

Empowering Adult Learners to Create Meaningful Texts and Personal Narratives in Literacy Classrooms

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Rationale for Including Learners' Experiences as Class Content

- ▶ Builds on learners' strengths (Auerbach, 1995)
- ▶ Learner-driven content is relevant (Tusting & Barton, 2003; Weinstein, 1999) and familiar: allows the class to spend more time on encoding meaning in text instead of puzzling out unfamiliar content (Freire, 1970)
- ▶ Celebrates adult learners as people (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001)
- ▶ Enables rewarding relationships with students
- ▶ Provides indirect needs assessment and classroom community building

Effective models and principles for working with emergent readers

- ▶ Oral language first (Bow Valley College, 2009; Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010)
- ▶ Whole-Part-Whole (Trupke-Bastidas & Poulos, 2007; Vinogradov, 2008)
- ▶ Bring the outside in and reduce the cognitive load by working with what learners know (Condelli & Wrigley, 2006; Vinogradov, 2008; Weinstein, 1999)

Eliciting learner-generated text

- ▶ Share about yourself
- ▶ Help learners get to know each other (build classroom community)
- ▶ Listen to and observe your students
- ▶ Put books out during break time
- ▶ Learners spontaneously tell you stories; run with them!
- ▶ Bring in pictures or prompts
- ▶ Scaffold their narratives
- ▶ Use "shadow texts" (Morgan, 1997) for sensitive topics

Activity: Narrative Schema

My work with emergent readers involves _____

Emergent readers are important because _____

Balanced Literacy Instruction: Whole-Part-Whole



Whole-Part-Whole is a balanced approach for teaching literacy. With this approach, you should start with a familiar topic that is relevant to learners' lives. Discuss the topic and elicit vocabulary or phrases. Once students are very familiar with the oral language, move to print (this is the "Whole"). Top-down activities focus on meaning. After students are able to recognize

and read the words, focus in on specific features. This is the "Part", where you take words or phrases that are meaningful to the students, and use them as the basis for focusing on developing phonemic awareness and phonics skills. You might help students focus on vowel sounds, consonant clusters, syllables, and identifying rhyming words. Including these bottom-up activities in each class is very important, but they must be done in the context of familiar language. After focusing in on the parts of language, move back out to the "Whole" by continuing to discuss the topic. This approach can take time to master. All activities, "Whole" and "Part," draw only from the language used in the learner-generated text. For more information, see Trupke-Bastidas & Poulos (2007) and Vinogradov (2010).



Once you have a student-generated text and you are certain that learners are familiar with the language in the story (orally), then you can begin the "top-down" activities. "Whole" reading activities keep the written language in context. The majority of a language lesson should focus on completing activities that are meaning-based. Depending on the structure of your class session, you may be able to lead your students in Whole-Part-Whole activities immediately after generating a text or you may prefer to create activities at home and use them the following session, or perhaps both. For additional examples of how to develop "Whole" activities based on a learner-generated text, see: Weinstein-Shr, G. (ed.), (1992). *Stories to tell our children*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Examples of "Whole" reading activities include:

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



Bottom-up activities should be used for brief periods of time during each literacy lesson. After focusing on the language in context, help your students to "zoom in" and think about the "Parts" that make up language. These activities are very important for learners developing literacy. Return to the "Whole" after focusing in on the "Part." *The following phonemic awareness activities and phonics activities have been used with permission from Vinogradov (in 2010) and personal communication:*

Phonemic Awareness Activities ("Part" Activities)

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

Phoneme segmentation: breaking a word into its sounds

What sounds are in man? /m/ /a/ /n/

How many sounds are in man? 3

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

Phoneme substitution: substituting one sound for another to form a new word <i>"What word would you have if you changed the /m/ in man to /p/?" (pan)</i>	
Phoneme deletion: recognizing what word remains when a specified sound is removed <i>"What is meat without the /m/?" (eat)</i>	
Large cards	Put letters or letter combinations on cards, hand to each student, and have students "spell out" words, starting with those related to your context, at the front of the room. Have them substitute or delete letters to form new words. Great for work on word families.
Letter tiles	Students can use letter tiles to form words and then substitute/delete letters to form new words.

Example Phonics Activities: Teaching Letters and Sounds ("Part" Activities)

Fill in the missing	To review the vocabulary words for your unit, give students a list of words that have one or more letters missing (try to choose ones that they could easily hear the sound of). Have students write the missing letters (without dictation). Many books have this activity (<i>Foundations, Lifeprints, etc.</i>). Exs: <u> </u> oa <u> </u> <u> </u> a <u> </u> <u> </u> an, <u> </u> oney, <u> </u> ilk bro <u> </u> <u> </u> er, mo <u> </u> <u> </u> er, fa <u> </u> <u> </u> er P <u> </u> tsy, h <u> </u> nd, B <u> </u> nd-aid
Circle the word	Students have a worksheet that has 3 word options. Call out a word, and they circle the word they hear. 1. sister son student 2. mother married male 3. father friend family 4. baby brother book 5. boy girl grandmother
Mixed up letters, Letter tiles	Like <i>Scrabble</i> tiles, you or a student can call out words that the learners must spell out with the tiles. They can work individually, in pairs or groups. Make a game: Put folks into teams and assign points to the team who can spell the word correctly first!
BINGO	Play BINGO with sounds (initial, final, vowels, blends), word families, rhyming words, or entire words. This is another way to connect oral language to printed language.
Dictation	Connect oral and written language by having students try to write the sounds or words you call out. Encourage new readers to write only the first sound they hear, or the final sound, and later the entire word if they're able. Encourage —inventive spelling. The literacy task of assigning symbols to sounds is a major undertaking, and students will need a great deal of practice. Dictation is also a good progress-checking activity.
Same and different	This activity helps build the automaticity that fluent readers use when reading. Create a pile of paper strips with a line in the center, and write two words on each paper strip that differ only by one or two letters. Students turn over a strip very quickly, just for a moment, and they must quickly determine whether the two words are the same or different. Then turn the paper over to check. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; gap: 20px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 10px;">shirt</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 10px;">skirt</div> </div>

FEEDBACK – ELECTRONIC COPIES – ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Please go to this link (or use the QR code) below to give us feedback and access more resources: <http://bit.ly/15rINnQ> Afterwards, you will be redirected to our website, which has our slides and additional resources. Thank you!

Selected References and Resources for Instructors

ESL Literacy Network www.esl-literacy.com

This site is operated by Bow Valley College and it contains a wealth of information and resources for educators working with ESOL literacy students (e.g., lesson plans, literacy readers, training info). You will want to visit this site often as it is updated frequently. Note: The Fall Webinar Series begins Oct. 22, 2013: www.esl-literacy.com/blog/fall-webinar-series

ProLiteracy www.proliteracyednet.org

Excellent site for better understanding how to work with literacy students. The Phonemic Awareness and Language Experience Approach modules explain the top-down, bottom-up foundation of literacy instruction.

ELL-U <http://lincs.ed.gov/programs/ell-u>

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

Making it Real www.tacomacommunityhouse.org/Page.aspx?nid=254

Croydon, A. (2005). *Making it real: Teaching pre-literate adult refugee students*. Tacoma, WA: Tacoma Community House Training Project. This wonderful resource offers an abundance of activity ideas for developing listening, speaking, reading & writing skills with pre-literate refugees.

Literacy Work International www.literacywork.com

This website hosts a number of resources and videos for instructors working with ESL students and ESL literacy students. The ESL Literacy and Reading Demonstration videos are particularly insightful.

LESLLA www.leslla.org

Low Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition (LESLLA) for Adults is an international forum of researchers who share an interest in research on the development of second language skills by adult immigrants with little or no schooling prior to entering the country of entry.

New American Horizons www.newamericanhorizons.org/training-videos

This website features a video of a sample Whole-Part-Whole lesson plan: "Building Literacy with Adult Emergent Readers". See the following website for an outline of the lesson plan for your reference: www.ell-u.org/assets/dl/SC12/NewHorizonsVideo_WholesParts.pdf

Handbook for Volunteer ESL Literacy Tutors <https://sites.google.com/site/margifelixlund/>

This website hosts a research-based, context-specific handbook that was developed for volunteer tutors working with adult ESL literacy learners in Portland, Oregon.

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