

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING READING



Learning to Love Reading

by Donna Earl

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I have been teaching adult beginning reading classes for five years in a center located in an old elementary school in the mountains of north Georgia. Teaching adults in a rural mountain community has been both a joy and a challenge. The Southern Appalachians, while culturally rich, are often economically and educationally poor. Mountain people, long isolated from the outside world, have developed solid family ties and a strong oral language, but have traditionally placed little emphasis on education. While this appears to be slowly changing, for too many adults in our community, reading is difficult or even impossible.

In the fall of 1995, I participated in a practitioner research project that gave me the chance to work with a network of adult literacy providers from across the state. Choosing an area in which to conduct research was not difficult. The greatest problem I faced was helping those students who failed to make any significant progress, through my observations and their own, in spite of their personal motivation, commitment, and apparent ability to learn. Over the years, I have had ten or 12 students who came to class faithfully, studied at home, willingly tried new techniques in class, and still made agonizingly slow progress. These students ranged from a 19-year-old high school graduate who wanted to improve her reading skills enough to get a job to a 55-year-old grandfather who was tired of job advancements passing him by. Several young men came to class desiring skills so they could read their own job manuals, and one older man wanted to read his Bible for himself. Drawing on methods learned during my years as an elementary teacher and in graduate school, I had tried both traditional strategies such as phonetic analysis and language experience, and novel interventions such as the use of color and music to enhance learning. We even tried Barbara Vitale's (1982) colored transparencies over the reading material. These approaches led to little discernible progress. One student had gained six months on the reading comprehension subtest of the Adult Basic Learning Exam (ABLE). He had attended class faithfully for four years. Another student had made two years' progress in her first year of class and had then made no further gains. Not all students experienced these problems, but for those who did, it was very frustrating.

I went to the first practitioner inquiry retreat hoping to find "the key" I had been missing. This did not happen. My peers were also puzzled by this and had experienced much the same with their own students.

A literature search unearthed little concerning adults learning to read. However, when I looked at literature dealing with teaching children to read, the overwhelming consensus was that children must spend a great deal of time practicing emerging skills if they are to become proficient readers. Gillet and Temple, in *Understanding Reading Problems-Assessment and Instruction* (1994), document numerous studies, such as Collins (1980) and Manning and Manning (1984), which point to the positive correlation between time spent reading and reading achievement. They state that people learn to read by reading and that, "we must use all our creativity and all our influence to get every student, especially the remedial reader, to read real books every day." Later I found articles that supported the concept of adult beginning readers needing to read a great deal as well. According to Jago (1995), "the more a person reads, the easier the act becomes." Fink and Devine (1993) propose that many low-level readers read poorly because they never practice the skills they have. Only by practicing emerging skills do beginning readers develop the fluency and automaticity needed to become able readers. They suggest encouraging adults to develop the habit of reading regularly.

Discussions with my current students, some of whom had been studying with me for a number

of years, revealed that they rarely, if ever, read at home. We had talked about the importance of doing so, and I had modeled reading, read aloud, and provided as many books and magazines in the classroom as I could find. In spite of my efforts, students rarely read anything at home. This led me to think about ways to motivate them to read more outside of class.

I decided to investigate two related areas. My primary research question was whether the students in my ABE program would experience greater gains in reading fluency and comprehension after reading for 15 minutes or more a day than they had without doing this reading. The second focus was the influence of personal incentives on student motivation to do the reading outside of class. Initial interviews with each student determined what, if any, materials they read at home and how much time they spent reading outside of class. Very little time was spent reading at home: in most cases, less than 15 minutes a week. Some students read the local weekly newspaper and a few tried to read the Bible. Next, I gave a battery of tests to measure reading ability and fluency before the project. These tests included the ABLE/Level 1; an informal reading inventory taken from Nadine Rosenthal's book, *Teach Someone to Read* (1987); and a taped oral reading. The results of these tests showed the students to be reading at a wide range of ability levels. Scores ranged from below first grade level to 6.7, with the average score 5.6.

I then gave the students weekly reading logs. They filled in their logs with the titles of the material they read outside of class, the amount of time they spent reading, and what they thought about the material. Each week, they turned the logs in and took another.

We discussed the idea of incentives to help motivate them to read outside of class. The students had selected pens, mugs, book bags, etcetera, from catalogs, and also planned how we should distribute the prizes. We would have a drawing whenever a student reached a reading milestone — for example, five hours of outside reading.

The winter of 1996 was severe here in north Georgia. We missed more than three weeks of school due to icy roads. Despite missing a day or two each week, however, most of the students carried on with their reading at home. Our shipment of incentives was delayed by the weather as well, and not one student ever asked about it. When it arrived in March, the students laughed and said they had forgotten there were supposed to be prizes. Several suggested that we save them until the end of the project since they were remembering to read at home without them. When I questioned further, two students said that keeping the weekly reading log was reminder enough. One gentleman, Jim, said he had always wanted to read but never found the time. "That log sheet reminds me to make the time" he stated. So, we kept the "incentives" and gave them out at the end of the project.

After three months, I gave post-tests. They included the same battery of tests in alternate forms and a second taped oral reading. I conducted closing interviews and handed out the prizes. The eight student participants logged in a total of 318 hours of reading outside of class. Bobby, the student with the lowest reading level, read a total of three hours, in ten-minute segments. Another student, Joe, logged in 108 hours, averaging close to ten hours a week. Tests revealed measurable changes in reading ability. No student lost ground in any area tested and all students showed significant progress on the Reading Comprehension sub-test. The class average on that sub-test went from a grade level of 5.6 to 7.8, a gain of 2.2 grade levels in three months. Each score was also the highest score that student had ever achieved. Improvement was also noted in oral reading, in the areas of expression, smoothness, and attention to punctuation. We also observed many life changes over the course of the project. One student bought a book for herself that she had read in class. Another began reading to her child every evening. Jim began reading scripture passages aloud in class and to his church. Twice he read verses over the local radio station. Students began to check out books from the classroom library more often, and several borrowed books from me and from the GED classroom. They began to share in the selection of new books from catalogs and willingly told others in class about books they had enjoyed. One morning, Jessie met me at the door with a book of short stories in her hand. As she gave me

the book, she asked me to read a certain story. "It's the funniest story I ever read. You've got to read this," she explained. I sat down to read, while she watched, expectantly, over my shoulder. When I got to the climax, she laughed with me, sharing the joy of good literature. This was the highlight of the project for me: a moment which is shared rather than taught.

The students began noticing changes in their own lives. They said that they read more than they ever had. Jim said he could understand more. Anne's husband commented that she didn't ask for help as often as she had, even though she was reading a lot more. Joe expressed in best when he said, "I love reading now; I didn't before."

Conclusions

My conclusions are two-fold. First, my class's experience supports the theory that reading outside of class does have a positive effect on the reading abilities of ABE students. The test results bear this out and the students expressed this, too. Second, filling out the logs and turning them in weekly was a great motivational tool. The students enjoyed keeping the logs and felt that they reminded them to keep reading.

I have several recommendations based on this project. One, certainly, is to encourage ABE students to keep daily reading logs. Another is that teachers acquire a classroom library of books and materials for students to check out. I believe that having a variety of high-interest, low-level materials readily available was critical to the success of this project. Involving students in the selection of books for the classroom seems to be important, too. Students were more enthusiastic about checking out books they had chosen and for which they had waited than they had been about books which had been selected for us.

Further research is, of course, needed. Weaknesses of this project include the small sample size and the lack of a control group. The study was also limited by the homogeneity of the students. The students in my classroom were white, low-income adults, living in a rural area. Increasing the number of participants considerably and extending the research to differing racial, socioeconomic, or cultural groups would add depth to the study and would increase generalizability.

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Reversing Reading Failure In Young Adults

by Mary E. Curtis and Ann Marie Longo

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When most people think of Boys Town, they think of Mickey Rooney or Spencer Tracy, or maybe even the phrase, "He ain't heavy, Father, he's m' brother." They might wonder if it still exists. It does, and today Boys Town is the home of a reading center that is part of the National Resource and Training Center. A laboratory for older adolescents with reading problems, the goals of the Reading Center are to develop research-based programs that prove effective in Boys Town's schools and to disseminate them to other schools around the country. Toward these goals, the Reading Center has developed the Boys Town Reading Curriculum. Our purpose in this article is to describe that curriculum, along with the research and experiences that led us to design it the way we did. Although boys and girls typically come to Boys Town two to three years behind in reading, some are as far as five to six years below grade level. We needed a curriculum that would help students at several different points along a continuum of reading development. We also needed a curriculum that would give us huge results in a relatively short period of time; the average length of stay for Boys Town youth, placed mostly through courts and social service agencies, is 18 to 22 months. Prior to coming to Boys Town, we both had worked in the Harvard Reading Laboratory with students who ranged in age from seven to 50 years old. Based on our experiences, we knew our curriculum needed to incorporate the principles that we had found successful in our one-on-one work in the Lab (Chall & Curtis, 1987). We knew that instruction had to have a developmental framework, that students' strengths had to be used to build on their needs, and that learning had to take place in stages. Unlike the lab, we wanted group instruction rather than one-on-one. We also knew that our teaching materials and techniques would need to appeal to our audience of young adults. We will discuss each of these elements in detail.

A Developmental Framework

We knew that our students' skills in reading were not going to be acquired overnight; they would develop gradually. Jeanne Chall's stages of reading development (1996, 1983) was the theory that helped us the most in recognizing how we as teachers could best accelerate this growth (see box below).

Chall's Stages of Reading

Stage	Characteristics
Stage 0: Prereading	Story can be retold while looking at book previously read; letters of alphabet can be named; names can be written; some signs can be recognized
Stage 1: Decoding	Relationships between letters and sounds, and between printed and spoken words are being learned; simple texts with predictable words can be "sounded out"
Stage 2: Confirmation	Stories and short selections are read with increasing fluency; "ungluing from print is taking place"

Stage 3: Reading to Learn	Reading is used to learn new information, new ideas, new words and concepts
Stage 4: Multiple View Points	Wide reading from a broad range of complex materials is occurring; a wide variety of perspectives and attitudes are being expressed
Stage 5: Construction	Reading occurs rapidly and efficiently; reading is used for personal and professional needs

According to Chall, reading is a process that changes as the reader becomes more able and proficient. She suggests that, in the beginning stages of learning to read, students learn how to recognize and sound out words — the basics of the alphabetic principle. With practice, their reading becomes more fluent and automatic, increasing their ease in dealing with texts that use concepts and themes already within their experiences. At this point, students have learned how to read. The challenge they face next is acquiring the ability to use reading as a tool for learning. This involves working with texts that go beyond what they already know, thereby increasing their vocabulary as well as their ability to think critically about what they read.

Build on Strengths

The content of each of the four courses in our curriculum is designed specifically to reflect students' current level of reading development, along with the level to which they need to go next. In each course, we try to make sure that we are building on strengths. Take Mark, for example. He was 16 years old when he began the program. Although he had difficulty reading text above the third grade level, his vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension skills were at about the seventh to eighth grade levels. Mark was placed in the first course in our curriculum, where students' strength in understanding is used to address their need in decoding. Although he struggled when he was asked to read, we interested Mark enough in the content of what he was reading to make that struggle worthwhile. Later, when we asked him what he would say to other students entering the program, Mark said, "No matter how hard the work is, just stick with it ... People making me read made me read better because I got used to reading."

Proceed in Stages

In each of our courses, we strive to use a three-step process when introducing new concepts and skills. First, we demonstrate or model the new material. Next, we give students an opportunity to practice, with the teacher as a guide. The third step involves independent practice with feedback. For example, to promote understanding of the alphabetic principle, we teach the concept of a syllable and then model how words can be broken into these parts. Following that, students use computer software to practice the reading and spelling of words divided into syllables. Finally, students are provided with independent practice via a cloze task with syllables. (In cloze tasks, portions of words or sentences are omitted, and learners must try to fill in the "blanks.") We use this same strategy when working on increasing students' knowledge of word meanings. We use direct instruction to introduce definitions and examples of different contexts in which words can be used. We then give students activities like games and puzzles to engage them in discussions that provide supported practice. Finally, students practice independently when they incorporate the vocabulary words in written responses to short readings.

Since our goal was to develop a reading curriculum that could be disseminated nationwide, we

needed to keep costs in mind. One-to-one tutoring is way too expensive for high schools. So, we knew from the outset that we had to get results with groups. We had another reason for wanting to work with groups. For the young adult with reading difficulties, inappropriate classroom behaviors often contributed to academic failure. By working in groups, our kids would also have opportunities to practice the social skills that are so critical to their future success (Connolly, Dowd, Criste, Nelson, & Tobias, 1995).

We designed our curriculum specifically for the older adolescent. Although the characteristics of effective reading instruction are the same, regardless of the learner's age, the specific techniques and materials used must be age appropriate. For instance, when working with young children, it's fine to teach the "oa" sound with words like *boat* and *coat*. But when working with older adolescents, who can often read words like this on sight, such an approach can turn them off. In selecting our materials and techniques, we paid particular attention to ensuring that they would be appealing to young adults. When we teach the "oa" sound, we use words like *cockroach* and *scape-goat*.

Four Courses

Each of the four courses in our curriculum lasts about 16 weeks. In each course, students meet for about 45 minutes a day, five days a week. This amounts to almost four hours of direct reading instruction a week as compared to Adult Basic Education students, who average between 5.5 and 13.0 hours of instruction per week, according to the Department of Education. Our courses are usually taken as electives, allowing students to complete their regular high school program while they are receiving help in reading.

Decisions about where to place students in the curriculum are based on whatever diagnostic data are available. On Boys Town's home campus, we give the **Diagnostic Assessments of Reading** test (Roswell & Chall, 1992), an individually administered, criterion referenced test (see page 16 for more on the DAR). Other sites we work with use other kinds of information for placement, including both standardized test data and curriculum-based measures.

Our experiences, both in the Harvard Reading Lab and in working with the Boys Town Reading Curriculum, convinced us that an accurate diagnostic picture of the students is one of the key ingredients for accelerating their growth in reading. Another key ingredient is ensuring that instruction is focused clearly on the components most critical for growth at each level of reading development. In the sections that follow, we talk about how each of our courses has been designed to accomplish this.

Foundations of Reading

Foundations, the course for young adults reading below the fourth grade level, maps onto Chall's Stage 1 of reading development. Our goals in this class are to teach the most common letter-sound correspondences, and to provide opportunities to apply this knowledge while reading books aloud. About ten students make up a Foundations class, along with a teacher and, when available, a paraprofessional. For about ten minutes each day, students work in pairs on spelling software (Spell It 3, by Davidson), which we have customized to teach up to 17 different phonics rules. Groups of students also spend about ten minutes each day playing a game with words that fit the rule they are working on, like Concentration or Wheel of Fortune (see also Curtis & McCart, 1992). Students learn very quickly that time is limited, and they know the more they are on-task, the more fun they will have.

The remainder of class each day is spent in a small group, four or five students with a teacher, reading aloud from a novel. Novels are at a high enough level to provide practice in applying the phonics rules being learned, and interesting enough to make the effort it takes to do so worthwhile.

Novels we've used include *Whispers From the Dead* by Joan Lowery Nixon and *Toning the Sweep* by Angela Johnson. The reading is done collaboratively, with students and teacher taking turns reading and passing back and forth at unexpected times. This technique requires everyone to follow along and to stay engaged. The teacher supplies unknown words when necessary, while at the same time encouraging students to identify un-familiar words. Informal discussions about the novels help to maintain comprehension and interest. Homework includes finding words that do and do not fit rules, and sentence writing.

Adventures in Reading

Adventures, the course that corresponds to Chall's Stage 2 of reading development, is intended for those reading between the fourth and sixth grade levels. The goals in this course are to improve students' ability to recognize words and their meanings, and to increase oral reading fluency. As in Foundations, students work in pairs for about ten minutes each day, on computer software customized to improve their reading vocabulary (*Word Attack 3*, by Davidson). They spend about ten minutes each day in small groups playing games that provide practice with the words, like *Password* and *Jeopardy*.

Oral reading is part of Adventures for the same reason we use it in Foundations: students need informed practice as they learn to read. We use the same procedure for oral reading in this class as in Foundations, and the emphasis continues to be on application and enjoyment during reading. In Adventures, however, fluency rather than accuracy is the focus. Novels we've used to promote these goals include *Something Upstairs* by Avi and *Flight #116 is Down* by Caroline B. Cooney. Homework includes crossword puzzles, cloze sentences, and analogies — all providing additional practice on the same words used in the computer software and the games.

Mastery of Meaning

Mastery, which relates to Chall's Stage 3 of reading development, is designed for those between the sixth and eighth grade levels. The goal in Mastery is to build up knowledge of word meanings to improve comprehension. The classes run anywhere from ten to 15 students per teacher.

The design of the activities and materials in Mastery are based on five principles of effective vocabulary instruction drawn from the research literature (McKeown & Curtis, 1987):

1. students get numerous opportunities to learn a word's meaning;
2. words are presented in a variety of contexts;
3. students are asked to process words in active, generative ways;
4. distinctions as well as similarities among words' meanings are stressed;
5. improvement in students' ability to use words in speaking and writing, as well as to recognize their meanings, is emphasized.

Students read mostly informational text, including articles from materials like [Disasters and Heroes](#), Jamestown Publishers, and [The Kim Marshall Series](#), Educators Publishing Service. Because students are now making the transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn," much of the reading is done silently. Homework includes writing assignments using target vocabulary words, along with cloze passages and sentence completions.

Explorations

The final course in the curriculum is designed to correspond to Chall's fourth stage of reading development. Intended for those reading at the eighth grade level and beyond, the goal in Explora

tions is to promote the ability to integrate information, via both reading and writing. Students learn study skills like note taking and summarizing in the context of materials taken from a variety of content areas. *Strategies for Reading Nonfiction* by Sandra Simons, published by Spring Street Press, is a resource that we use frequently. Students practice using study skills when they work on problem-solving software (*Where In Time Is Carmen Sandiego*, Broderbund). Use of study skills is also required on an activity we call the Explorations Board, where they respond in writing to short-answer and essay questions. Homework provides additional practice in using reading and writing as tools for learning.

Assessing Effectiveness

We use curriculum-based information, data from norm-referenced tests, and consumer data to assess the effectiveness of the program. In the first three courses, students take weekly pre- and post-tests on the content being taught, and feedback on weekly writing assignments is provided via rubrics. Explorations' students get weekly updates on their progress.

Results from curriculum-based measures have been quite encouraging. For instance, by the end of Mastery, students can use nearly 75% of their words correctly in writing, as compared to 35% before the course begins. The curriculum-based measures have also helped us to see which students may need some additional help or additional challenge. Students appreciate data like these as well. Even when they get less than 100% on their post-tests, they can see improvements from their pre-tests, and this keeps them motivated.

We use norm-referenced tests for evaluation because results from national samples, as well as results from the various sites we work with, provide baselines for gauging how much reading growth students are making. We picked the tests to correspond to the components addressed in each course. For example, in Foundations and Adventures, we have given students the basic reading and vocabulary sub-tests of the *Woodcock-Johnson, Revised* (Woodcock & Johnson, 1989). Average gains after 36 weeks of instruction have been more than two grade levels. In Mastery and Explorations, students take the vocabulary and comprehension sub-tests of the *Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test* (Karlsen & Gardner, 1995). Gains on these measures average one year for every semester of instruction.

At the end of every course, we ask our students (our “consumers”) questions about the class activities, materials, assignments, and so on. Responses are always positive. Particularly revealing is the question that asks kids what advice they would give others who are just starting the program: “It helped improve my learning and spelling abilities. Take advantage of the opportunity to learn to do your work. I liked the classes and the computers are fun. Most of all I liked the games we played and I didn’t even mind reading so much.”

Creating an Effective Reading Program

Although the content of this curriculum was designed specifically to appeal to older adolescents (15-20 years old), we believe that the following factors make the program successful and can do the same for any ABE program.

Instruction is based on theory and research:

A curriculum must have a strong foundation in theory and research. When students are continuously engaged in tasks that are at the appropriate level of reading development, accelerated growth will be the result.

Instruction is structured and planned:

For anyone who has failed in school, an environment that is clear, consistent, and encourages risk-taking is crucial. When learners know ahead of time what they will be asked to do, and that help will be available when they need it, they feel safe and in control.

Teachers are trained:

Teacher training and consultation are essential ingredients for a successful program. Teachers need to understand the rationales behind curricula, the goals and principles of what they are teaching, and the reading profiles of their students. They must also be able to ask questions, seek advice, and receive feedback once instruction has begun.

Classroom atmosphere is positive:

A program needs to make sense to students and provide them with hope. They need to know why they have been placed in a particular class, and more importantly, what they will be able to do when they get out.

Students are challenged:

Teachers and students alike need to define success both by how much is learned as well as by how well tasks get performed. When success is measured by how much is learned, students are willing to be continually challenged. As challenge results in growth, motivation will increase.

Concluding Remarks

Concern about illiteracy abounds, yet solutions are difficult to find. Indeed, in many circles, reading failure in older adolescents and adults is viewed as failure too late to overcome. The Boys Town Reading Curriculum has successfully reversed reading failure in young adults. This success would not have been possible without the cooperation and help of the teachers and students for whom the curriculum is designed. This is what really makes the curriculum work. It was developed in vivo rather than in vitro, keeping us continually aware of the needs of the teachers and the students we were seeking to help. To them we owe a special thanks.

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STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH EMERGENT ADULT READERS

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Establish Positive Expectations

There is a strong emotional component working within the adult beginning reader. Adults entering a beginning reading program often have negative memories of past schooling. Many learners have developed low self-esteem from earlier experiences at school and sometimes believe from the outset that they will not succeed at reading.

Adults learn best when they feel that the teacher is caring and that the teacher believes they will succeed. One of the teacher's most important tasks is to reassure learners that they will indeed become readers.

Expect Success

At the end of each lesson, the student should feel that he has succeeded at something new. For example, the student can learn his own name as a sight word at the very first lesson. Not only will he then "own" this learning, but also the teacher can tell the learner that he is already a reader!

The learner needs a great deal of positive, frequent feedback. He should leave each class feeling that he has accomplished something and is a competent, successful learner. The learner needs to see that he has made real progress.

Create a learner-friendly classroom

The classroom environment is extremely important. Adults do not want to be treated like children, and the teacher should keep in mind that the learner is an adult. The adult may not have learned to read, but she is frequently extremely successful in other areas of life and deserves respect.

A traditional classroom atmosphere can discourage adults because they often recall that they have failed in just such a setting. Formality should be avoided because a superior-subordinate relationship is not necessary between adults in this setting and may have a negative effect.

A collaborative effort

The learner should be treated as a responsible, intelligent person who is in charge of her learning. Reading should be a collaborative effort, with the learner gradually assuming more and more responsibility for self-direction.

The teacher is a co-partner in learning who helps the learner to develop strategies that will enable her to read. Reading is not taught, but learned.

The classroom should be learner-centered and self-paced to the greatest extent possible. Rather than following a strict, prescriptive routine, the teacher should make use of the information gathered during the initial assessment in planning for lessons and considering learners' needs on an individual basis.

Reading is social

Reading has a social aspect that should not be overlooked. Every effort should be made to adapt class activities to include the minimal reader. Everyone in the class should be able to participate fully without risk of being embarrassed.

Friendliness and respect among the teacher, learner, and classmates help create a warm atmosphere. The teacher should avoid criticism and ridicule at all costs, because success so heavily depends upon establishing a positive environment. Errors should be viewed as learning opportunities by teacher and student alike, and the learner should be able to take a risk without fear.

Adult learners

Many of the techniques used in teaching children are ineffective for adults because adults are not only developmentally different but bring a wealth of life experiences into the classroom. Many adults are impatient with letter recognition games that children might enjoy, for instance. They want to read meaningful text.

Adults also process information differently from children. They need adequate thinking time. Instruction should be presented in small increments with plenty of time for repetition and practice.

The learner should not be asked to read aloud what she has not had the opportunity to read silently. And during oral reading, the teacher should be ready to prompt, but give the learner enough thinking time.

Colloquial pronunciation of words should be accepted. Many proper names, for example, have varying pronunciations. The teacher might point that out. The teacher should also stress that in reading, an unpronounceable word can still be a recognizable word – “Disraeli” may be hard to say, but each time the reader sees the word, she recognizes the character.

Set goals for reading

Unless an adult learner is compelled to attend an adult education class, he probably has a specific reason for being there. Many students join learning programs in response to a personal need. They usually do not want to learn to read for its own sake, but because a situation now requires it. For example, a child might need help with homework or the learner has made a job change. Reading is then a vehicle for coping with a life change. The teacher should first establish what brought the learner into the program and use this information to plan lessons and activities.

The learner will do best if he has some control over his learning and is an active participant to the fullest extent possible. Early in the program, the teacher and student together should establish goals. Sometimes goals are very specific. At other times, the students may have only vague, general ideas about why he wants to read. The teacher must then broaden his awareness about the purpose of written communication, showing him how reading can be used to help him cope more fully personally and within society.

Clarify goals

The teacher can help the student clarify his goals and together discuss ways of accomplishing them. Long-term goals, such as becoming a proficient reader or obtaining a GED, may seem overwhelming at first. But the teacher can also help the student develop short-term goals to establish a feeling of accomplishment as soon as possible. For this reason, goals should be broken down into smaller objectives, and the teacher should be careful not to make the instruction too fast-paced.

At the beginning of each lesson, the teacher should discuss what will be done that day to establish with the learner the daily objectives. Toward the end of the session, the teacher should do a short evaluation so as to emphasize what learning took place and to summarize.

For instance, at each session certain objectives can be established: the learner will read and write one sentence; learn three sight words, etc. At the end of the session, the teacher can point out how well the student reached the objective and succeeded. Besides specific feedback at every session, review of previously written and read material such as the learner’s language experience stories can be effective in showing the learner just how much progress she has achieved.

Outcome-based instruction

Goals should be based on outcome-based instruction. That is, learning should be performance-centered, and learning experiences should be organized around competency-developed categories (Knowles, 1980). Goals are determined by the learner and teacher together, and goal-related material should be used for reading instruction. If, for example, the learner wants to read self-help literature, then this will be at least one of the vehicles of instruction.

Select meaningful material

Teachers often complain about the lack of relevant reading material for beginning adult readers. The teacher might consider frequently overlooked, but easily accessible, material that can be of real use to the learner. These are simply the real-world materials so relevant to practical life. Common meaningful, real-life materials include: job manuals, income tax forms, classified ads, newspapers, magazines, repair manuals, medicine bottles, thermometers, food labels, driver's license manuals, work invoices, maps, children's literature books, calendars, handouts from self-help groups, menus, health pamphlets, cookbooks, mail, signs and bumper stickers. Many of these can be taught as sight words. A good strategy is for the teacher to ask the learner to bring in materials that she wants to read. Another is to encourage the student to look for and notice environmental print outside the classroom.

The teacher should try to collect every magazine and book possible to give to the student. Let the student take them home for as long as she wants them – even permanently. The student is now a reader and needs to possess printed material.

Language experience stories

Language experience stories that the learner has dictated to the teacher are also extremely relevant and interesting to the learner because she has personally produced them and thus “owns” the work. All these materials should be read first for meaning. The teacher can then select certain words to teach as sight vocabulary, for phonic analysis, or for structural analysis.

Relate reading to meaning

Quite often learners have not made a connection about the purpose of reading in life. Many learners have managed to compensate in other ways for reading deficiencies and have come from environments where print is not a priority. Frequently reading is not valued in the learner's community.

The learner may want to read for a specific purpose, such as understanding a job manual, but may not realize how reading can otherwise be important. After all, he has already become an adult without this ability. The teacher can help the learner become aware of the function of literacy in the outside world and broaden his horizons. The learner needs to realize the relevance of reading and how it can help him communicate. From the beginning, the teacher should guide the learner into the realization that speaking, listening, reading and writing are related. Adult beginning readers often perceive reading as a decoding process. To them, reading is a process of sounding out words or identifying their individual meanings rather than a meaning-making process (Keefe & Meyer, 1980).

Other learners are poor at auditory discrimination and do not realize the association between sounds and their written symbols. Still other readers can read a sentence but not understand what is meant.

Empower the learner

The teacher should take an active role and guide the learner towards self-direction by explaining the process of reading as much as necessary. The teacher should build on the strengths of the learner and present reading and writing as enjoyable activities. The teacher should also explain why certain strategies are being used, and how they help the learner accomplish his goals.

The teacher can explain how phonic and word structure activities help the learner to break down unfamiliar words, for instance. The teacher can help the learner develop auditory discrimination skills with illustrations and practice in selectively attending to sound patterns. Rhyming, thinking of words with the same beginning or ending sounds, and discriminating between similar words are good activities.

Develop critical thinking skills through Schemata

An important strategy in developing comprehension is to combine schemata, or the learner's prior knowledge about a subject, with new information from the printed matter to get meaning. Schemata are internal structures, somewhat like mental maps, that include knowledge, ideas and concepts about the subject. If the learner can recall her schemata before reading and relate it to the material to be read, comprehension will be enhanced.

Give examples

The teacher can help prepare the student by demonstrating concrete examples of how the teacher gets meaning from a passage. The teacher can give examples from personal experience, explaining what she does to activate prior knowledge and how she uses various strategies to increase comprehension. This includes discussion about what the student already knows and conversation among the students about the topic to be read.

Activities, such as the above, reinforce the connection between oral and written language and set the stage for reading. Another technique is to ask students to make predictions about the passage, often using titles and illustrations as guides, and to preview what is to be read. Another strategy is to introduce a few new words before reading, making certain that the learner knows what they mean.

Use physical props as needed

Many adult students have problems with eye coordination. When the learner is reading, she should use any props or techniques that make the eye connection easier. For example, she should be able to trace the word with a pencil, follow the print with her finger or an index card, or subvocalize as necessary.

A large-print adult dictionary is helpful for students. The teacher can encourage students to use a small mirror to see how the mouth shapes certain sounds. If a tape recorder is available, the students can read aloud their own stories and listen to them.

Utilize multisensory and multimodality activities

Multisensorial activities are effective because students often learn better using one sense over another. Some benefit more from visual activities, some from auditory exercises, and others from touching. In cases like these, a variety of activities will be beneficial. Tracing on rough surfaces such as sand or sugar, writing in the air, touching lips when making sounds, and shaping letters with materials such as modeling clay are all successful for many learners. Also, many adults have trouble focusing for long stretches and should be able to move about when necessary.

Achieve mastery with practice

The learner must have every chance to practice until mastery is achieved. There is no point in rushing through the curriculum if the learner is left feeling frustrated. New material needs to be absorbed, and much of the class session should be spent practicing actual reading and writing.

The teacher should repeat and overteach. Adult reading students often have no reinforcement outside the classroom. They proceed at different rates, but mastery of the reading process will take time and much effort on the learner's part.

Summary

All adults can learn, and some strategies enhance learning. The adult is capable of self-direction and full participation in the learning process. The teacher can facilitate this by his confidence in the learner; by establishing goals, methods of instruction and assessment mutually with the adult; by relating goals to learner needs; and by creating a comfortable, positive environment for learning.

Ideas for Working with Low Literacy Learners

1. Label items in the classroom. Ask the learner to match a duplicate set of labels. Take the labels off the items and have the learner return as many as possible.
2. Make and display posters on a topic such as healthy foods. Whenever possible, combine a word with a picture.
3. Make a chart that contains information about several learners. Record learners' names and information such as where they were born and how long they have lived in the US in chart form. Use the chart to make sentences, ask questions, and write a paragraph using the Language Experience Approach.
4. Display lists such as simple rules of the classroom or of group work.
5. Design activities using environmental print such as Pepsi, Safeway, and Stop. Have learners bring in food containers, take a walk around the block reading signs, make a map of the school or neighborhood.
6. Use or make picture dictionaries.
7. Use games such as Sorry, Bingo, Concentration, Go Fish.
8. Use tapes. Buy or make Read-Along Books.
9. Use drama. Create, present, and write short role plays.
10. Use patterned language such as predictable books, chants, or songs.
11. Use Frame Sentences which practice a pattern but allow for individual variation, e.g.:
What can you do with your feet?
I can walk with my feet.
I can run with my feet.
Where can you walk?
I can walk to...
I can walk on...
I can walk over...
I can walk through...
I can walk around...

12. Teach sound-symbol correspondence with names, countries, and other personal information. Build a profile of the class and develop stories about the class as a whole.
13. Make greeting cards and sign names. Address envelopes.
14. Begin each lesson by writing the day, date, and topic on the board. Close each lesson by writing a one-sentence summary of the class that the learners dictate.
15. Use real materials to read from whenever possible: ads, comics, the weather page, photo captions, book titles. Learners write/dictate their own captions for pictures.
16. Use dialogue journals even if early writing is pictures and a few copied words.

BUILD A CONNECTION

*“The more students know before they read,
the more they learn when they read.” (Durkin, 1981)*

Because...

Students learn more information from the text if they can link what they are reading to something they already know—to their past experiences, knowledge, and attitudes;

Therefore...

We need to help our students link what they read to prior knowledge and experiences. We need to find out if what they know corresponds to what the author assumes they will know, and fill in the knowledge gaps.

Strategies to find out what students already know:

- [] Ask questions to see what they already understand.
- [] Brainstorm the topic with students to find out what ideas and concepts they are already familiar with.
- [] Use graphic organizers to build a picture of what they know.
- [] Ask students what they *want* to know about the topic.
- [] Ask students to generate a list of words they think will be in the selection.
- [] List important words from the selection. Ask students to use symbols (!, ?, happy faces, etc.) to indicate words they know well, words they are acquainted with, and words they don't know.

Other ideas:

Contributed by: Betty Harbin and Anne Jolly
As presented at the ASCD Classroom Leadership Conference
July 1999, Orlando, FL

GIVE 'EM A PLAN BEFORE THEY READ!

Because...

All students can learn to construct meaning from text if they have a collection of strategies (however, some readers do not develop such strategies unless these are specifically taught to them);

Therefore...

We need to help students develop a specific set of skills and procedures to help them understand and enjoy reading a text.

Strategies...

- [] Prepare a “textbook scavenger hunt” to acquaint students with the organization of their text.
- [] Be sure students understand *the purpose* for which they are reading. What should they learn from the text?
- [] Present background information about the topic through interesting stories, articles, demonstrations, labs, guests, field trips, etc.
- [] “Think aloud.” Model strategies such as recalling what you know about the topic, predicting what information you will find, asking questions, skimming, identifying key ideas, paraphrasing, and so on.
- [] Introduce new vocabulary in the selection before students read.
- [] Give students a list of statements, some to be verified, some to be refuted, some not addressed. As students read they will note if the statement was true, not true, or not addressed.
- [] Ask students to list what they think they will learn from the text and questions they would like to see answered.

Contributed by: Betty Harbin and Anne Jolly
As presented at the ASCD Classroom Leadership Conference
July 1999, Orlando, FL

GIVE 'EM A PLAN DURING READING!

Encourage students to use some of these strategies:

- [] Read *silently and independently*.
- [] Read silently to a specific place in the text, stop and discuss with other students, make a prediction, then continue reading silently.
- [] Listen as the teacher reads several paragraphs orally, then read silently.
- [] Impose their own organization on the text. Use *organizational tools* such as outlines and graphic organizers.
- [] Use *imagery*. Mentally picture the ideas, situations, and actions they read about.
- [] Use context clues and other approaches to *get the meaning of unfamiliar words*.
- [] Find the *main idea*. Locate *important points*.
- [] *Relate* important points to each other.
- [] *Decode words* by using parts of the word they understand.
- [] *Check out their predictions and hypotheses* that they made before they began to read.
- [] *Monitor* their own reading by asking "What did I learn from what I just read?" or "What did that part of the text say?"
- [] *Reread* the selection, or parts of the selection, as needed.
- [] Work with other students to find the answers to specific questions, verify previous predictions, etc.
- [] Practiced *timed* reading.
- [] *Change* their strategies as necessary.
- [] Listen to audio taped versions of the text occasionally silently read the text as they listen to the tape.

Other ideas:

Contributed by: Betty Harbin and Anne Jolly
As presented at the ASCD Classroom Leadership Conference
July 1999, Orlando, FL

GIVE 'EM A PLAN AFTER READING!

Encourage students to use some of these strategies:

- [] *Summarize* the information they read.
- [] *Paraphrase* the text. Ask students to tell you what the text said in their own words.
- [] *Write their own definitions* of unfamiliar words they found. Keep them away from the glossary for this activity!
- [] *Compare and contrast* what they knew before they read with what they know after they read.
- [] *Discuss* their responses to the text and *share the strategies* they used to understand it.
- [] *"Build a picture"* of what they learned using graphic organizers.
- [] *Use the information* they read in creative ways, through art, dramatization, writing activities, group or individual presentations, etc. Encourage use of available technology.

Other ideas:

Contributed by: Betty Harbin and Anne Jolly
As presented at the ASCD Classroom Leadership Conference
July 1999, Orlando, FL

Try these!

Contributed by Betty Harbin and Anne Jolly, as presented at the ASCD Classroom Leadership Conference, July 1999, Orlando. FL

When you are stuck for a writing assignment, try these. They work in every subject for every level writer. Be creative! Have students write an obituary for a body organ they are researching, or create a advertising jingle convincing viewers to use the distributive property. How about a birth announcement for a historical figure or for a grammar rule recently discovered? Hope this list spurs your creative juices and sends your students down some new and instructive paths.

ads	complaints	game rules	movie scripts
advice columns	constitutions	graffiti	movie reviews
allegories	contracts	greeting cards	mysteries
anecdotes	conversations	grocery lists	myths
announcements	critiques	gossip	
anthems	cumulative stories		news analyses
apologies		headlines	newscasts
assumptions	data sheets	horoscopes	newspapers
autobiographies	definitions	how-to-speeches	notebooks
award	descriptions		nursery rhymes
	diaries	impromptu speeches	
ballads	diets	indexes	obituaries
beauty tips	directions	inquiries	observations
bedtime stories	directories	insults	odes
beginnings	documents	interviews	opinions
billboards	double-talk	introductions	
blurbs	dramas	invitations	palindromes
book jackets		job applications	pamphlets
book reviews	editorials	jokes	parodies
books	epilogues	journals	party tips
brochures	epitaphs	jump rope rhymes	persuasive letters
bulletins	encyclopedia entries		phrases
bumper stickers	endings	labels	plays
	essays	letters	poems
calendar quips	evaluations	lists	post cards
campaign speeches	exaggerations	love notes	posters
cartoons	exclamations	lyrics	prayers
captions	explanations		problems
cereal boxes		magazines	problem solutions
certificates	fables	marquee notices	profound sayings
character sketches	fairy tales	memories	prologues
church bulletins	fantasies	metaphors	proposals
community bulletins	fashion articles	menus	propaganda sheets
couplets	fashion show scripts	monologues	protest signs
comparisons	folklore		protest letters
comic strips	fortunes		product descriptions
			proverbs

puppet shows
puns
puzzles

quips
quizzes
questionnaires
quotations

ransom notes
reactions
real estate notices
rebuttals
recipes
record covers
remedies
reports
requests
requisitions
resumes
reviews
revisions
riddles

sales notices
sales pitches
satires
schedules
secrets
self-descriptions
sentences
sequels
serialized stories
signs
silly sayings
skywriting messages
slogans
soap operas

society news
songs
speeches
spoofs
spook stories
spoonerisms
sports accounts
sports analyses
superstitions

TV commercials
TV guides
TV programs
tall tales
telephone directories
textbooks
thank you notes
theater programs
titles
tongue twisters
traffic rules
transcripts
travel folders
travel posters
trivia

vignettes
want ads
wanted posters
wise sayings
wishes
weather reports
weather forecasts
warnings

yarn
yellow pages

MOST FREQUENTLY MISSPELLED WORDS

1. accept
2. accommodate
3. acknowledgement
4. acquaintance
5. across
6. affect
7. already
8. among
9. analysis
10. apparent
11. appearance
12. arrangement
13. attendance
14. beginning
15. benefited
16. business
17. calendar
18. canceled
19. coming
20. committee
21. confident
22. conscientious
23. controversy
24. convenience
25. convenient
26. criticism
27. description
28. difference
29. disappoint
30. effect
31. eligible
32. endeavor
33. equipped
34. especially
35. exceed
36. except
37. existence
38. experience
39. explanation
40. extension
41. February
42. foreign
43. fourth
44. government
45. guarantee
46. height
47. immediately
48. incidentally
49. its
50. judgment
51. laboratory
52. lose
53. necessary
54. oblige
55. occasion
56. occurred
57. omission
58. omitted
59. opportunity
60. original
61. paid
62. pamphlet
63. personal
64. personnel
65. possession
66. practical
67. practically
68. preferred
69. principal
70. principle
71. privilege
72. probably
73. procedure
74. proceed
75. professor
76. quantity
77. questionnaire
78. really
79. receive
80. recommend
81. reference
82. referred
83. referring
84. schedule
85. separate
86. similar
87. sincerely
88. stationery
89. strictly
90. their
91. there
92. too
93. undoubtedly
94. unnecessary
95. using
96. volume
97. weather
98. Wednesday
99. whether
100. writing

SYNONYMS

Of the more than 3,000 languages in the world, English is used in over 50% of the world's books, over 50% of international telephone calls, over 60% of the world's radio programs, over 70% of international mail, and over 80% of the world's computer text. One reason is that English has so many synonyms. Writers and speakers have a wealth of choices. As a result, they can express nuances of meaning that may be impossible in other languages.

Synonyms

For SAID

explained
mumbled
answered
called
asked
yelled
exclaimed
replied
muttered
giggled
signed
moaned
whined
chuckled
pleaded
begged
questioned
guessed
suggested
promised
laughed
yawned
commanded
screamed
gulped
screeched
whispered
wailed

For THINK

mull
cogitate
conceive
consider
imagine
invent
remember
recall
evaluate
judge
conclude
reason
note
ponder
ruminate
dream
reflect
observe
hypothesize
visualize
categorize
compare
analyze
recollect
contemplate
speculate
study
suppose

DOLCH WORDS

Preprimer	Primer	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade
a	all	after	always	about
and	am	again	around	better
away	are	an	because	bring
big	at	any	been	carry
blue	ate	as	before	clean
can	be	ask	best	cut
come	black	by	both	done
down	brown	could	buy	draw
find	but	every	call	drink
for	came	fly	cold	eight
funny	cat	from	does	fall
go	did	give	don't	far
help	do	going	fast	full
here	four	has	first	got
I	get	had	five	grow
in	good	her	found	hold
is	have	him	gave	hot
it	he	his	goes	hurt
jump	into	how	green	if
little	like	just	its	keep
look	must	know	made	kind
make	new	let	off	laugh
me	no	live	off	light
my	now	may	or	long
not	on	of	pull	much
one	our	old	rtead	myself
play	out	once	right	never
red	please	open	sing	only
run	pretty	open	sing	only
said	ran	nut	sleep	pick
see	ride	round	tell	seven
the	saw	some	their	shall
three	say	stop	these	show
to	she	take	those	six
two	so	thank	upon	small
up	soon	them	us	start
we	that	then	use	ten
where	there	think	very	today
yellow	they	walls	wash	together
you	this	were	which	try
	too	when	why	warm
	under		wish	
	want		work	
	was		would	
	well		write	
	went		your	
	what			
	white			
	who			
	will			
	with			
	yes			

Daily Grammar

Daily Grammar is a free service of Word Place, Inc. which sends you e-mail messages with a grammar lesson five days of the week followed by a quiz on the sixth day. All lessons are complete with explanation and worksheet. Following is a sample.

DAILY GRAMMAR - - - from Word Place

by Mr. Johanson

Lesson 42: Adjectives

When you are using separate nouns, be sure to use the articles (*a*, *an*, or *the*) before each noun. If only one thing or person is meant, do not repeat the article. Examples:

I need a secretary and a bookkeeper. (two persons)

I need a secretary and bookkeeper. (one person)

She lost the black and white kitten. (one kitten)

She lost the black and the white kitten. (two kittens)

Choose the correct form in these sentences.

1. Mrs. Jones is (a wife and a doctor, a wife and doctor).
2. Jane wanted (a girl and a boy, a girl and boy) for the committee.
3. Jack was wearing (a green and red, a green and a red) shirt.
4. Joan wants to be (a rock star or a lawyer, a rock star or lawyer).
5. Jim brought (a bat and ball, a bat and a ball).

See the answers on the following page.

www.wordplace.com Mr. Johanson graduated from Utah State University in 1966 and has taught high school and junior high school English for 30 years. He now teaches 7th and 9th English at Canyon View Junior High in Orem, Utah.

Answers

1. a wife and doctor
2. a girl and a boy
3. a green and red
4. a rock star or a lawyer
5. a bat and a ball

To unsubscribe from Daily Grammar, reply to this message with Remove as the subject. To see the previous lessons, visit the Archive section of our web site at <http://www.dailygrammar.com> Daily Grammar is a free e-mail service of Word Place, Inc. Daily Grammar is powered by E-mail Workshop — <http://www.emailworkshop.com>

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Education Planet Newsletter is delivered weekly to your email address free of charge. It has many helpful links with learning activities and ideas. Following is an edited sample.

EDUCATION PLANET NEWSLETTER

(2/26/01-3/4/01)

The Education Planet Newsletter brings you this week's top educational sites, news stories and featured "Curriculum Corners" as selected by our team of teacher reviewers. Please visit the Education Planet site at <http://www.educationplanet.com> to access over 100,000 educational resources including 16,000 lesson plans.

Note: <http://www.educationplanet.com/WeeklyNewsletter.html>

CONTENTS:

What's New at Education Planet

- The Education Planet Challenge - Last Chance To Win A \$500 Shopping Spree At Office Depot
- Education Grant Resources

This Week's Featured Curriculum Corner

- Women's History

Top Sites of the Week

- Science: NASA Connect
- Language Arts: Writing-World.com
- Math: Totally Tessellated
- Online Project: Iditarod: Race Across Alaska
- Social Studies: American Memory from the Library of Congress
- Teaching Resources: Iditarod Learning Expedition

Top Educational News Stories

- Report: Diesel School Buses Loaded With Toxins
- Study Suggests Marker in the Brain for Dyslexia
- Students' Discovery Surprises Mars Scientists

Message From Education Planet

- Attention Teachers!!! Become an Education Planet Teacher Reviewer!

Education Grant Resources

Teachers! Education Planet has partnered with eFunding Solutions to bring you easy access to 1,000's of grants. Click here to search for federal, state & foundation grants!
<http://www.lessonplanet.com/e-funding.html>

THIS WEEK'S FEATURED "CURRICULUM CORNER":

Title: Women's History

URL: <http://www.educationplanet.com/articles/women.html>

This month, teachers have a great opportunity to educate their students about the achievements of women throughout history...

TOP SITES OF THE WEEK:

SUBJECT AREA: **SCIENCE, MATH, TECHNOLOGY**

Title: NASA Connect

URL: <http://connect.larc.nasa.gov/index.html>

Grade Level: 4-8

Rating: * * * * *

Content: Math, Science and Technology Videos, Teacher's Guides, Online Activities,
Classroom Experiments.

Do your students ever feel that all their science and math classes have no practical value? Here's a great resource to change their minds: NASA Connect. Here they can find out how all that math and science is used everyday by NASA scientists. The video segments are available for satellite downlink, can be viewed in many areas on PBS Television stations or are viewable on the web. An airtime schedule is available online along with teacher's guides including classroom activities and experiments.

SUBJECT AREA: **LANGUAGE ARTS**

Title: Writing-World.com

URL: <http://www.writing-world.com/>

Grade Level: 6-12+

Rating: * * * * *

Content: Guides for Writers, Writing as a Career, How to Get Your Book Published,
Improving Writing Skills.

Do you have any students who aspire to be writers? If so his website will be a great resource for them. There are a whole range of resources to understand the career field of writing in its various forms. How does one get started as a writer? What do you need to know about the business side of writing? How do you get your work published? How can you improve your writing skills? What markets are available to me? What about writing Children's books? The answers to these questions and more are available on this site.

SUBJECT AREA: **MATH, ART**

Title: Totally Tessellated

URL: <http://library.thinkquest.org/16661/>

Grade Level: 4-12+

Rating: * * * * *

Content: History of Tessellations, Numerous Examples, tessellation Gallery, Background
Information, Advanced Topics in Math and Art.

Everyday there are tessellated designs all around us but we just don't recognize them as specific

mathematical patterns. The Totally Tessellated website will open your eyes up to all of these designs and to the history of tessellations. Be sure to visit the historical image gallery to see the numerous examples posted there.

The Essentials and Mosaic/Tilings sections will show you how these interlocking designs work. It's amazing how simple design elements can produce such beautiful patterns.

SUBJECT AREA: *ONLINE PROJECT*

Title: Iditarod: Race Across Alaska

URL: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/itarod/home.htm>

Grade Level: 3-8

Rating: * * * * *

Content: Background Information, Teacher's Guide, Lesson Plans, Special Reports, Daily Updates, Be a Reporter and Post Your Article Online.

Are you ready for this year's Iditarod Race which starts March 3? You can get your classes ready by visiting this web site and reading all the background information. There are stories about past races and information about training and how the dogs are cared for. There is a clickable map with information about each checkpoint and the nature of the trail. Once the race starts there will be daily updates and special reports. Your students can also become reporters and post their articles online. Be sure to scroll down to the bottom to find the link to the teacher's guide with cross-curricular activities and standards correlations.

SUBJECT AREA: *SOCIAL STUDIES, AMERICAN HISTORY*

Title: American Memory from the Library of Congress

URL: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amhome.html>

Grade Level: 4-12+

Rating: * * * * *

Content: Thematic Multimedia Collections, Lesson Plans, Lesson Ideas, Educational Games, This Day in History.

The primary aim of the National Digital Library Program is to provide access to the various American History and American Culture holdings at the Library of Congress including photographs, rare manuscripts, books, maps, sound recordings, and video recordings. Currently there are over 90 thematic multimedia collections that can be accessed over the internet from the American Memory website. In addition to these collections there is a Learning Page section with background information on each collection as well as lesson plans, professional development information, and educational games.

SUBJECT AREA: *TEACHING RESOURCES*

Title: Iditarod Learning Expedition

URL: <http://www.midtel.net/~burtont/>

Grade Level: 4-6

Rating: * * * * *

Content: Web-Based Lessons in Math, Social Studies and Language Arts, Iditarod Quiz.

Take your students along on this Iditarod Learning Journey. By following the web-based lessons, students will visit other Iditarod websites to dig for information. How much do the distances between checkpoints vary? What do calculated values for mean, median and mode tell us about the race course? In what direction do the mushers travel from checkpoint to checkpoint? Why is the race course not more straight?

How did this race get started anyway? The final lessons deal with writing poetry using an alternative point of view and writing newspaper articles.

TOP EDUCATIONAL NEWS STORIES OF THE WEEK:

Report: Diesel School Buses Loaded With Toxins
<http://www.cnn.com/2001/HEALTH/02/13/toxic.buses>

Study Suggests Marker in the Brain for Dyslexia
<http://www.cnn.com/2001/HEALTH/parenting/02/16/dyslexia.ap>

Students' Discovery Surprises Mars Scientists
<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/releases/2001/boulder.html>

MESSAGE FROM EDUCATION PLANET:

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SCANS

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) was convened in February 1990 to examine the demands of the work place and to determine whether the current and future workforce is capable of meeting those demands. The Commission was directed to: (1) define the skills needed for employment; (2) propose acceptable levels in those skills; (3) suggest effective ways to assess proficiency; and (4) develop a strategy to disseminate the findings to the nation's schools businesses and homes.

Definitions of SCANS Competencies and Foundation Skills

- **Competencies**

- Resources
- Information
- Interpersonal
- Systems
- Technology

- **Foundation Skills**

- Basic Skills
- Thinking Skills
- Personal Qualities

Competencies

RESOURCES

C1 Allocates Time

Selects relevant, goal-related activities, ranks them in order of importance, allocates time to activities, and understands, prepares, and follows schedules. Competent performance in managing time include properly identifying tasks to be completed; ranking tasks in order of importance; developing and following an effective, workable schedule based on accurate estimates of such things as importance of tasks, time to complete tasks, time available for completion, and tasks deadlines; avoiding wasting time; and accurately evaluating and adjusting a schedule.

C2 Allocates Money

Uses or prepares budgets, including making cost and revenue forecasts, keeps detailed records to track budget performance, and makes appropriate adjustments. Competent performance in managing money includes accurately preparing and using a budget according to a consistent and orderly accounting method; accurately calculating future budgetary needs based on projected costs and revenues; accurately tracking the extent to which actual costs and revenues differ from the estimated budget, and taking appropriate and effective actions.

C3 Allocates Material and Facility Resources

Acquires, stores, and distributes materials, supplies, parts, equipment, space, or final products in order to make the best use of them. Competent performance in managing material and facility resources includes carefully planning the steps involved in the acquisition, storage, and distribution of resources; safely and efficiently acquiring, transporting or storing them; maintaining them in good condition; and distributing them to the end user.

C4 Allocates Human Resources

Assesses knowledge and skills and distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance and provides feedback. Competent performance in managing human resources includes accurately assessing people's knowledge, skills, abilities, and potential; identifying present and future workload; making effective matches between individual talents and workload; and actively monitoring performance and providing feedback.

INFORMATION

C5 Acquires and Evaluates Information

Identifies need for data, obtains them from existing sources or creates them, and evaluates their relevance and accuracy. Competently performing the tasks of acquiring data and evaluating information and evaluating its appropriateness; and determining when new information must be created.

C6 Organizes and Maintains Information

Organizes, processes, and maintains written or computerized records and other forms of information in a systematic fashion. Competently performing the tasks of organizing and maintaining information includes understanding and organizing information from computer, visual, oral, and physical sources in readily accessible formats, such as computerized data bases, spreadsheets, microfiche, video disks, paper files, etc.; when necessary, transforming data into different formats in order to organize them by the application of various methods such as sorting, classifying, or more formal methods.

C7 Interprets and Communicates Information

Selects and analyzes information and communicates the results to others using oral, written, graphic, pictorial, or multi-media methods. Competently performing the tasks of communicating and interpreting information to others includes determining information to be communicated; identifying the best methods to present information (e.g., overheads, handouts); if necessary, converting to desired format and conveying information to other through a variety of means including oral presentation, written communication, etc.

C8 Uses Computers to Process Information

Employs computers to acquire, organize, analyze, and communicate information. Competently using computers to process information includes entering, modifying, retrieving, storing, and verifying data and other information; choosing format for display (e.g., line graphs, bar graphs, tables, pie charts, narrative); and ensuring the accurate conversion of information into the chosen format.

INTERPERSONAL

C9 Participates as a Member of a Team

Works cooperatively with others and contributes to group with ideas, suggestions, and effort. Demonstrating competence in participating as a member of a team includes doing own share of tasks necessary to complete a project; encouraging team members by listening and responding appropriately to their contributions; building on individual team members' strengths; resolving differences for the benefit of the team; taking personal responsibility for accomplishing goals; and responsibly challenging existing procedures, policies, or authorities.

C10 Teaches Others—Help others learn

Demonstrating competence in teaching others includes helping others to apply related concepts and theories to task through coaching or other means; identifying training needs; conveying job information to allow other to see its applicability and relevance to tasks; and assessing performance and providing constructive feedback/reinforcement.

C11 Serves Clients/Customers

Works and communicates with clients and customers to satisfy their expectations. Demonstrating competence in serving clients and customers includes actively listening to customers to avoid misunderstandings and identifying needs; communicating in a positive manner especially when handling complaints or conflict; efficiently obtaining additional resources to satisfy client needs.

C12 Exercises Leadership

Communicates thoughts, feelings, and ideas to justify a position, encourages, persuades, convinces, or otherwise motivates an individual or groups, including responsibly challenging existing procedures, policies, or authority. Demonstrating competence in exercising leadership includes making positive use of the rules/value followed by others; justifying a position logically and appropriately; establishing credibility through competence and integrity; taking minority viewpoints into consideration.

C13 Negotiates to Arrive at a Decision

Works toward an agreement that may involve exchanging specific resources or resolving divergent interests. Demonstrating competence in negotiating to arrive at a decision involves researching opposition and the history of the conflict; setting realistic and attainable goals; presenting facts and

arguments; listening to and reflecting on what has been said; clarifying problems and resolving conflicts; adjusting quickly to new facts/ideas; proposing and examining possible options; and making reasonable compromises.

C14 Works with Cultural Diversity

Works well with men and women and with a variety of ethnic, social, or educational backgrounds. Demonstrating competence in working with cultural diversity involves understanding one's own culture and those of others and how they differ; respecting the rights of others while helping them make cultural adjustments where necessary; basing impressions on individual performance, not on stereotypes; understanding concerns of members of other ethnic and gender groups.

SYSTEMS

C15 Understands Systems

Knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively within them. Demonstrating competence in understanding systems involves knowing how a system's structures relate to goals; responding to the demands of the system/organization; knowing the right people to ask for information and where to get resources; and functioning within the formal and informal codes of the social/organizational system.

C16 Monitors and Corrects Performance

Distinguishes trends, predicts impact of actions on system operations, diagnoses deviations in the function of a system/organization, and takes necessary action to correct performance. Demonstrating competence in monitoring and correcting performance includes identifying trends and gathering needed information about how the system is intended to function; detecting deviations from system's intended purpose; troubleshooting the system: making changes to the system to rectify system functioning and to ensure quality of product.

C17 Improves and Designs Systems

Makes suggestions to modify existing systems to improve products or services, and develops new or alternative systems. Demonstrating competence in improving or designing systems involves making suggestions for improving the functioning of the system/organization; recommending alternative system designs bases on relevant feedback; and responsibly challenging the status quo to benefit the larger system.

TECHNOLOGY

C18 Selects Technology

Judges which set of procedures, tools, or machines, including computers and their programs, will produce the desired results. Demonstrating competence in selecting technology includes

determining desired outcomes and applicable constraints; visualizing the necessary methods and applicable technology; evaluating specifications; and judging which machine or tool will produce the results.

C19 Applies Technology to Task

Understands the overall intent and the proper procedures for setting up and operating machines, including computers and their programming systems. Demonstrating competence in how to apply technology to task includes understanding how different parts of machines interact and how machines interact with broader production systems; on occasion installing machines including computers; setting up machines or systems of machines efficiently to get desired results; accurately interpreting machine output; and detecting errors from program output.

C20 Maintains and Troubleshoots Technology

Prevents, identifies, or solves problems in machines, computers, and other technologies. Demonstrating competence in maintaining and troubleshooting technology includes identifying, understanding, and performing routine preventative maintenance and service on technology; detecting more serious programs; generating workable solutions to correct deviations; and recognizing when to get additional help.

Foundation Skills

BASIC SKILLS

F1 Reading

Locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and documents—including manuals, graphs, and schedules—to perform tasks; learns from text by determining the main idea or essential message; identifies relevant details, facts, and specification; infers or locates the meaning of unknown or technical vocabulary; judges the accuracy, appropriateness, style, and plausibility of reports, proposals, or theories of other writers.

F2 Writing

Communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; records information completely and accurately; composes and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, proposals, graphs, flow charts; uses language, style, organization, and format appropriate to the subject matter, purpose, and audience. Includes supporting documentation and attends to level of detail; checks, edits, and revises for correct information, appropriate emphasis, form, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

F3 Arithmetic

Performs basic computations; uses basic numerical concepts such as whole numbers and percentages in practical situations; makes reasonable estimates of arithmetic results without a

calculator; and uses tables, graphs, diagrams, and charts to obtain or convey quantitative information.

F5 Listening

Receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues such as body language in ways that are appropriate to the purpose; for example, to comprehend, to learn, to critically evaluate, to appreciate, or to support the speaker.

THINKING SKILLS

F6 Speaking

Organizes ideas and communicates oral messages appropriate to listeners and situations; participates in conversation, discussion, and group presentations; selects an appropriate medium for conveying a message; uses verbal language and other cues such as body language appropriate in style, tone, and level of complexity to the audience and the occasion; speaks clearly and communicates a message; understands and responds to listener feedback; and asks questions when needed.

F7 Creative Thinking

Uses imagination freely, combines ideas or information in new ways, makes connections between seemingly unrelated ideas, and reshapes goals in ways that reveal new possibilities.

F8 Decision Making

Specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, and evaluates and chooses best alternative.

F9 Problem Solving

Recognizes that a problem exists (i.e., there is a discrepancy between what is and what should or could be); identifies possible reasons for the discrepancy, and devises and implements a plan of action to resolve it. Evaluates and monitors progress and revises plan as indicated by findings.

F10 Seeing Things in the Mind's Eye

Organizes and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects or other information; for example, sees a building from a blueprint; a system's operation from schematics; the flow of work activities from narrative descriptions; or the taste of food from reading a recipe.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

F13 Responsibility

Exerts a high level of effort and perseverance toward goal attainment. Works hard to become excellent at doing tasks by setting high standards, paying attention to details, working well and displaying a high level of concentration even when assigned an unpleasant task. Displays high standards of attendance, punctuality, enthusiasm, vitality, and optimism in approaching and completing tasks.

F15 Social

Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy and politeness in new and on-going group settings. Asserts self in familiar and unfamiliar social situations; relates well to others; responds appropriately as the situation requires; takes an interest in what others say and do.

F16 Self-Management

Assesses own knowledge, skills, and abilities accurately; sets well-defined and realistic personal goals; monitors progress toward goal attainment and motivates self through goal achievement; exhibits self-control and responds to feedback unemotionally and non-defensively; is a “self-starter.”

These and other related findings were released in several reports, including Skills and Tasks for Jobs; Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance; and What Work Requires of Schools.

Source:

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. 1991. What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor.

WHERE TO ORDER THE SCANS REPORT

- **WHAT WORK REQUIRES OF SCHOOLS****A SCANS REPORT FOR AMERICA 2000**
U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Washington, D.C. 20210
(202) 219-6871
No Charge
- **LEARNING A LIVING: A BLUEPRINT FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE****A SCANS REPORT FOR AMERICA 2000**
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- **SKILLS AND TASKS FOR JOBS****A SCANS REPORT FOR AMERICA 2000**
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