, personnel forms may use check boxes, numbers, codes and text as entry modes.
- Need information from different sources: for example, a passport application requires information from other people or other documents.
- Involves a high level of use: for example, the short form census required filling out a shorter section while the long form census required filling out and checking the whole form.
- Have more steps to get the answer: for example, income tax forms require entry, calculation and re-entry to get a result.

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce the activity by saying that forms are one of the most common documents that we encounter.
2. Ask tutors for examples of forms. Write these on a flip chart sheet. Medical forms, program registration forms, application forms, school forms, waiver forms, sports registration forms and banking forms are only a few examples.
3. Distribute Handout 13.18.
4. Ask tutors to examine the sample forms. What do they observe? There are similarities in how a form is organized even if it is written in an unknown language. Tutors can help learners develop a way to look at forms, breaking them down into various parts, and learning how to recognize headings and organization.
5. Review the guidelines to filling out forms on Handout 13.18. Ask tutors if they have ideas to add to the guidelines. Note their ideas on a flip chart sheet.
6. Distribute Handout 13.19 and review it.
7. Again, ask the tutors if they have ideas or tips to add.
8. Ask the tutors to pair up and give each pair two forms to work with as well as two sheets of flip chart paper. Using the guidelines and tips, ask them to identify the different parts of the forms. Ask them to track the different steps and Essential Skills they are using as they go through the forms. They will use a sheet of flip chart paper for each form.
9. Come together as a group and ask for volunteers from each pair to present their findings.
10. Ask the tutors how they can adapt this activity to use with their learners.

Coordinator tips

Develop a collection of the many types of forms that your tutors and learners encounter in life and work. Using the form analysis framework discussed, learners can practise filling out the many different forms. Refer to the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills DVD included with this unit for additional tips on teaching Document Use.

Section 6

Writing

The *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* defines Writing as the ability to get an idea across by using words, numbers and symbols. It includes writing continuous text and writing in documents such as forms. It also includes non-paper-based writing such as typing using a computer.

We write text to organize or record information, to inform or persuade, and to request information or justify a request. We also write to analyze or compare. Writing includes informal and formal tasks such as writing notes and creating reports.

Writing tasks are rated on a five-level scale of complexity. The complexity of the writing is determined by the length and purpose, style and structure, and content of the writing. For our purposes, we only focus on the first three levels of complexity as the skills of most learners in literacy programs fall within these levels.

As Robyn Cook-Ritchie and her colleagues point out in *Essential Skills for Literacy Practitioners*, you can ask yourself these questions when you examine the complexity of a Writing task:

- What task does the writer want to do with his writing?
- How long is the written text?
- Does the writing follow a formal format or is it informal?
- How familiar is the written content and the context?

Concepts

- **Introducing the Essential Skill of Writing**
- **Writing complexity levels and examples**
- **Writing a letter to inform or persuade**
- **Writing for work**

Builds on

- **Writing**

The following are examples for Writing at complexity levels 1 to 3:

Using the Essential Skill of Writing	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Writing that is less than a paragraph, intended to organize, remind or inform.</p> <p>Writing content is concrete, day-to-day, dealing with matters of fairly immediate concern.</p>	<p>Parents write a brief note to the teacher about their child missing class.</p>	<p>Workers write short telephone messages for their colleagues.</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Brief text that is a paragraph or longer, intended to serve a variety of purposes.</p> <p>Content of writing is routine, with little variation from one instance to the next.</p>	<p>People write letters to their friends inviting them to come for a visit.</p>	<p>Secretaries send out memos to employees regarding upcoming staff meetings.</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Either longer or shorter pieces of writing intended to inform, explain, request information, express opinions or give directions.</p> <p>Writing task has an established format, such as a contract, lease, financial report or job description.</p> <p>Writing format may call for structural elements such as headings, a table of contents, footnotes, etc.</p> <p>The content of the writing may be extensive, but it is readily available from established sources.</p>	<p>People write letters to the editor of their daily newspaper to express their disagreement with recent political decisions.</p> <p>A landlord prepares a lease to have his new tenant sign using an old copy of a lease.</p> <p>A student writes an essay for a course in university.</p> <p>For its 50th anniversary, a community association prepares a historical presentation of the community based on archived research done over the past 50 years.</p>	<p>The bank writes and sends brochures to customers informing them of new customer services.</p> <p>A real estate agent prepares a contract for providing services to his customer.</p> <p>A salesperson writes a sales report making recommendations for future purchases.</p> <p>A writer/researcher prepares a manuscript on the nine Essential Skills. The content is extensive, but there is much information available on the topic from the Internet and other sources.</p>

Descriptions and complexity levels of nine essential skills, Levels 1-3 and some examples, published in Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 1996 and 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012.

Activity A

Writing for different purposes

Writing:
lower complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Thinking
- Computer Use
- Oral Communication
- Continuous Learning

Option 1 Use of handouts, writing, reflection and discussion

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a lower skill level. This activity gives tutors an example of a Writing activity at a lower skill level that they could adapt and use with their learners.

Materials and equipment

Samples of different types of letters: between friends, informative, persuasive, complaint, formal business, fund-raising, etc.

Computers (if you have enough for everyone)

Flip chart paper and markers

Handout 13.20: *Writing Complexity Levels 1 to 3 and Examples*

Handout 13.21: *Writing a Friendly Letter to Inform and Persuade*

Preparation

Collect samples of different types of letters. Make sure you have examples of the first three complexity levels. Use Handout 13.20 to guide you. Some examples could include: level 1: notes to the teacher, short notes to friends, reminders to do things, level 2: Longer letters to friends, letters from advertisers regarding their products, office memos, level 3: Longer letters to the editor, letters from the bank regarding changes in services. Make enough copies of each example for each participant.

Copy handouts.

Use Handout 13.21 to guide you in preparing flip chart sheets with the example that demonstrates the format, punctuation and tone of a friendly letter.

Review Handout 13.20 and put summaries on flip chart sheets.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Distribute Handout 13.20.
2. Review the handout and discuss the examples.
3. Ask tutors to examine the samples of letters and discuss the differences between a letter at level 1 to 2 and a letter at level 3. How are they different in purpose, form, tone, vocabulary and content? Can tutors think of other differences?
4. Ask tutors about the learners they are working with. What sorts of letters might they write?
5. Using the flip chart sheets, lead a discussion about the different purposes for writing letters and the different audiences that read them.
 - What kinds of letters have the tutors written? How about the learners?
 - What is the difference between writing letters on the computer or in longhand?
 - Do learners use computers to write letters?

6. Discuss the format of a friendly, informal letter. (Refer to the flip chart sheet you have made summarizing Handout 13.21.)
 - How does it differ from a formal letter? Formal letters have a stricter format and a more business-like tone.
 - Using the examples of letters you have photocopied, ask tutors to identify which are formal and which are informal letters.
 - How does the formality of the letter affect the complexity level of the Writing task? Formal letters tend to have a higher complexity level.
7. Distribute Handout 13.21 and ask tutors to compose a letter on the computer (if there are enough computers). Otherwise, tutors may hand-write their letters.
8. Ask volunteers to read their letters aloud.
 - Ask tutors if they are convinced by any of the letters.
 - Why? What convinced them? (This would highlight the Thinking skills used in Writing.)
9. Ask for comments and observations.
 - What kind of letters do their learners write?
 - Why did we do this exercise? Why is it important to be able to write letters of different types?
 - What other Essential Skills did we use?
 - How can we adapt this exercise to have a higher level of difficulty? For example, we could write a letter of complaint to a store, a letter to the editor about an issue the learner feels strongly about, a letter to a community newsletter about an issue the learner is interested in, a cover letter for a resume or a letter to a child's teacher explaining an extended absence.
 - Refer to the letter samples.

Ward, M. (n.d.). *Writing a friendly letter*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Winnipeg School Division Adult English as an Additional Language Program. www.tutela.ca. Adapted and used with permission.

Writing:
higher complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Thinking
- Continuous Learning

Facilitation tip

Refer to the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills DVD included with this unit for the tip sheet on teaching Writing. You could make copies for the tutors to keep in their binders.

Option 2 Reflection, writing, group discussion and use of handout

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a higher skill level. In this Writing task, tutors will practise writing a detailed product description for a new product outlining the characteristics for the product and making recommendations to their manager about buying the product.

Materials and equipment

An interesting or unusual assortment of objects from around the house, office and community (e.g. a Swiss army knife, different kitchen utensils, art, automotive parts)

Flip chart paper and markers

Handout 13.20: *Writing Complexity Levels 1 to 3 and Examples*

Pens and paper

Preparation

Place the objects you have gathered on a table.

Review Handout 13.20 and put summaries on flip chart sheets.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Review Essential Skills Writing complexity level 3 and what it includes using the flip chart sheet summary of Handout 13.20.
2. Ask tutors to give examples of level 3 Writing tasks from their lives. What are examples of possible level 3 Writing tasks in learners' lives?
3. Ask tutors to pair up and have each pair select an item from the table.
4. Tell tutors they are to imagine that they are working for a company as a buyer. They have to write a submission to their manager outlining the characteristics of the item they have selected. They need to include recommendations and reasons for buying or not buying the item in question. When they write their submission, they must bear in mind the level 3 Writing requirements and include as many as possible within their report. They will have 30 minutes to complete the task.
5. Ask each pair of tutors to present their submission.
6. Review the requirements of level 3 Writing found in the chart on Handout 13.20.
7. Ask if any of their learners would be writing at this level, writing things like job specifications, work orders, instructions for cooking a three-course meal, letters to the editor, letters of complaint, car accident reports or articles for community newsletters.
8. How could tutors make writing lessons relevant to the learners' lives?

Section 7

Numeracy

The *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* defines Numeracy as the ability to use and understand numbers, and the requirement to think in quantitative terms.

Numeracy has two rating scales: numerical calculation and numerical estimation.

Numerical calculation

Numerical calculation includes:

- Money math – handling cash, preparing bills or making payments
- Scheduling, budgeting and accounting math – managing time and money as resources; planning and monitoring their use; assessing best value; reducing waste
- Measurement and calculation math – measuring and describing the physical world
- Data analysis math – analyzing numerical data

Numerical calculation has five complexity levels based on “operations required” and “operations translated.”

“Operations required” refers to the actual math operation used, such as addition or subtraction. It covers the number of different operations used, the number of steps of calculation and the difficulty of the operations used.

“Operations translated” refers to the process of turning the problem into a set of operations so that math can be applied to get the answer. For example, a waiter adding up a bill does not have to do much translation; the task only requires one operation and it's obvious what one it should be. A homemaker uses more translation, however, to determine the household budget. She must think through and set up the problem before doing the math.

It is important to note that there is a difference between simply using numbers, as you do when you record a number on a chart, and understanding the underlying concepts of a task using numbers, as you must do when making a calculation.

In *Essential Skills for Literacy Practitioners*, Robin Cook-Ritchie et al suggest that to understand the complexity of a Numeracy task, you can ask yourself:

- How many operations does the task require?
- How complex are the required operations?
- How many steps of calculation are required?

As in previous sections, we will focus on complexity levels 1 to 3 for numerical calculation. Most learners in literacy programs work within these levels.

Concepts

- Introducing the Essential Skill of Numeracy
- Complexity levels and examples
- Practising Numeracy skills
- Calculating your supper budget

Builds on

- Numeracy

This table gives examples of money math calculation skills.

Using the Essential Skill of Numeracy	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Only the simplest operations are required and the operations to be used are clearly specified.</p> <p>Only one type of mathematical operation is used in a task.</p>	<p>Homemakers calculate the total for simple bills.</p>	<p>Store clerks enter amounts on cash registers and count back the appropriate change to customers.</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Only relatively simple operations are required. The specific operations to be performed may not be clearly specified.</p> <p>Tasks involve one or two types of mathematical operation.</p> <p>Few steps of calculation are required.</p>	<p>Shoppers calculate the price of an item that is on sale by starting with the regular price and subtracting a specific percentage for a discount.</p>	<p>A waiter calculates the additional 15% gratuity for a large group of diners.</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Tasks may require a combination of operations or multiple applications of a single operation.</p> <p>Several steps of calculation are required.</p>	<p>People calculate deductions on their personal income tax forms.</p>	<p>Accounting clerks prepare pay cheques using rates of pay, deduction schedules, bonus calculations, etc.</p>

Descriptions and complexity levels of nine essential skills, Levels 1-3 and some examples, published in Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 1996 and 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012.

Numerical estimation

This is the second component of Numeracy. Numerical estimation has a four-level complexity scale based on five dimensions:

- Whether there is a set procedure
- The number of factors comprising the item being estimated
- The amount of information available
- The consequence of error
- The degree of precision required

Again, for our purposes, we only focus on the first three levels of complexity as the skills of most learners in literacy programs fall within these levels.

The following table shows examples of numerical estimation in levels 1 to 3 in the first dimension, that is, where there is a set procedure:

Dimension 1: Whether there is a set procedure	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
<p>Level 1</p> <p>There is a formula. It identifies the variables and how they are combined.</p>	<p>Homemakers estimate the amount of laundry detergent needed for different loads.</p>	<p>Dental assistants estimate the number of amalgam capsules required for a particular cavity. There is a set procedure and minimum precision is required.</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>There is a formula but it does not incorporate all of the variables.</p>	<p>A student taking the bus to school estimates the approximate time it will take him to get there using the bus schedule. His time may be affected by traffic, accidents or weather conditions.</p>	<p>Taxi-drivers estimate the costs of fares by considering distances, traffic and rates they charge.</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>There is no formula, but an approach has been developed, possibly by having had to do the task repeatedly.</p>	<p>The cook in a large family assembles and bakes a traditional dish without using a recipe because she has been making it for years.</p>	<p>A carpenter estimates the amount of time and money it will take him to build a 12' x 12' deck based on his previous experience, factoring in design considerations.</p>

Descriptions and complexity levels of nine essential skills, Levels 1-3 and some examples, published in Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 1996 and 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012.

We need to keep in mind that Numeracy is more than just math. It includes anything that requires numbers or thinking in quantitative terms. It includes mathematical foundations such as using integers, fractions, decimals, percents, rational numbers, equations, formulae and measuring conversions, areas, volume and statistics. The use and knowledge of trigonometry and geometry are also part of Numeracy.

On the Ontario Skills Passport website, you can find easy to use, accessible information on all the different types and levels of Numeracy, including using money; scheduling or budgeting and accounting; measurement and calculation; and data analysis and numerical estimation.

Activity A

Practising Numeracy skills

Numeracy:

lower complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Oral Communication
- Document Use
- Thinking
- Continuous Learning

Option 1 Pairs work, use of handouts and group discussion

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a lower skill level. This activity will help tutors gain a familiarity with Numeracy tasks and complexity levels.

Materials and equipment

Handout 13.22: *Numeracy Complexity Levels 1 to 3 and Examples: Numerical Calculation*

Handout 13.23: *Numeracy Task Examples*

Handout 13.24: *Camping Worksheet*

Flip chart paper and markers

Preparation

Copy handouts.

Using Handout 13.22 as a reference, summarize the Numeracy complexity levels and examples on flip chart sheets.

Transfer the Numeracy task examples from Handout 13.23 to flip chart sheets.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Distribute Handout 13.22.
2. Using the flip chart sheets, discuss Numeracy and the first three complexity levels with examples.
3. Ask tutors if they can give other examples of Numeracy tasks for each level. Write these on the flip chart sheets also.
4. Review the Numeracy tasks one by one, using the flip chart sheets you made based on Handout 13.23, and asking the questions. After the discussion, distribute Handout 13.23 for tutors' binders. Ask the tutors how they could use these kinds of activities with their learners. What are some examples of Numeracy tasks that learners might do?
5. Explain that the purpose of this lower complexity level exercise is to become conscious of the process and individual steps required to get to the answer when working in Numeracy. Explain how this process helps tutors design and teach Numeracy skills to learners. See Section 13 in this unit for more information about tracking and writing the steps to an answer.
6. Distribute Handout 13.24 to each tutor. Ask tutors to pair up and work together. The task is to calculate a budget for a two-day camping trip. Ask tutors to track the steps they take to get to the answer and the Essential Skills they use.

7. Debrief:

- Ask tutors to identify the steps they took to do the calculations. Write these on a flip chart sheet.
- What Essential Skills did they use? Write these on a separate flip chart sheet.
- These are simple calculations. Which parts of the calculations took longer?
- If a learner had problems with multiplication, how could you practise?
- What did the tutors do when they discovered that their budget was not sufficient? If it doesn't come up, point out that they also used the Essential Skills of Thinking and Working with Others in this process.

8. Discuss other tutoring ideas for practising simple math calculations, for example:

- Ask learners to bring in their gas, electricity and phone bills for the past month. You can work together reading the bills and finding the amount paid per month (using the Essential Skills of Numeracy, Document Use and Working with Others). The learner can add up the three bills and get a total for the month, which raises the complexity level.
- Learners could also save their grocery receipts for a week and calculate how much they spent on groceries during that period. You could examine the receipts and add more activities by calculating how much was spent on milk, eggs or other identified groups. The more complicated the calculations, the higher the complexity level of the task.
- What other ideas do tutors have? Record these on a flip chart sheet and send them out later to tutors.

Campbell, L. (2009). *Money math: Everyday math skills*. Yellowknife, Northwest Territories: Northwest Territories Literacy Council. www.nwt.literacy.ca/resources/adultlit/everyday_math/money_math_wrkbk.pdf. Adapted and used with permission.

Numeracy:
higher complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

Option 2 Use of handouts, pairs work and group discussion

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a higher skill level. This Numeracy activity gives tutors an opportunity to notice the different tasks and the Essential Skills they use when choosing food from a menu, adding up the cost and calculating a 15% tip so that they can do a similar activity with their learners.

Materials and equipment

Handout 13.22: *Numeracy Complexity Levels 1 to 3 and Examples: Numerical Calculation*

Handout 13.25: *Vietnamese Restaurant Menu* (3 pages)

Flip chart paper and markers

Calculators (one per pair of tutors – ask tutors to bring them from home)

Preparation

Ask tutors to bring calculators from home.

Copy Handout 13.25.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Review the components of Numeracy complexity level 3 on Handout 13.22.
2. Ask tutors if anyone is working with a learner at this level, and if so, ask them to share their experience for the benefit of the other tutors.
3. Give each tutor Handout 13.25 and two sheets of flip chart paper.
4. Ask them to pair up and pretend they are at the Vietnamese restaurant.
 - They have \$20.00 each to spend on supper, including tip.
 - Ask tutors to write out their orders with prices, add up the total and calculate a 15% tip.
 - They may order together or as singles. Ask them to track the steps they take and the Essential Skills they use on the flip chart sheets.
5. Debrief:
 - After they sat down in the restaurant, what were the steps they took to decide what to order for supper so that they stuck to their budget?
 - Write the steps down on a flip chart sheet.
 - What Essential Skills did they use from the moment they sat down in the restaurant? These might include Numeracy, Thinking, Working with Others, Document Use and Reading Text.
 - What specific Numeracy tasks were necessary to come up with the total for their bill?
6. How could this activity be adjusted for learners with lower skill levels?
7. Brainstorm other Numeracy activities tutors could do with their learners using real life activities.
8. Generate a list on a flip chart sheet which you can type up later and send out to tutors.

Section 8

Oral Communication

The *Readers' Guide to Essential Skill Profiles* defines Oral Communication as the ability to use speech to share thoughts or give information. Strong Oral Communication skills, including listening skills, are necessary to present our ideas clearly in all different situations in our personal and professional lives. We use these skills when we greet people, take messages, provide information, seek or obtain information, reassure or comfort others, discuss or exchange opinions, resolve conflicts, instruct others, negotiate and talk to groups.

Why is Oral Communication important?

As human beings, we use Oral Communication and listening skills as well as tone of voice and body language to convey our messages to other people. Communication helps us build relationships with others at home, at work and in our communities.

As you can see on the *Communication Essentials* module of the *Literacy and Essential Skills Tools* DVD included with this manual, studies conducted by Warren Sheppell in 2008 show that good communication helps people to:

- Receive and share information
- Define and understand goals
- Build rapport
- Promote self confidence
- Avoid negative effects of conflict and confusion

Oral Communication has four complexity levels based on the following four dimensions:

- The range and complexity of communication functions – how and why one communicates
- The range and complexity of the information communicated
- The range and complexity of the communication context – in what environment and to whom one communicates
- The risk level in failing to communicate – how serious the outcome is if the communication fails

Each level of the Oral Communication complexity scale looks at all four dimensions. Tasks may be more difficult in one dimension and less difficult in another. The complexity level assigned to the task is a summary description of the four dimensions.

The following table shows examples of the first dimension of Oral Communication – the range and complexity of communication functions, that is, how and why we communicate. Although only the first dimension is shown here, it's important to remember that the four dimensions are interconnected and don't work in isolation. The underlined phrases in the first column show how obtaining information becomes increasingly complex in each higher level. As elsewhere in this unit, we only focus on the first three levels of complexity as the skills of most learners in literacy programs fall within these levels.

Concepts

- Defining Oral Communication as an Essential Skill
- Why Oral Communication is important
- Complexity levels and examples
- Oral Communication and the ESL learner
- 3 in 1: An exercise showing increasing complexity
- Learning how to say 'no'
- The role of active listening in Oral Communication

Builds on

- ESL Tutoring Basics

Facilitation tip

Review Handout 12.2: *The Functions of Language* for a summary of the different ways we use written and oral language.

Using the Essential Skill of Oral Communication – First Dimension	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Limited Oral Communication demands in basic, work-related or social interactions.</p> <p>Includes: responding to daily inquiries; <u>obtaining specific information</u>; following and giving simple instructions; simple greetings; leaving and receiving routine recorded messages.</p>	<p>Parents greet their young child and ask him how his day went.</p> <p>Students leave a simple message for their professors asking about the date of the final exam.</p>	<p>Receptionists greet customers and answer questions.</p> <p>A labourer asks a supervisor for instructions about the tasks planned for the morning.</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Moderate Oral Communication demands in a moderately complex social or work setting.</p> <p>Includes: exchanging information; <u>obtaining information by questioning multiple sources</u>; following or giving detailed, multi-step instructions; dealing with minor conflict or complaints; leaving and receiving complex recorded messages; presenting and discussing simple choices.</p>	<p>Community association volunteers resolve minor complaints from community members.</p> <p>Parents give detailed instructions to the babysitter regarding the child's feeding and bedtime routines.</p>	<p>Dental assistants talk to patients to make them comfortable, instruct them about hygiene and calm them when they are experiencing discomfort.</p> <p>Executive assistants follow detailed instructions, solving minor client complaints and participate in staff meetings to discuss client service issues.</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Extensive Oral Communication demands in complex work-related or social interaction.</p> <p>Includes: providing, <u>obtaining or exchanging detailed, complex information and opinions</u>; following complex directions and instructions; resolving routine conflict; entertaining; advising; counselling; evaluating.</p>	<p>A husband and wife have a detailed discussion regarding the uneven workload in the household. Both parties are emotional during the conversation.</p>	<p>Realtors interact with customers to analyze their requirements, establish their objectives and negotiate agreements. They also make presentations to small groups of other realtors.</p> <p>Collectors speak to debtors about the amount they owe and determine a plan of action. Debtors may be hostile during this interaction.</p>

Descriptions and complexity levels of nine essential skills, Levels 1-3 and some examples, published in Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 1996 and 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012.

Oral Communication and the ESL learner

A research team from the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks developed *Relating Canadian Language Benchmarks to Essential Skills: A Comparative Framework* in 2005 to help coordinators integrate Essential Skills-related tasks into the ESL context. They caution, however, that the framework was designed for “low-stakes applications such as classroom materials selection” (p.4) and advise coordinators to avoid using the comparative framework to make decisions in high-stakes situations such as selecting formal assessment tasks, creating formal test specifications or establishing workplace selection requirements. The framework is meant to be a guide only in helping coordinators design lessons. It does not provide exact designations for comparing Canadian Language Benchmarks and Essential Skills levels.

Despite all these caveats, the framework is an excellent resource for coordinators. It compares the Essential Skills levels and the Canadian Language Benchmarks in the areas of Writing, Reading Text and Document Use. It also includes a series of tables with examples of tasks at the different complexity levels that can be used to design lessons for ESL and non-ESL learners alike.

Oral Communication Complexity Scale and Canadian Language Benchmarks Comparison Table

Essential Skills	CLB Speaking	CLB Listening
Level 1	CLB 5, 6	CLB 5, 6, 7
Level 2	CLB 6, 7, 8	CLB 7, 8
Level 3	CLB 9, 10	CLB 9, 10

Activity A

3 in 1: An exercise showing increasing complexity in Oral Communication

This activity will help tutors understand exactly how complexity increases in Oral Communication.

Oral Communication:
complexity levels 1 to 3

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Working with Others
- Thinking
- Continuous Learning

Tutor Tip

Break Oral Communication down into component skills: taking messages, obtaining information, asking for instructions, questioning, clarifying, negotiating, leading meetings and making presentations. Create lessons around each skill.

CREATING LEARNING PARTNERS

LITERACY ALBERTA

Group discussion, role plays and use of handouts

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Telephones or cell phones

Pens or pencils

Handout 13.26: *Oral Communication Complexity Levels 1 to 3 and Examples*

Handout 13.27: *Three Oral Communication Scenarios* (2 pages)

Preparation

Copy Handout 13.26.

Make six copies of Handout 13.27 and cut them up into the three scenarios.

Prepare three sheets of flip chart paper explaining the complexity levels of the role play scenarios, one for each role play, as follows:

- Role play 1 at level 1: Simple greeting; obtaining specific information; following and giving simple instructions
- Role play 2 at level 2: Greeting; obtaining information from multiple sources; following and giving detailed, multi-step instructions
- Role play 3 at level 3: Greeting; obtaining detailed, complex information; following complex directions; resolving conflict

Prepare one flip chart sheet listing the four dimensions of Oral Communication:

- The range and complexity of communication functions – how and why one communicates
- The range and complexity of the information communicated
- The range and complexity of the communication context – in what environment and to whom one communicates
- The risk level in failing to communicate – how serious the outcome is if the communication fails

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1. Review the Handout 13.26 with the group.
2. Review the flip chart sheet on which you've outlined the four dimensions of the Oral Communication complexity scale.
3. Telephone skills are an important part of Oral Communication both at home and at work. You can use telephone skills for greeting, listening, taking messages, obtaining information, questioning and clarifying, asking for and giving instructions, and negotiating. Ask the tutors if they can think of any other examples. (Comforting someone and dealing with conflict are two additional examples.)
4. Tell the tutors that they are going to do three telephone role plays that will show them the increasing levels of complexity of this Essential Skill and illustrate its different dimensions.

5. For the role plays, you will need three pairs of volunteers. Each pair of volunteers will receive two copies of one of the scenarios, one for each person to read.
6. The pairs will have several minutes to look at the scripts and decide how they want to proceed with the role plays. They can choose to act out the role play with or without the sheets. It is important, however, that they follow the outline of the role play they are enacting as the communication tasks become increasingly complex in each role play.
7. After each role play, lead a discussion:
 - Using the three flip chart sheets you prepared that outline the complexity level of each role play as a reference, ask the group to identify the different Oral Communication tasks performed.
 - Can they identify the different dimensions of Oral Communication involved in each role play? Refer to the flip chart sheet you prepared and make sure the tutors cover the following points:
 - Role play 1 at complexity level 1: simple information communicated in a medical context for an appointment for a non-serious matter
 - Role play 2 at complexity level 2: slightly more complex communications in medical environment involving a degree of uncertainty and possible risk
 - Role play 3 at complexity level 3: more complex, situation appears more serious, patient is stressed and angry, higher risk involved as patient is elderly
8. Ask tutors how they could create learning activities to practise Oral Communication skills with their learners.

Activity B

Oral Communication includes more than speaking

Option 1 Use of handout, discussion, small group work and role plays

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a lower skill level. As discussed earlier, communicating well orally helps us build relationships professionally and personally. Having healthy relationships at home and work means being able to set reasonable limits and realistic expectations. It is important to be able to say “no” when the situation requires it. Understanding when and why saying “no” is sometimes necessary will benefit tutors and learners alike.

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers

Handout 13.28: *Guidelines for Saying “No”*

Preparation

Copy handout.

Oral Communication:
lower complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Working with Others
- Thinking
- Continuous Learning

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Group discussion: Ask the tutors why it is important to be able to say “no” sometimes.
2. Record responses on a flip chart sheet. Sample responses may be:
 - To set realistic expectations
 - To have a manageable workload
 - To prevent becoming too stressed
 - To let someone know if he or she has pushed too far
 - To set reasonable limits
3. Why might saying “no” be difficult sometimes? Again, write responses on a flip chart sheet.
 - It may seem uncooperative.
 - Someone may think I’m lazy.
 - Someone may think I’m not a team player.
 - People may not like me and so they’ll treat me differently.
 - People may get angry, defensive or aggressive.
4. Distribute Handout 13.28.
5. Review and discuss each point. The following are some points that might come up:
 - Listen to the request:
 - Give the speaker your full attention. For example, stop typing, turn off your cell phone, put down your pen.
 - Face the speaker.
 - Make sure you understand what you are being asked to do:
 - Ask questions. Use both open and closed questions. For example, closed questions are usually answered with a “yes” or “no.” They don’t usually invite discussion. Open questions start with words like “why,” “what” and “how,” invite people to give a longer answer, and invite discussion.
 - Ensure that you have all the information you need to make an informed choice.
 - Empathize with the speaker(s). Say things that indicate your understanding and empathy such as:
 - I really understand the situation you are in.
 - Sounds like you are in a real bind.
 - I know how important it is to finish this project.
 - I know it must be hard to have to talk to the boss.
 - Explain why you must say “no”:
 - Honestly and clearly explain your reasons using “I” statements rather than “you” statements. For example, you would say “I have my own deadlines to meet” instead of “You are asking the wrong person.”
 - Give the facts only. There is no need to go into a long explanation.
 - Explain what you can or will do instead, if possible:
 - What I can/will do however is...
 - Try to end things on a positive note.

6. Encourage participants to share relevant examples from their experience. Instruct tutors to write down the points and strategies for each step on their handouts.
7. Reinforce the main goal of saying “no,” which is to be able to speak up on your own behalf in a way that encourages the other person to listen and respect what you’re saying.
8. Share the following scenario with the tutors as an example:
 - Tell the tutors that you are going to say something that requires them to say “no” to you.
 - Invite the participants to respond to this request using the Guidelines for Saying “No.”
 - Invite as many responses as the group can offer.
 - Encourage the tutors to ask questions, empathize, etc.
 - You say: “I’ve just realized that this workshop will take an extra 30 minutes. So rather than finishing at the time we agreed on, I will finish a half hour later. Is this okay with everyone?”
 - Ask the group:
 - How did it feel to say no to me?
 - Brainstorm how would it feel to say “no” to others: a child, a boss, a doctor? Ask if there are differences? Why? What are they?
 - Did the guidelines help?

Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Literacy and Essential Skills DVD (WP 122-08-09) – “Saying No” Module and Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Literacy and Essential Skills DVD (WP 122-08-09) – “Saying No” Module Handout, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools/resources/tools_audience/oral_comm_workshop.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2009. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011.

Option 2 Use of handouts, discussion, pairs work and reflection

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a higher skill level. Communication is a two part process: listening and speaking. Active listening is an essential part of communicating well. This activity will help tutors learn the difference between active and passive listening, and will expand their listening skills and those of their learners.

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers

Handout 13.29: *The Communication Loop*

Handout 13.30: *Active Listening: Model and Questionnaire* (2 pages)

Preparation

Copy handouts.

Prepare a flip chart sheet with the following facts:

- Humans speak at a rate of 150 words per minute.
- Humans listen at a rate of 500 words per minute.

Oral Communication:
higher complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Writing
- Thinking
- Document Use
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

UNIT 13
ESSENTIAL SKILLS

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Review Handout 13.29: Person A sends the message to Person B. Person B responds to Person A. Lead a discussion:
 - How does the sender know whether the message was received?
 - When and how does miscommunication occur?
 - What affects how we send and receive messages?
 - What role does listening play in the communication loop?
2. Share the facts on the flip chart sheet with participants. Ask them what it means to the speaker, what it means to the listener.
3. Give tutors Handout 13.30 and let them know that the blank spaces on the Active Listening Model are for them to take notes.
4. Go through each step of the model, reviewing and explaining the points and asking for input from the group:
 - Remove all distractions
 - Stop typing or texting
 - Ignore the phone
 - Put down your pen
 - Stop what you're doing and listen
 - Focus on the speaker
 - Make eye contact. Be aware that this is a cultural factor – in some cultures making eye contact is a sign of disrespect.
 - Turn your body to face the speaker
 - Lean towards the speaker
 - When on the phone, quiet your mind and focus on what the speaker is saying
 - Understand the message
 - Focus on key points
 - Pay attention to non-verbal clues
 - When appropriate, take notes to remain focused
 - Ask questions to clarify the message
 - Use both open and closed questions. Closed questions can be answered with one word or a short phrase. For example, many closed questions can be answered with “yes” or “no.” Closed questions are useful for getting facts and easing into longer discussions. Open questions are more likely to receive a long answer. They invite reflection and thinking, and the sharing of opinions and feelings. For example, the question, “How are you feeling after your surgery?” shows you have an interest in a person’s health and invites the person to share both feelings and concerns.
 - Do not assume that you understand the speaker’s exact message
 - Try to walk in the speaker’s shoes and understand his or her perspective
 - Remember that we all see the world in unique ways
 - Double-check your understanding
 - Periodically summarize the message you are receiving in your own words
 - Do not assume that you have understood until you are certain
 - Use verbal and non-verbal prompts
 - Nod your head to signal you are listening
 - Use confirmations: uh huh, yes, I understand, etc.

5. Encourage participants to share examples from their experiences.
6. Reinforce the main goal of active listening, which is achieving a true understanding of what the other person is trying to communicate.
7. Split participants into pairs. Have them decide who is Person A and who is Person B. Person A is the speaker and Person B is the listener. Each person will have the opportunity play both roles.
8. Person A will talk about a challenge he or she experienced in work, parenting, volunteering or with a neighbour. Person B's task is to listen consciously using the active listening strategies. Even if this is how they listen normally, listeners should pay attention to using each of the strategies in the model. Listeners should:
 - Ask questions to clarify meaning and gain greater understanding
 - Periodically summarize what they are hearing
 - Remain focused on the speaker, listening at all times
9. After two to three minutes, ask tutors to reverse their roles.
10. At the end of the exercise, draw attention to the Active Listening Questionnaire on the second page of Handout 13.30.
11. Ask participants to rate their own active listening skills.
12. Invite each pair to discuss their assessments, soliciting feedback from each other.
13. Debrief:
 - How did it go?
 - What did the tutors discover about themselves?
 - Did any of them find their summaries were not entirely accurate? Did any of them think of themselves as good listeners and find out that there are areas for improvement?
 - How will they apply what they learned to improve their Oral Communication skills?
 - How will the activity help their work with learners?
 - How can they adapt this activity for their learners?

Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, *Literacy and Essential Skills DVD (WP 122-08-09)* – “Active Listening” Module and Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, *Literacy and Essential Skills DVD (WP 122-08-09)* – “Active Listening” Module Handout, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/oral_comm_workshop.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2009. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011.

Section 9

Thinking

The *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* defines Thinking as the ability to review and evaluate information and ideas to reach a rational decision. Thinking skills are broken down into six different cognitive skills. While all the Thinking skills are different, they are also interconnected and work in combination with each other. Thinking cannot be separated from any aspect of our lives. The thread of thinking runs through every Essential Skill, helping us to make sense of our world.

According to the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles*, the six Thinking skills are:

- Problem Solving involves using creative thinking to find solutions to problems concerning people, situations or mechanical challenges.
- Decision Making refers to making a choice among different options.
- Critical Thinking involves making judgments, evaluating ideas or information, and using a rational, logical thought process.
- Job Task Planning and Organizing refers to the extent that individuals are required to plan and organize their tasks.
- Significant Use of Memory refers to the unusual or significant memory involved in some occupations.
- Finding Information involves using resources including text, people, or computerized databases or information systems to find needed information.

All the sub-categories of Thinking use the same complexity scale with four levels. The only exception is the skill of Significant Use of Memory, which does not have a complexity scale. In the following pages, we discuss each of the six Thinking skills in greater detail with a focus on the first three complexity levels, which are the levels at which most literacy learners are working.

Problem Solving

Problem Solving is the thinking process involved in analyzing problems and identifying appropriate solutions. Problem Solving has four levels of complexity based on four dimensions:

- The complexity of the problem
- The complexity of identifying the problem
- The complexity of identifying the separate steps needed to work towards a solution
- The complexity of assessing the solution, including the different solution possibilities

Complexity levels range from level 1 to 4. In level 1, there are a limited number of factors and all the information and procedures are provided. In level 4, there are a broad range of factors that are unpredictable or vague, combined with a need to find information and create procedures and criteria. The following table focuses on complexity levels 1 to 3 as most learners in literacy programs are working within those levels.

Concepts

- **Defining the Essential Skill of Thinking**
- **Examining the six Thinking skills: Problem Solving, Decision Making, Critical Thinking, Job Task Planning and Organizing, Significant Use of Memory and Finding Information**
- **Practising our Thinking skills**
- **Job Task Planning and Organizing: An Essential Skill at home and at work**
- **A new way to look at making decisions and solving problems**

Examples of complexity levels 1 to 3 in Problem Solving:

Using the Essential Skill of Thinking: Problem Solving	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Dealing with simple problems that are easily identified and have a limited number of factors.</p> <p>Selecting the prescribed solution for the problem.</p> <p>Checking that the problem has been solved.</p>	<p>Homemakers identify that the bathroom sink is plugged and use boiling water and baking soda to unclog the drain.</p>	<p>Office workers check the instructions on the photocopier to identify copy problems and solutions.</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Dealing with problems that are of moderate difficulty and that have several factors, most of which are clearly defined.</p> <p>Identifying the problem and selecting the most appropriate solution.</p> <p>Determining whether the solution was successful.</p>	<p>A couple has a certain amount budgeted for groceries. At the cash register, they realize the bill total is more than the budgeted amount. They solve the problem quickly by deciding which items to return.</p>	<p>Customer service representatives handle customer complaints, identify the problem and choose the best solution from several options available.</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Dealing with difficult problems that have a broad range of factors, some of which are difficult to define.</p> <p>Selecting the best procedure for identifying the problem, and modifying an existing solution, if needed.</p> <p>Determining whether the solution was successful, and identifying the need for further action.</p>	<p>Parents are determining how to handle a situation with their teenager. He is spending time with friends they disapprove of. They assess the situation to determine if their child is at risk, and if so, the nature of the risk. With this information, they choose a course of action, taking into consideration the age and personality of the teenager involved.</p>	<p>Septic tank cleaners deal with problems such as sewage backing up. Although a problem-solving model is available, cleaners deal constantly with unknown factors because the tanks are underground, a variety of pumps are used, and soil conditions are difficult to determine.</p>

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Descriptions and complexity levels of nine essential skills, Levels 1-3 and some examples, published in *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles*, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 1996 and 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012.

Decision Making

In the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles*, Decision Making refers to making a choice among options using appropriate information. It does occur as part of Problem Solving but also stands on its own as a thinking process.

There are four levels of complexity based on the following six dimensions:

- The consequence of error
- The reversibility of the decision
- The adequacy of the information available
- Whether there is a set procedure or decision tree to follow
- Whether there is a body of similar, past decisions to compare to
- The extent to which judgment is required to make an appropriate decision

As in previous sections, we focus on the first three levels of complexity. Examples for the first three levels of complexity are:

Using the Essential Skill of Thinking: Decision Making	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Making a decision in a situation where all the relevant information is known; in which limited judgment is needed; and in which decisions can be easily reversed.</p> <p>Following a standard procedure in which expectations are clearly defined.</p> <p>Using similar decisions from the past as models.</p>	<p>Homemakers decide on recipes, ingredients, cookware and utensils when they prepare daily meals.</p>	<p>Receptionists decide when to interrupt calls or put people on hold. Some protocol exists that guides these decisions.</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Making a decision in a situation where most of the relevant information is known; in which some judgment is needed; in which errors have minor consequences; and in which decisions can be reversed with only some inconvenience.</p> <p>Following a standard procedure in which exceptions require some interpretation.</p> <p>Using comparable decisions from the past as models.</p>	<p>When buying a computer, people take into account what they will use the computer for, how much it costs, the brand's reputation and what type of service plan it carries.</p>	<p>Cable installers look for the most effective way of installing cables, i.e., is it better through this wall or that wall?</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Making a decision in a situation in which some information is uncertain; in which considerable judgment is needed; in which errors have significant consequences but can be corrected; and in which decisions can be reversed only with considerable difficulty.</p> <p>Following a standard procedure that allows a lot of room for personal interpretation.</p> <p>Using somewhat similar decisions from the past as models.</p>	<p>Students deciding which university to attend give considerable attention to their goals, and to family and financial obligations.</p>	<p>Front-desk clerks working in busy hotels decide on priorities of who and what comes first.</p>

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Critical Thinking

As defined in the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks publication *On the Job: The Essential Skill of Thinking*, Critical Thinking includes the processes of making judgments; evaluating ideas or information; and using a rational, logical thought process and referring to objective criteria to reach a judgment about value or to identify strength and weakness.

Critical Thinking can be an element of the other Thinking skills but it also exists on its own. It has four levels of complexity ranging from having simple criteria with no complicating factors involved to making judgments that carry a very high risk if they are wrong.

Critical Thinking also has three dimensions:

- Assessment of the criteria used
- Assessment of the process
- The effects of critical thinking

At the time of printing, this section is still under development on the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills website, therefore no tables with complexity levels and examples are available.

Job Task Planning and Organizing

In the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles*, Job Task Planning and Organizing refers to the extent to which individuals plan and organize their own work. This category has four levels of complexity ranging from situations that have little daily variety and include similar, repetitive tasks, to situations in which there is significant variety with no set structure or routine and a different work plan each day.

There are seven dimensions to the Essential Skill of Job Task Planning and Organization:

- The extent of variety in work activities
- Whether the task sequence is provided for or determined by the worker
- Whether priorities are set for or determined by the worker
- The number and extent of disruptions to the work plan or day
- The integration of the individual's work plan with the work of others
- The number of sources for work assignments
- The effect of the order of tasks on the total efficiency of the workplace

These are the first three complexity levels in Job Task Planning and Organizing with examples of each:

Using the Essential Skill of Thinking: Job Task Planning and Organizing	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Performing tasks that are done in an established order, rarely disrupted and do not require coordination with others.</p>	<p>Clients in a vocational training centre perform the same tasks daily, in the same order.</p>	<p>Janitors at the community hall have an established schedule to do various cleaning jobs. They generally work alone and without direction.</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Planning and organizing work within a limited framework.</p> <p>Performing tasks according to the priority assigned to various categories by someone else.</p> <p>Performing tasks that may be disrupted without changing the day's work plan.</p> <p>Coordinating some work with that of others.</p>	<p>Parents plan their work day according to the needs and moods of individual children. They coordinate these demands with regularly scheduled activities such as providing meals and snacks.</p>	<p>Administrative assistants work on similar tasks one day to the next. Using their experience and guidance from a supervisor, they prioritize tasks that need to be completed first. They coordinate their work with the needs of their supervisors and co-workers.</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Planning and organizing work following general guidelines</p> <p>Establishing the order in which tasks are completed subject to supervisor's approval</p> <p>Coordinating and integrating one's work with the work of others</p>	<p>Students plan and complete similar tasks day-to-day. Outside of class time, they plan and organize homework, studying and extracurricular activities. They use priorities established with teachers and parents to decide what needs to be done first.</p>	<p>Pre-press technicians determine the order in which print jobs will be completed approximately two weeks in advance with modifications occurring almost every day based on new jobs, rushes and the arrival of materials.</p>

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Descriptions and complexity levels of nine essential skills, Levels 1-3 and some examples, published in *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles*, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 1996 and 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012.

Significant Use of Memory

Significant Use of Memory includes any significant or unusual use of memory for individuals within different occupations. It does not include normal memory use that is a requirement for day-to-day life and in every occupation.

This skill does not have a complexity rating and consists of only one component: significant or unusual use of memory. The *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles*, however, considers three types of memory:

The Three Types of Memory	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
Type 1 Purposeful memorization of procedures, codes, parts numbers, etc. Memorization through repetition	Volunteers working for charitable organizations remember phone procedures.	Mail carriers remember the order of streets when organizing delivery routes.
Type 2 Remembering information for brief periods, e.g. minutes or hours	Students memorize specific information for exams.	Labourers are told several things they are to do and must remember this list of tasks until all are completed.
Type 3 Unique events in which "learning" occurs from one exposure.	Patients remember potentially fatal allergic reactions to specific foods.	Pharmacy assistants remember a customer's request for a potentially dangerous, non-prescription drug when the customer makes follow-up inquiries.

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Finding Information

Finding Information involves using any of a variety of sources including text, people, or computerized databases or information systems.

Knowing how to research and find information is a key skill in this age of information. Teaching learners how to find information from various sources has become more and more important as technology opens new doors.

Finding Information has four levels of complexity based on the following two dimensions:

- Locating the desired information
- Extracting and processing the information

The levels of complexity range from consulting established sources to bringing together information from several different sources, and from analyzing information to creating information, such as when doing original research.

Following are complexity levels 1 to 3 with examples for Finding Information:

Using the Essential Skill of Thinking: Finding Information	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Consulting established resources: the telephone book, an airline flight schedule, the dictionary.</p> <p>Using information only in the form in which it was obtained: telephone numbers, flight times, definitions.</p>	<p>A family member asks the information desk about the location of a particular patient. She receives the information verbally immediately.</p>	<p>A courier consults the Yellow Pages for the correct address for a business.</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Identifying and consulting specific sources that are easily located.</p> <p>Selecting information to established criteria.</p>	<p>Babysitters, nannies and parents' helpers find information about appropriate children's activities and upcoming events in such sources as flyers and recreational directories. They may also search the Internet.</p>	<p>Hotel workers contact regular suppliers to get information on pricing and delivery for toiletry items.</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Conducting a search for specific information.</p> <p>Analyzing and using the information found.</p>	<p>Students research and analyze scientific information in preparation for writing an essay.</p>	<p>Water processing operators access information by selecting one of 100 computer screens. They access reference material through specialized software programs on networks available to some operators.</p>

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Incorporating Thinking into lesson planning

Carmen Felzien, Literacy Coordinator at the Paintearth Community Adult Learning Council in Coronation, Alberta, has many suggestions and ideas for including the Essential Skill of Thinking in teaching activities. She believes that coordinators can consciously make Thinking a part of each lesson, and suggests the following ways to incorporate the different elements of Thinking into your teaching:

- Use various presentation methods in your teaching techniques. People have different ways of learning – auditory, visual, kinesthetic or a combination of all three. Planning your activities for the different types of learning styles your learners have will increase opportunities for practicing Thinking skills. (For more ideas see Unit 3: Learning Styles.)
- If it's possible in your program, have learners practise in groups first. This helps to reinforce techniques and builds confidence. Taking part in group activities takes away some of the pressure on individual participants. It also places learners into situations where they need to respond to other people's ideas and approaches. In programs where the learners are working one-on-one with a tutor, ask the learner to pretend she is the tutor and then have her teach the lesson to the tutor.
- Be intentional about showing learners how they use all of the Thinking skills in everything they do. Help learners recognize that all of the Thinking skills are involved in other activities.
- Help learners use flow charts to track the Thinking skills they used in an exercise.
- Throw in random exercises that have ambiguous or no instructions. Mixing it up and throwing in the unexpected increases awareness and builds confidence.

*Thinking is the ultimate human resource.
Yet we can never be satisfied with our most
important skill. No matter how good we
become, we should always want to be better.*

Dr. Edward de Bono

Activity A

Thinking skills are a part of everything we do

Job Task Planning and Organizing:
lower complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

Option 1 Use of handouts, large sticky notes, discussion, and small and large group work

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a lower skill level. This exercise will give tutors activity ideas for teaching their learners about the Essential Skill of Job Task Planning and Organizing.

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers

Large sticky notes

Handout 13.31: *Thinking Skills: The Sub-Categories*

Handout 13.32: *Job Task Planning and Organizing Complexity Levels 1 to 3 and Examples*

Preparation

Copy handouts.

Prepare a flip chart sheet with “Thinking – An Essential Skill” printed on it.

Prepare a second flip chart sheet that lists the sub-categories of Thinking: Problem Solving, Decision Making, Critical Thinking, Job Task Planning and Organizing, Significant Use of Memory and Finding Information

Also prepare a sheet titled “Other Thinking Skills” for those ideas that might not fit under any specific category.

Prepare a cheat sheet for your own use with the following categories: budget, date, time and schedule of activities, food, decorations and music.

Decide if your program has a budget for a small party to celebrate the end of tutor training, which the tutors will be planning as part of this activity.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Discuss Thinking as one of the Essential Skills. Here are some ideas to guide your discussion:
 - How do you define Thinking?
 - Why would Thinking be an Essential Skill?
 - Take each Essential Skill we have discussed thus far, and examine how Thinking is part of that skill. For example, how is Thinking part of Reading Text?
2. Ask tutors to brainstorm what might be included under the Essential Skill of Thinking, for example, problem solving.
3. Put up the flip chart sheet you prepared, “Thinking – An Essential Skill.” Hand out the sticky notes and ask tutors to print their ideas on the sticky notes and place them on the flip chart sheet.
4. After some discussion, put up the flip chart sheet listing the sub-categories of Thinking. Most of the tutors’ ideas will fit into the sub-categories. Those ideas that don’t fit can be grouped under Other Thinking skills.
5. Distribute Handout 13.31.

6. Talk about how Thinking is a part of everything we do. Ask the group for examples of each of the sub-categories of the Essential Skill of Thinking.
 - How can they help their learners become aware of developing their Thinking skills?
7. Review Handout 13.32. Job Task Planning and Organizing is a skill we use every day of our lives to greater and lesser degrees depending on the complexity of our lives and our personalities. It serves us at home and at work.

Ask tutors how they use planning and organizing skills in their lives.

 - How do their learners use planning and organizing skills?
 - How can tutors help their learners develop their planning and organizing skills?
8. Tell the tutors that their task today is to organize a party to celebrate the end of tutor training. Based on what you decided your program could afford for a party to celebrate the end of tutor training, this could be a real party or it could be a fantasy party.
 - Put up a blank flip chart sheet and ask the group what sorts of tasks need to be accomplished to organize a party.
 - List these tasks on the flip chart sheet. Ask the group if they've missed anything.
 - Let the group know you are available to answer questions, but they are to organize the party on their own.
 - They may do so as a group or choose to delegate different planning pieces to committees or individuals.
 - They have 30 minutes to complete the task.
 - Remind them to track what Essential Skills they use during this process – the party-planning is a good exercise to help tutors focus on the use of Thinking skills and other Essential Skills.
9. Debrief:
 - Ask for a spokesperson to present the planning process. If there were different groups planning different pieces, ask for a person from each group to present their part.
 - What Essential Skills were used during this process? Be sure to include the skill of Working with Others.
 - How could tutors adapt this activity to work with learners?
 - How could tutors help their learners to document the planning process for tasks that learners have trouble planning? For example, could they use checklists, flowcharts, step-by-step instructions?

Tutor tip

Ask learners how they organize themselves. Ask them to plan and organize a leisure activity or another activity that they currently do, for example, a hike, a menu for a family dinner or a picnic. You could also ask them how they manage to get their kids to sports practice, band or other after-school activities.

Decision Making:
higher complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

Option 2 Large group discussion, small group work, presentations and use of handouts

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a higher skill level. This exercise is designed to help tutors and their learners practise thinking outside the box and looking at situations and problems through different perspectives. It uses the method described by Edward de Bono in his 1985 book, *Six Thinking Hats: A Technique for Making Decisions*, as you can see on the MindTools website.

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Handout 13.33: *The Six Thinking Hats Method*

Handout 13.34: *Four Decision-Making Scenarios*

Preparation

Copy Handout 13.33.

Make a copy of Handout 13.34 and cut it up into the four scenarios.

Review the Six Thinking Hats technique.

Cut six flip chart sheets into the shapes of hats.

Outline them with the six colours of the Six Thinking Hats technique.

Using the handout as a guide, summarize each thinking hat in point form on the paper hat of the appropriate colour.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give the tutors an introduction to the Six Thinking Hats:
 - We are each unique individuals with different life experiences, likes, dislikes, prejudices, opinions and ways of looking at the world.
 - Some of us are optimists, and some of us are pessimists.
 - Others are creative free-thinkers and still others are analytical and rational.
 - Most of us are a combination of all of these qualities.
 - When we have problems, however, we sometimes fall back on old ways of thinking and feeling that may not be useful in new situations.
 - The Six Thinking Hats process helps us bring all the parts of our thinking and feeling selves to the table to get a clearer picture of the problem.
2. Review the Six Thinking Hats process using the prepared flip chart sheets.
3. Ask tutors to get up and stand by the hat that most fits how they approach problems. Tutors can choose more than one hat. Encourage discussion, comments and observations.
4. Give out Handout 13.33.

5. Tell the tutors that they are going to practise the Six Thinking Hats method for solving problems and making decisions.

- **Variation A:** Use this variation if you are training more than six tutors.
 - Divide the tutors into groups of twos or threes, depending on numbers.
 - Give each group a problem scenario from the cut-up Handout 13.34.
 - Remind them to monitor their thinking and to consciously “wear” all six hats as they work through the scenario.
 - Tell them they have 15 minutes to do this.
 - After 15 minutes, reconvene the group and review the scenarios.
 - Ask a volunteer from each group to share the outcomes and, most importantly, the process they used. (For debrief questions, see step 6, below.)
- **Variation B:** Use this variation if the group has two to six people.
 - Choose one of the four decision-problem scenarios. You could do this yourself or ask the group which one they’d prefer to work with.
 - Present the scenario.
 - Each person “wears” one of the Thinking Hats to work through the problem and prepares a statement from that point of view, using Handout 13.33 as reference.
 - Tell them they have 10 minutes to do this.
 - After 10 minutes, reconvene the group and ask each of the participants to share the point of view of their Thinking Hat, beginning with the Blue Hat.
 - Did they come to a consensus about a decision? (For more debrief questions, see step 6 below.)
- **Variation C:** Use this variation if you are training just one tutor.
 - Choose one problem scenario of the four options. You could do this yourself or ask the tutor which one he or she would prefer to work with. You could also use a real problem since you’re working in private with just one tutor.
 - Place the Thinking Hats in a circle with the problem scenario in the centre.
 - Each of you choose the hat that is most familiar to you and discuss the scenario from that point of view.
 - After a set time, both of you switch hats so you view the problem from a different angle.
 - Continue until you’ve viewed the problem from all six points of view.
 - Use the debrief questions below to learn more about what you learned.

6. Debrief:

- What did tutors learn about themselves?
- What did they learn about the Essential Skill of Thinking?
- How did using the Thinking Hats process help or hinder?
- What other Essential Skills did they use during the process? For example, for those working in pairs, the skill of Working with Others is important in this activity, as it is in real life.
- What surprised them?
- How could they use this process with their learners?
- How could learners benefit from this process?

Section 10

Working with Others

Concepts

- **Defining the Essential Skill of Working with Others**
- **Developing skills for Working with Others or working alone**
- **Dealing with conflict**

Other Essential Skills used

- **Oral Communication**
- **Thinking: Problem Solving, Decision Making, Critical Thinking, Job Task Planning and Organizing, and Finding Information**

Working with Others requires you to work in a variety of different situations to complete tasks, whether independently, with a partner or a team, or in a leadership role. Working with Others includes being able to work cooperatively with others as well as having the self-discipline to accomplish tasks while working alone. It also includes both direct interactions, such as face-to-face or on the phone, and indirect or delayed interactions, such as by email, memos or voicemail.

When we first look at the description of Working with Others, it may appear as if this skill is mainly relevant to the working world. Working with Others, however, is a transferable skill that increases our personal as well as our professional capacity. We use this skill in virtually all our relationships: talking to our children, negotiating work and schedules with our partners, meeting with teachers, participating in team sports, solving problems with neighbours, and sitting on community volunteer committees.

As the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* explains, there is no formal complexity rating scale for Working with Others, however, the skill is described in two parts:

1. The work context:

- Working alone – People work alone providing products or information on progress to others.
- Working independently – People are not physically alone but work independently, co-coordinating their work with that of others.
- Working jointly with a partner or helper – One person coordinates and co-operates with only one other person at a time.
- Working as a member of a team – People work in a group that produces a product or accomplishes a task through combined effort and organized co-operation.

2. The degree of participation in supervisory or leadership activities, which may include one or more of the following 12 functions:

- Participate in formal discussions about work processes or product improvement
- Have opportunities to make suggestions on improving work processes
- Monitor the work performance of others
- Inform other workers or demonstrate to them how tasks are to be performed
- Orient new employees
- Make hiring recommendations
- Make hiring decisions
- Select contractors and suppliers
- Assign routine tasks to other workers

- Assign new or unusual tasks to other workers
- Identify training that is required by, or would be useful for, other workers
- Deal with other workers' grievances or complaints

The following table gives examples of the skills needed in differing work contexts when using the Essential Skill of Working with Others:

Context	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace	Skills needed
Working alone People work alone providing products or information on progress to others.	Homemakers work alone in their homes preparing dinner for their families.	Freelance writers work alone within their homes and consult with their clients regarding content.	Organizing, planning, communication, self-discipline
Working independently People are not physically alone but work independently, coordinating their work with that of others.	A volunteer for a community association shares her office space with other community services, but works independently.	Production line workers with responsibility for a very specific part of the process are in physical environments that include other people but they work essentially on their own.	Communicating, organizing, planning, delegating, cooperating
Working jointly with a partner or helper One person coordinates and co-operates with only one other person at a time.	Parents work together to coordinate child care arrangements.	A tradesperson works with an apprentice.	Communicating, organizing, planning, delegating, cooperating
Working as a member of a team People work in a group that produces a product or accomplishes a task through combined effort and organized co-operation.	Members of a soccer team work together to win the regional championship.	Members of a film crew work together to create a feature film or documentary.	Communicating, organizing, planning, delegating, cooperating

These are examples of the role of participating in supervisory or leadership activities when using the Essential Skill of Working with Others:

Context	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace	Skills needed
Participation in supervisory or leadership activities	The volunteer board of directors of a trail-riding association hires and monitors the job performance of the office manager.	The executive director of a not-for-profit organization assigns new tasks to employees and monitors their progress.	Leadership skills, diplomacy, delegating, problem solving, planning, organizing

Descriptions and complexity levels of nine essential skills, Levels 1-3 and some examples, published in Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 1996 and 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012.

Activity A

Working with Others or working alone

Some activities are more suited to working alone, while others are better done in a group. This activity will help tutors explore the different skill sets needed for Working with Others and working independently.

Working with Others:
no complexity levels

Other Essential Skills Used

- Reading Text
- Writing
- Oral Communication
- Thinking
- Continuous Learning

Facilitation tip

Refer to the DVD from the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills that is included with this unit for the tip sheet on Working with Others.

Use of handouts, discussion, group work and pairs work

Materials and equipment

Handout 13.35: *Working with Others* (2 pages)
Handout 13.36: *Working with Others or Working Alone*
Flip chart paper and markers
Masking tape

Preparation

Copy handouts.
Prepare a flip chart sheet with four columns: Activity, By Myself or with Others, Reason, Skills Needed
Read over the instructions for the activity to familiarize yourself with the process.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce Working with Others as an Essential Skill. Distribute Handout 13.35.
 - Review the different components using the handout.
 - Explain that this skill is not confined to work.
 - Ask tutors to brainstorm other personal situations where Working with Others is required. Write these out on a flip chart sheet. Some examples could include:
 - Planning schedules
 - Negotiating work conditions
 - Coaching a soccer team
 - Providing childcare

- Why are these situations important?
 - What skills do you need when working with others?
 - Bring up the transferability of this skill if it doesn't come up in the discussion.
2. Open a discussion about tutors's preferences around working alone or with others.
- Direct the group's attention to the prepared flip chart sheet with four columns: Activity, By Myself or with Others, Reason, Skills Needed.
 - Ask tutors to think about some activities they do at work or at home, and write them on the chart.
 - For each example, ask them to consider whether they'd prefer to do the activity alone or with others. Note their responses on the chart.
 - Ask them to explain why. Note their reasons.
 - Together, brainstorm a list of the skills needed for each activity and list them.
 - At the end of the discussion, you could have a chart that looks something like this:

Activity	By Myself or with Others	Reason	Skills Needed
Redecorating my living room	With my partner	We share the space and need to be happy with the result.	Budgeting, decision-making, communications, problem solving
Doing the housework	With my partner and family	It's only fair to share the housework.	Same as above plus job task planning
Organizing a work-related dinner	With other staff members	We need to coordinate schedules and food preferences among the whole group.	Job task planning, decision making, budgeting, numeracy, oral communication

3. Distribute Handout 13.36. Ask tutors how they could see using such an activity with their learners.
4. We all have things we like to do alone and activities that are better done with others. There can be many reasons including personal preference, distributing the workload and efficiency.
5. Ask the tutors why some activities are more suited to working alone and others are better done in a group. List the reasons on two flip chart sheets – one with the reasons for working alone and the other for working with others. Some examples of reasons are:
- For working alone
 - I am free to make all the decisions
 - I can be creative
 - I can work to my own schedule
 - I can take all the credit
 - I can use my own methods
 - There are no disagreements if I do it myself

Facilitation tip

If there isn't much time, limit the discussion to three or four examples of activities.

- For working with others
 - We can spread the workload
 - We share ideas and talents
 - We share responsibility
 - We have the ability to do something bigger and better
 - It's a more sociable way to work
- 6. Does everyone agree about which tasks they prefer to do alone and which ones they prefer to do with someone?
- 7. Divide the group into two. One half of the group has to work together as a team and the tutors in the other half will work on their own. Make sure that those working on their own cannot hear the discussion of the group.
- 8. Give tutors 10 minutes to list all the Essential Skills they can remember and why they are important to learners.
- 9. As with all activities in this unit, ask the tutors to be very conscious of the *process* of accomplishing the task.
- 10. After the time is up, come together as a group and compare results. Record the results on a flip chart sheet.
 - Did tutors get on better working as a group or working on their own?
 - What are the benefits of working on your own?
 - What are the benefits of working with others?
- 11. Whether you prefer working alone or with others depends on your own personal working style and the task you are trying to complete.
- 12. Think about the work you do with your learner.
 - Does your learner have a preference for working alone or together on tasks?
 - Do you offer a mix of activities that require working alone and together?
- 13. Being able to work well independently and with other people is a necessary skill in the workplace and in our personal lives.

Working together module. (2000). In the *Keys to participation* package in the Adult Returners Key Skills (ARKS) Program. www.homepages.ed.ac.uk/calarks/arks/materials.html. Adapted and used with permission.

Activity B

Dealing with conflict

Learning how to deal positively with difficult behaviour is a tool that will help both tutors and learners.

Brainstorm, discussion, use of handout, pairs work and reflection

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Handout 13.37: *Six Scenarios: Dealing with Difficult Behaviour* (3 pages)

Preparation

Copy handout.

Make a copy of Handout 13.37 for your use and cut it up into the scenarios.

Write the following two questions on a sheet of flip chart paper:

- What reasons do you think may be behind the behaviour?
- How would you respond to the behaviour?

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce the activity by saying that we all have had to deal with difficult behaviour at work, at home or in the community.
2. Ask tutors if they have ever seen or experienced the following behaviours:
 - A work colleague leaves you to do all the work when you are supposed to be working on a task together.
 - Someone gets very angry and heated when you are trying to have a reasonable discussion.
 - A neighbour repeatedly borrows tools and household equipment from you and never returns them.
 - Another driver makes angry gestures at you as he overtakes your car.
3. Most of us have experienced at least one of these situations. Part of living and working together in a community is learning how to deal with difficult situations and people.
4. Ask tutors to pair up and give each pair a scenario from the handout that you cut up.
5. Display the flip chart sheet you've prepared with the questions and ask them to answer them:
 - What reasons do you think may be behind the behaviour?
 - How would you respond to the behaviour?
6. Come together as a group and ask each pair to share their scenario and answers.
 - Ask the group if they have anything to add.
 - Ask them what other Essential Skills were used in each of the different scenarios.
 - How could they adapt this activity to work with their learners?

Working with Others:
no complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Thinking
- Document Use
- Oral Communication
- Continuous Learning

Section 11

Computer Use

As defined in the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles*, Computer Use refers to the use of different kinds of computer applications and related tools. We use this skill when we operate electronic equipment such as cash registers, ATMs, GPS units and food store self-checkouts; use word-processing software; send emails; do research on the Internet; and create and modify spreadsheets.

When we think of Computer Use as an Essential Skill, most of us think about our personal computers and the programs we know, but as the list above demonstrates, the skill includes many other technologies and applications that we encounter in our everyday lives. These days, even our cell phones can be considered computers. Thus, Computer Use includes the use of any type of computerized technology, hardware, software and computer-based technical tools.

And we use them everywhere: in the classroom, at work, at home and in the community. Being able to use computers and computer applications competently is a necessity in our constantly changing technological world.

The Essential Skill of Computer Use has five levels of complexity. The table below shows the first three levels of complexity with examples. Most learners in literacy programs will be working within these levels.

Using the Essential Skill of Computer Use	At Home and in the Community	In the Workplace
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Performing tasks that require only basic interaction with computer-controlled machinery or equipment: entering given codes to unlock equipment, responding to light-emitting diodes (LEDs).</p> <p>Using only a few basic commands with no knowledge of software required: sending an email message to one person.</p>	<p>Customers make deposits and withdrawals at an ATM.</p>	<p>Employees enter the building's security codes when they arrive at work.</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Performing tasks that require the use of several simple software features: formatting a letter.</p> <p>Using software for a limited number of functions that make use of existing structures or standard formats: entering data onto a given form.</p>	<p>People applying for a job use the standard features of word processing software to prepare a resume.</p>	<p>Library clerks send email messages to patrons regarding overdue books.</p>

Concepts

- Introducing Computer Use as an Essential Skill
- Computers are part of our everyday lives
- Navigating the Internet

Other Essential Skills Used

- Document Use
- Reading Text

<p>Level 3</p> <p>Performing tasks that involve several operations and the use of a wide range of software features or options: formatting complex documents, setting up and configuring software.</p> <p>Performing various kinds of tasks that may involve some experimentation to achieve the desired results.</p>	<p>Students organize and format research results for their doctorate theses.</p>	<p>Communications assistants produce brochures using graphics software.</p>
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Descriptions and complexity levels of nine essential skills, Levels 1-3 and some examples, published in *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles*, URL: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 1996 and 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012.

In addition to the levels of complexity described above, the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills* lists nine applications associated with Computer Use. These include the ability to:

- Use word-processing software: Microsoft Word, WordPad
- Use graphics software: CorelDRAW, Adobe Photoshop
- Use a database: dbase, Microsoft Access
- Use a spreadsheet: Microsoft Excel, Lotus 1-2-3
- Use financial software: Accpac, QuickBooks
- Use statistical analysis software: SPSSX, SAS
- Do programming, and systems and software design: Fortran, Cobol
- Use computer-assisted design, manufacturing and machining: CAD, CAM, AutoCAD
- Use communications software: Microsoft Outlook, Netscape mail, FaceBook, Twitter

Activity A

Computers are part of our everyday lives

Option 1 Brainstorm, discussion, pairs work, role play and view video

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a lower skill level. We interact with computers on a daily basis in many contexts. Yet many people are still hesitant and nervous about using them. This activity shows tutors a way to introduce learners to everyday Computer Use.

Computer Use:
lower complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Thinking
- Continuous Learning

Materials and equipment

Computer, LCD projector

Link to YouTube *Middle Ages Tech Support* at www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRBIVRwvUeE or to some other video or cartoon that humorously demonstrates a fear of new technology

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

A small prize such as a chocolate bar, a literacy pin, a pen with the program's name on it or other literacy item

A GPS, a cell phone, an iPod, a Kindle, any other examples of common technology (ask tutors to bring their own as well)

Preparation

Watch the YouTube video to become familiar with it.

Ask tutors to bring in some of the (easily portable) technology that they use.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Warm up activity: Ask the tutors to brainstorm the many different ways they use computers in their lives. Note all their responses on a flip chart sheet.
2. When we think of Computer Use as an Essential Skill, many of us think about our personal computers and the programs we use. Computer Use, however, encompasses many more technologies and applications in our everyday lives than just our computers, and many of us take our ability to use these tools for granted. Be sure that some of the following are included in the brainstorming discussion.
 - Cell phones
 - GPS equipment
 - Automated checkouts at the grocery store
 - Cameras
 - Cash registers and automated teller machines (ATMs)
3. For some learners, however, using technology can be intimidating. Change and learning a new way of doing something is daunting.
4. Show the YouTube clip. Discuss its relevancy to a first time computer user. Discussion points:
 - Ask tutors if they can relate to the video. How did they feel when they first started to use computers? Discuss their comfort level with learning new technology. Did they have fears?
 - In the video, books are replacing scrolls. The student does not believe they will be as functional. He still prefers the old fashioned scrolls. Does this sound familiar to anyone? How do your learners feel about technology and change?
5. Discuss how computers often replace another form of doing a familiar activity. Sometimes they even replace people. For example, an ATM replaces interacting with a bank teller, a GPS replaces reading a map, an automated self-checkout at the grocery store or Walmart replaces interacting with a cashier and a pump your own gas station replaces interacting with a gas station attendant.
6. This activity demonstrates a way to think about and teach Computer Use to learners working at a lower level who need to become familiar with common computers such as the ones listed in the brainstorm. Ask tutors to pay attention to the steps they go through in this activity, which happens to focus on banking and the use of ATMs, but could be adapted for any other new technology.

7. As a group, discuss what happens when you make a deposit with a teller.
 - What information do you need to know/have?
 - Bank account number and personal identification number (PIN)
 - Amount of the deposit or withdrawal
 - How to fill out the deposit slip (some banks don't use slips anymore)
 - Your bank card
 - What does the teller do for you?
 - S/he deposits your money or cheques.
 - S/he gives you a receipt for your records.
 - S/he can also help you pay your bills.
8. Have tutors to get into pairs and practise a role play between a bank teller and a customer making a deposit. Give them five minutes to develop the role play. Ask for two volunteers to demonstrate their role play.
9. As a group, discuss the process of developing the role play. How could they see doing this with their learners?
10. The Automated Teller Machine or ATM does the same thing. You can make deposits or withdrawals and pay your utility bills.
11. Ask the tutors to think about the ATM keyboard. You might want to note their answers on a flip chart sheet. Use the following questions to guide the discussion.
 - What information does the ATM give to the customer?
 - What services can it provide for the customer?
 - Deposit
 - Withdrawal
 - Transfer
 - Account balance
 - Bill payment
 - What words and vocabulary do you need to know to use the ATM?
 - Enter
 - Cancel
 - Your Personal Identification Number (PIN)
 - Deposit
 - Withdrawal
 - Transfer
 - Transaction
 - What information does the ATM want from the customer?
 - Personal Identification Number (PIN)
 - Type of account
 - Amount of deposit, withdrawal or transfer
12. Have partners choose one of the Computer Use examples from the brainstorm or an example of their own. Have them talk through or demonstrate to each other the interaction with the "old" way of getting something done. Then, have them discuss what they can expect the computerized method to provide users and to ask of users. For example, tutors can demonstrate the similarities and differences between using a map and using a GPS.
13. Have one or two volunteer pairs share their results with the class.
14. Discuss how they can use this method to prepare their learners for Computer Use.

Computer Use:
higher complexity level

Other Essential Skills used

- Reading Text
- Writing
- Thinking
- Document Use
- Oral Communication
- Continuous Learning

Option 2 Discussion and use of handouts

Why choose this option?

Choose this option for tutors working with learners at a higher skill level. This activity teaches the skills necessary to navigate a website to locate information and conduct basic searches on the Internet.

Materials and equipment

Handout 13.38: *Searching the Internet – for New Computer Users*

Handout 13.39: *Email Etiquette and Internet Safety*

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Laptop computer (optional)

LCD projector (optional)

Preparation

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce the activity. The Internet can be a great resource for all kinds of information. Knowing how to use search engines to search the Internet is a valuable skill for everyone.
2. Ask the group what people should know about using the Internet. Make sure the following are mentioned: vocabulary, search engines, websites, viruses, scams, defining your topic, keywords, URLs, toolbars, favourites. List their answers on a flip chart sheet. Make sure you are familiar with all these terms. If you have a laptop computer and an LCD projector, you can show a typical website during the discussion and use it for demonstrating the terms.
3. Ask the group about their experiences researching on the Internet. Write down the answers on a second flip chart sheet.
 - What kinds of topics did they explore?
 - What search engines did they use?
 - Did they have a positive experience?
 - Has anyone had negative experiences with websites, viruses or scams? Ask them to share their experiences.
 - What do people need to be aware of when searching the Internet?
 - Is everything you find on the Internet reliable and absolutely true?
 - How can you determine the accuracy of information found on the Internet?
4. Distribute Handout 13.38.
5. Using the flip chart sheets, review the different search engines. Discuss the steps explaining how to choose words for your search. It is easy to be overwhelmed by the information on the Internet. It helps to narrow your focus.
6. Debrief:
 - What Essential Skills do you use when doing an Internet search?
 - How can learners benefit from doing an Internet search?
 - How can tutors adapt and use this activity with their learners?
7. Ask the group what learners may need to know about email etiquette and Internet safety. Write these down on a flip chart sheet. Distribute Handout 13.39. Discuss any points that have been missed.

Section 12

Continuous Learning

Continuous Learning is the ability to participate in an ongoing process of acquiring skills and knowledge. Continuous Learning involves knowing how to learn, understanding one's learning style, and knowing how to access learning materials and opportunities. We use this skill when we learn through:

- Reading or other forms of self-study
- Regular work activity
- Co-workers, mentors, friends or family
- Formal training offered in the workplace
- Off-site training
- Community educational opportunities

Continuous or lifelong learning is necessary because what we know and what we need to know is changing on a daily basis both in our personal lives and in the workplace. Being a lifelong learner helps us adapt to our evolving world. Continuous learners:

- Manage themselves
- Understand their learning styles
- Are flexible
- Have confidence
- Are resilient
- Believe in lifelong learning
- Have an awareness of themselves and their impact on others
- Have an organizational awareness

Continuous Learning has no complexity rating, but it covers a wide range of learning across our lifespan. Some examples include:

Using the Essential Skill of Continuous Learning in the Home	In the Community	In the Workplace
A senior enrolls in an online computer course on genealogy to explore his family history.	A First Nations student attends a workshop on learning styles and culture.	A middle manager enrolls in a management course on innovative leadership styles.

Concepts

- **Defining the Essential Skill of Continuous Learning**
- **Expanding personal awareness**
- **Understanding lifelong learning from a personal perspective**

Builds on

- **Adults as Learners**
- **Learning Styles**
- **Planning for Learning**
- **About Literacy**

Continuous Learning:
no complexity levels

Other Essential Skills used

- Oral Communication
- Thinking
- Writing
- Reading Text
- Working with Others

Facilitation tips

Coordinators should be prepared to share their personal information if necessary to get personal sharing started in the group.

You may want to review and incorporate the information on learning styles from Unit 3: Learning Styles, Section 2.

Activity A

Expanding our personal awareness

Learning about ourselves, our personal strengths and our resources is one of the first steps in the Continuous Learning journey. Taking a personal inventory helps us become clearer about our current skills and abilities, and about where we want to go in life, learning and work. Knowing our strengths and resources helps us towards setting future learning goals.

This group activity illustrates a way for people to expand their personal awareness. In turn, tutors can use this process to help learners identify their strengths, personal resources, potential and abilities.

Discussion, use of handout, pairs work and reflection

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers
Masking tape
Handout 13.40: *Individual Resource List* (2 pages)
Papers and pens
Large sticky notes

Preparation

Copy handout.
Prepare a flip chart sheet with the heading “What are your personal resources?”
Familiarize yourself with the list.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Give each person three or four sticky notes.
2. Ask the group to think about the question “What are your personal resources?” Brainstorm and discuss the definition of the term “personal resources” before proceeding so that there is a shared understanding of the term.
3. Have tutors write their answers to the question on the large sticky notes and stick them on the flip chart sheet with the heading “What are your personal resources?”
4. As a group, brainstorm additional answers to the question, creating a comprehensive list. Make sure the list is visible to the whole group.
5. Get the group to categorize their answers, clustering similar answers together and giving each category a name that reflects the theme of the contents.
6. Once they have finished creating their own categories, distribute Handout 13.40. Ask them to compare their categories with the list. Are they the same? How do they differ?
7. Debrief:
 - Ask the group if there were any surprises or revelations?
 - Were there things that they hadn’t considered?

8. Personalize the activity.
 - Each tutor has Handout 13.40 listing the defined categories. Have them add any that were generated in the group but are not listed on the handout.
 - Ask the tutors to each create a personalized resource list using those resources from the master list that apply and adding resources that they had listed for themselves.
 - When they are finished, tutors will have their own personal resource list.
9. Debrief:
 - Ask for volunteers to share their personal resource lists.
 - How are tutors feeling about themselves?
 - How has this activity expanded their awareness of their own resources and strengths?
 - How can learners benefit from doing a similar activity?
 - How would they adapt the activity for their learners?

Carter, C. (n.d.). *Understanding and identifying individual resources*. Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee, Southern LINCS Workforce Education Lab. http://slincs.coe.utk.edu/gtelab/learning_activities/28carc.html. Adapted and used with permission.

Activity B

Understanding lifelong learning from a personal perspective

This activity will help tutors to understand and solidify the role of lifelong learning in their own lives.

Discussion, use of handouts, pairs work and reflection

Materials and equipment

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Handout 13.41: *Sample Learning Plan for Developing Tutoring Skills*

Handout 13.42: *My Continuous Learning Plan*

Preparation

Review Unit 4, Section 5: Portfolio Development.

Prepare a flip chart sheet with the definition of Continuous Learning and examples as follows:

- Continuous Learning is the ability to participate in an ongoing process of acquiring skills and knowledge.
- Continuous Learning involves knowing how to learn, understanding one's learning style, and knowing how to access learning materials and opportunities.

Tutor tip

Tutors can adapt and use the template *My Continuous Learning Plan* (from Handout 13.42) with learners.

Facilitation tips

See *Clinton True Essential Skills Evidence* for a unique example of recognizing lifelong learning through the development of Essential Skills. You may want to share this creative way of acknowledging Continuous Learning with your tutors.

Coordinators can have extra copies of Handout 13.42: *My Continuous Learning Plan* on hand to give out for tutors to use with their learners.

- We use this skill when we learn through:
 - Reading or other forms of self-study
 - Regular work activity
 - Co-workers, mentors, friends, family
 - Formal training offered in the workplace
 - Off-site training
 - Community educational opportunities

Prepare a second flip chart sheet with the “Continuous Learning.”

Prepare a third sheet with the question “How am I improving my tutoring skills?”

Copy handouts.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Introduce Continuous Learning as an Essential Skill.
2. Review the definition and the examples using the first flip chart sheet you prepared.
3. Ask the group for examples of Continuous Learning from their own lives and write these on the second flip chart sheet you prepared. Ask why Continuous Learning is important.
4. Distribute Handout 13.41. The handout gives us an example of an area a tutor might like to develop. Brainstorm other ideas or areas for learning, for example, developing knowledge about the nine Essential Skills, understanding the complexity levels within the Essential Skills, learning how to develop authentic materials or becoming familiar with portfolios.
5. Ask tutors to pair up and discuss how they are developing their tutoring skills.
6. Distribute Handout 13.42. Ask tutors to create their own Continuous Learning plan for developing their tutoring skills. They may work in the original pairs or choose to work on their own.
7. In the larger group, ask tutors to share their ideas for developing their tutoring skills with the group. Record these on the third flip chart sheet you’ve prepared.
8. Ask tutors to think about the learners they are working with.
 - How are they engaging in lifelong learning?
 - What are tangible ways to help learners recognize the lifelong learning process? Examples could include:
 - Portfolios: For your reference, Unit 4, Section 5, explores portfolio development
 - Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)
 - The *Clinton True Essential Skills Evidence* process on the Igniting the Power Within website, which is a process for collecting evidence of a person’s prior learning and work experience that is very user-friendly
9. Discuss portfolios and portfolio development. If tutors are unfamiliar with portfolios and there is interest, arrange to do a portfolio workshop in the future.

Section 13

Planning Learning Activities with an Essential Skills Focus

Using the Essential Skills framework as an overlay to their current lesson planning will help tutors increase and enrich their pool of teaching ideas and possibilities. Reading Text, Writing and Numeracy will not lose their importance, but will expand to incorporate components of the other six Essential Skills.

Criteria for effective learning activities

In *Recognizing Life's Work: Helping Learners Connect Their Essential Skills from Home to Work*, the kit they developed for the QUILL Learning Network, Alison Wasielewski and her colleagues list the criteria for determining effective learning activities as follows:

- Present information in an interesting, novel way and invite learner participation through each step of the learning process
- Incorporate the development of more than one Essential Skill
- Make the connection between the use of the Essential Skill at home or in the community and at work
- Meet the stated goals of the learner
- Encourage further exploration and Continuous Learning

The QUILL Learning Network publication profiles 12 leisure and home-based activities that use Essential Skills. They give the following suggestions for creating learning activities. The learning activity:

- Should include at least one important Essential Skill used in the leisure or home-based activity, and ideally, more than one.
- Should draw on the skills a learner uses while participating in the activity and take advantage of the learner's interest in the topic.
- Should be something you can do in a classroom setting or, if your program is more flexible, some activities can be done outside the classroom.
- Should incorporate activities that use products that the learner is familiar with. Be sure to consider their socio-economic situation.
- Should be tailored to the skill level of the learner.

Use the Internet to research activity ideas. Also refer to the list of resources at the beginning of this unit as well as the bibliography for websites containing activity and lesson ideas. Imagine you are the learner and do the activity yourself. This will give you insight into whether or not the activity works in the way you intend it to.

Concepts

- Criteria for effective learning activities
- Using and developing authentic materials
- Creating activities designed for different levels

Builds on

- Planning for Learning

Facilitation tip

You may want to review Unit 4: Planning for Learning.

Facilitation/Tutor tip

Attend training or access resources that focus on developing authentic learning materials.

Using and developing authentic materials

Authentic materials are those materials learners encounter and use in real life situations outside of the classroom. As coordinators, we believe that using authentic materials, preferably from an individual's own life, is an excellent way to make lessons more meaningful for students.

Erick Jacobson, Sophie Degener and Victoria Purcell-Gates give many examples of using authentic materials in their study *Creating Authentic Materials and Activities for the Adult Literacy Classroom*:

- Want ads (Reading Text, Document Use)
- Drivers' education manual (Reading Text, Writing, Oral Communication)
- Instruction manuals for household items (Reading Text, Document Use)
- Voter registration cards (Reading Text, Document Use, Writing)
- Letters from the bank or credit card companies (Reading Text, Document Use, Writing, Numeracy)
- Receipts (Reading Text, Document Use, Numeracy)

Other authentic materials include passport applications or job applications, waiver forms for participating in sports, instructions for prescriptions, letters from the city regarding construction in the neighborhood, community newsletters, and magazines and books on topics of interest to the learner, whether they be about diet, health, cars or anything else.

Creating activities designed for different levels

Effective lessons grow out of an understanding of the learner's goals, interests and skill level.

Earlier, we discussed the different complexity levels that exist within the nine Essential Skills. Learners may have different knowledge and skill levels depending on the Essential Skill being used for any given task. Lessons and activities must be designed keeping the individual learner and his skill levels in mind.

This serves a two-fold purpose. First, it motivates the learner to increase his knowledge level. And second, it helps prevent the frustration that comes from working on activities that are too complex or the boredom that arises when activities are too easy.

Cindy Davidson provides examples of activities with increasing complexity levels in the QUILL Learning Network publication *Through the Worker's Eyes: Developing Learning Activities with Work Related Documents*. This simple chart, based on her work, describes the kind of action required to perform a given task. The task tutors ask their learners to do will depend on the learner's knowledge and skill level.

Action required	Description	Example
Level 1 Locate	Find the information requested by directly matching what the question is asking with specific information in the text.	What is the price of a bag of oranges?
Level 2 Cycle	Repeat the same search or a similar search several times to find the requested information, relating information in one part of the text to other information in different parts of the text.	List the names and file numbers of customers paying by credit card.
Level 3 Integrate	Compare and contrast information from two or more different sources by gathering the information from the different texts and combining it to create the answer.	Compare the two lists. Which type of brush is better for painting metal?
Level 3 – 4 Generate	Take information from two or more sources and integrate it with background knowledge or inference from outside those sources to generate ideas and opinions.	Explain why sales have decreased since the beginning of the month.

Davidson, C. (2009). *Through the worker's eyes: Developing learning activities with work-related documents – A guide for workshop trainers*. Walkerton, Ontario: QUILL Learning Network. www.quillnet.org/e-resources/throughworkerseyes.htm.

As you see, level 1 and level 2 activities require simple processing skills such as locating information and cycling through similar searches. Higher-skill activities involve integrating information from several sources and generating new information using a learner's background knowledge.

The research and development of an effective learning activity is a collaborative process between the tutor and the learner. It engages the learner's imagination, creativity and interest, and is relevant to the learner's life.

By creating materials and activities that reflect students' backgrounds, interests and experiences, teachers are attempting to contextualize their instruction within the students' lives and provide literacy instruction using the very materials their students will engage with as they live those lives.

*Creating Authentic Materials and Activities
for the Adult Literacy Classroom*

Erik Jacobson et al

Activity A

Finding and developing authentic materials

Using authentic materials helps learners engage with the learning in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their lives. This exercise will give tutors practice in finding and adapting authentic materials for effective lessons.

Use of handout, presentation, discussion, pairs work and reflection

Materials and equipment

Handout 13.43: *Tips for Collecting and Using Authentic Documents* (2 pages)

As many different samples of authentic documents as you can find: newspaper articles, editorials, an insurance policy, a credit card agreement, bank statements, brochures, recipes, part of a procedure manual, Ikea how-to instructions, product warning labels, medication information, rules for soccer or hockey, graphs, bus schedules, work documents, etc.

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Preparation

Copy handout.

Prepare several flip chart sheets with highlights from the handout to use in your presentation, as follows, and leave space between questions to note the responses from the group:

- What are some examples of work, home or leisure related documents?
- Where could you find authentic documents?
- Good documents are:
- Good documents do:
- Things to watch for:
- Avoid documents that are:
- Making changes to documents to make them more legible, easy to read and error-free does not usually jeopardize their authenticity
- Document checklist
 - ✓ Information is displayed in format typical of documents used in the activity
 - ✓ It satisfies the instructional purpose
 - ✓ It is visually interesting
 - ✓ It contains enough information to allow someone not familiar with the activity to use it
 - ✓ It has the potential to be used for practising the Essential Skills of Reading Text, Writing, Document Use and/or Numeracy
 - ✓ It is authentic
 - ✓ Minor errors such as spelling are corrected
 - ✓ Permission has been received by employer (or other) to use the document
 - ✓ It has Canadian content

Tutor tip

Tutors can also collect authentic documents with their learners as a learning activity. This encourages learners to take more responsibility for their learning, thereby increasing their motivation, raising their interest levels and encouraging their autonomy as self-directed lifelong learners.

Coordinator tip

Coordinators may want to create a binder or file available to tutors where documents are stored and sorted by activities or jobs, and by the Essential Skills required.

Collect and prepare the various sample documents. Make sure they are visually clear, legible and appropriate, with a broad selection. If time permits, ask tutors to bring samples from their lives and their learners' lives. You may want to give tutors and learners a sample list to guide their choices.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Distribute Handout 13.43 and review it using the flip chart sheets you prepared. Be sure to cover the points on the flip chart sheets. Note their responses to the questions as they discuss them.
2. Ask the tutors to break into pairs.
3. Ask each pair to look through the authentic documents you have provided and to select several documents.
4. Ask them to examine the documents to identify if they are useful for learning activities and why, or if they are not useful, give some reasons why not.
 - Remind tutors that they can use the document checklist on the flip chart sheet or the handout to help them analyze the documents.
5. Ask pairs to present their documents to the group for further discussion.
 - What Essential Skills will learners use to interpret the documents?
 - Good documents incorporate the Essential Skills of Reading Text, Writing, Document Use and/or Numeracy.
6. Using a flip chart sheet to record their responses, brainstorm more places they could find authentic documents in their lives and communities.
7. Suggest they create a binder of useful, authentic documents and classify them under various Essential Skills.
8. Remind them that their own learners are a rich source for documents relating to their own lives.

Activity B

Creating activities designed for different skill levels

In this activity, tutors will practise developing a learning activity using an authentic document.

Discussion, use of handouts, presentation and reflection

Materials and equipment

Handout 13.44: *Evaluating the Complexity Level of Your Activity or Task*

Handout 13.45: *Questions to Consider When Designing Learning Activities*

Handout 13.46: *Steps To Creating a Learning Activity Using Authentic Documents*

Handout 13.47: *Writing the Steps to the Answer*

Handout 13.48: *Learner Progress Checklists for Essential Skills* (12 pages)

Samples of authentic documents (collected for the previous activity)

Flip chart paper and markers

Masking tape

Preparation

Using Handout 13.44, prepare two flip chart sheets, one for low-level activities and one for high-level activities.

Review Handouts 13.45 and 13.46.

Copy handouts.

Review the presentation in step 4 below.

On a flip chart sheet, outline the steps to creating a learning activity using the presentation discussion points.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. If they are working with learners, ask tutors to keep the learners in mind as they think about learning activities throughout this activity.
2. Distribute Handouts 13.44 and 13.45. Discuss the difference between low- and high-level activities using the flip chart sheets you prepared summarizing Handout 13.44.
3. Distribute Handout 13.46 and use it to discuss the main points:
 - Research: ask the learner to identify an activity he/she enjoys, create a full description, pull out the Essential Skills used in that activity, identify complexity levels, look for authentic documents to use.
 - Decide: identify the main goal, imagine a specific scenario, identify specific Essential Skills, identify the authentic documents you will use.
 - Write: write a context for the activity in one or two sentences, orient the learner to the document, develop three to four tasks with different types of responses.
4. For discussion purposes, you may use household scheduling and organizing as an example of a typical home activity. Use it to show the steps necessary for creating a learning activity using authentic documents:

Facilitation tip

Prior to doing this activity, coordinators may want to review Unit 4, Section 4: Lesson Planning with the tutors.

Tutor tip

Regularly review the Learner Progress Checklists to get ideas for planning lessons. Suggest that the learners also keep a copy of the checklists in their binders for their reference. That way they can come forward with their own ideas for areas they want to work on.

- Essential Skills used in household scheduling and organizing: Thinking (Job Task Planning and Organizing), Document Use, Oral Communication, Reading Text, Writing, Numeracy, Working with Others.
- Learning goal: To learn how to organize and schedule appointments.
- Authentic documents: Daytimer or calendar, list of learner’s activities and appointments for one week.
- Essential Skills used in learning activity: Document Use, Thinking (Job Task Planning and Organizing), Oral Communication, Writing, Reading Text, Numeracy.
- Context of the activity: In our extremely busy lives, we need to keep track of our appointments, and in many cases, those of our families. Using a daytimer or calendar is an easy way to organize appointments.
- Writing the steps to the answer: As you write the answers here, make sure you use clear, consistent language. In other words, be aware you are modeling how the tutors should do this with their learners. (Note that the numbers in brackets indicate complexity level.)

Orient the learner to the document:

1. Scan the daytimer or calendar to become familiar with its structure, one week at a time or one month. (1)
2. Where are the days of the week written? Where are the times? Where do you enter activities or appointments? (1)
3. Scan your list of activities and appointments planned for the week. (1)

Develop three to five tasks that vary in difficulty:

1. Read slowly through the list of activities and arrange them in order, starting with the first appointment on either Sunday or Monday, depending on the layout of your daytimer or calendar. (2)
2. Think about and write down the times for ending each activity. For example, *Doctor’s appointment Friday 1:00 – 2:00.* (2)
3. In your daytimer, write down the activities for the week in order, starting with either Sunday or Monday, depending on the layout of your daytimer or calendar. (2)
4. Notice if there are any appointments that conflict with each other. (2)
5. Talk to people to make arrangements to change any appointment times or make other changes. (For example, if you are at the doctor’s appointment and it runs late, someone else may need to start supper.) (2)

5. Debrief:

- Ask the tutors if they do some of this already in their lesson writing and planning.
 - How would these suggestions complement their current work?
6. Distribute Handout 13.47 and review. Point out how you have written out the steps to the answer in the above presentation using a numbered list, action words and consistent wording.
 7. Distribute Handout 13.48.
 - The one-page checklists on this handout will help tutors and learners track their progress as they work through the Essential Skills.
 - Point out that there is a learning checklist for each Essential Skill and that Thinking has more than one checklist.

Next Steps

The focus of this unit has been on giving coordinators and tutors an introduction to the nine Essential Skills and their complexity levels, and an understanding of their transferability between life, learning and work.

A solid grounding in the nine Essential Skills helps individuals participate more fully in their lives by providing a foundation for exploring future learning opportunities and increasing one's ability to respond to workplace and life changes. An Essential Skills focus will assist literacy learners in their next steps, whether continuing to maintain their skills, upgrading in their current occupation or moving on to other educational opportunities.

A key to the 21st century, learning throughout life will be essential for adapting to the evolving requirements of the labour market and for better mastery for the changing timeframes and rhythms of individual existence.

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Please note: All URLs listed here were confirmed on January 15, 2012. However, it is likely that a number of URLs will become outdated as time goes by. We suggest that if you find a web page is no longer available, you try to shorten the URL or go to the website's home page.

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