Making It Real:
Teaching Pre-literate Adult Refugee Students

Tacoma Community House Training Project

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INTRODUCTION

Imagine what it must be like for pre-literate adult refugees arriving in the United States. They may not have climbed stairs before let alone used an elevator or escalator. They may have never held a pen, yet are faced with computers and other technologies. They are used to passing information orally but not in writing since they are not literate in their own language. They love their children but cannot discipline them the way they are used to. They may be fearful about doing the wrong thing because of lack of cultural knowledge and language skills. They are concerned about how they are going to survive. What a bewildering and frightening world it must be.

These refugees are already survivors. They may have experienced trauma related to events in their own country, the country of first asylum, or from resettlement in the United States. They may have health problems, mental health difficulties, and lots of questions. They may have lived in the United States for many years, or they may be relative newcomers. Whatever their background and situation, one thing they all have in common is a need to speak, read, and write in English.

Pre-literate adult refugees present a number of challenges for teachers and programs. Unlike other learners who are literate in their own language, pre-literate students may have had no formal contact with written language before. Teachers cannot rely on students taking notes to aid memory and promote self-study. Learners may need basic instruction in how to hold a pencil and other literacy basics that we take for granted in a literate culture. Pre-literate learners may not recognize common pictoral representations that teachers often use to represent objects with literate learners. Pre-literate learners may not have handled books and papers or be familiar with the cultural expectations in the classroom. Where and how do you start teaching these learners? What do you need to teach them? What do they need and want to know?

What's in This Book?

This book attempts to answer these questions and reviews some effective practices for teaching pre-literate adult refugees. It describes techniques and activities that support these practices. It is divided into sections on teaching speaking and listening skills and reading and writing skills. Although their literacy level is what makes pre-literate students especially challenging to teach, oral language still needs to be developed and actually developed first as many of the approaches to teaching literacy described here rely on learners reading their own words. Each of the sections on teaching language skills provides examples and descriptions of useful approaches, techniques, and activities. There is a checklist of language competencies that learners who are new to the language need to know, a section on teaching multi-level groups, and information on resources that teachers and service providers can use.

LEARNER PROFILES

Throughout the book, you will read about the experiences of four learners – Sambath, Fatuma, Awad, and Pao – and their teachers – Ann, Mike, Chris, and Brenda. While the descriptions are fictional, the learning situations and experiences reflect stories from real students. Their backgrounds and situations represent a cross-section of adult pre-literate refugees.

TEACHING SPEAKING AND LISTENING SKILLS

> *It is a hot day. Fatuma sits on the outside steps of her second floor apartment. Sounds drift up from the street below, neighbors, and radios and televisions in other apartments. It is a stream of sound. There are bursts of laughter and Fatuma wonders what everyone is saying. A woman approaches up the stairs, and says something. She is not sure what. The woman moves on. "Thank you," Fatuma whispers in English. It is the only thing she can think of in English right now. She feels embarrassed and longs for a real conversation. She wants to tell her she is hot, she is afraid, she knows a lot of things, and that she is happy because her children will soon be coming home from school.*

Learning to speak another language can be stressful, time consuming, and confusing for adults. The needs of newcomers are vast and their ability to handle the complex world of the United States is limited by the amount of English they know and their familiarity with the culture. Learning to speak English is one of the first steps they can take to get control of their lives. First comes the ability to understand and then to speak. So, they need time to focus on building exposure to hearing the language and using some new vocabulary and short phrases. They also need to develop some oral competency that should be developed before attempting to transition into reading and writing their new language.

To be a competent speaker of another language, you need to develop both accuracy and fluency. Getting it right so you can communicate a simple message is essential. However, Level 1 students have to tackle complex situations where more than a few simple words suffice. So, they need to be able to quickly put together utterances of what they do know. As teachers, we need to provide opportunities for both kinds of learning and find the balance between unstructured conversation and controlled practice of new language.

A balanced program has carefully constructed practice opportunities where students learn and practice new language that you introduce to meet their needs and fulfill their purposes. In addition, there is time for students to use their new language to communicate messages and their own meaning. It is like constructing a house. Students need structured building blocks of language to make a structure, but the house also needs to be decorated with the students' personal stamp.

> *Fatuma and her tutor Mike had been practicing saying what food Fatuma liked. They had done various controlled activities related to food. Near the end of the session, Mike asked, "What do you like in America, Fatuma?" A torrent of things spilled out – "I like go school, I like job, I like bus no walking, I like study."*

Your students' desire to speak will depend on how urgent or meaningful the stimulus or concrete hook is. The hook can be rather contrived, where you are controlling the language the students use, or can be real opportunities for speaking, where your students are in control and make decisions about what language they are using. The following sections on controlled practice techniques and conversation activities give suggestions for handling both of these types of interaction.

As a general rule, build oral competency before introducing the written form of the language, as some approaches to literacy rely on students' being able to read their own words.

Getting Started

Starting to speak in a new language requires a number of skills to come together at once. Your students need to hear and understand the meaning of the message and respond to it. However, students need plenty of time to hear the language without having to make verbal responses. The section on listening activities gives ideas on how to build in opportunities for students to hear language in context without the burden of having to formulate verbal responses. The lower a student is in terms of level, the more time you will have to spend on listening and recognition activities.

> *Fatuma and Mike were reviewing colors by looking at magazine pictures. "Fatuma, point to red. That's it. Point to blue. Point to green. No, that's yellow. Green. Green. Point to green. That's it. Point to black. Today you remembered four colors!"*

Adults forming words and phrases in a new language require patience, empathy, and encouragement. They have to retrain muscle groups in the mouth and throat to make unfamiliar sounds. It can be embarrassing and awkward for students when they twist their mouths into new positions. Therefore, give lots of time to practice simple dialogs and phrases so they become automatic. Build in lots of repetition. Repetition does not have to be choral parroting of language. There are a number of ways to build in meaningful repetition. See the section on grids for ideas.

Exposure is another important concept. Your students will probably not remember something if they meet it only once. They need to have bits of language they know recycled back in various contexts a number of times. For example, if you had worked on greetings, be sure to bring back this language when working on a dialog for shopping. This way, they can ask for a price and greet the shopkeeper.

Level 1 students will most probably have already learned some limited English words and phrases. A good starting point is to get to know your student and get some basic information from them. Following that, choose items from the checklist section on Basic Language on page 76. This section contains some initial words and phrases for social interaction, giving personal information, and saying numbers and dates. As students gain some ease in managing some everyday tasks, you will be able to start introducing some of the conversation techniques listed below and go beyond basic language to choose other topic areas that you know are relevant to your students' immediate needs.

Other items that are worth teaching early on are:

The language to express feelings
I'm happy / sad / angry.

The language for classroom directions
Stand up / repeat / copy / write.

The language for classroom items and ways to ask for them
A pencil / eraser please.
I need paper / scissors.

Social language of the classroom that can be used in many other daily contexts
How are you?
See you tomorrow.

Introduce question types by building understanding first. Students at Level 1 will not fully master "Wh" question types, but provide plenty of exposure in hearing them.

Controlled Practice Techniques

Beginning students need a curriculum that carefully builds grammatical structures and vocabulary and gives them opportunities to practice these new language skills in a controlled environment. Focused practice of new items is helpful, limiting use of other language. For example, students may practice a dialog for getting someone's attention in different contexts or learn the names of food items. It is a chance for them to 'get it right' or focus on pronunciation.

> *Pao was working with his teacher Brenda on a dialogue to give greetings. "How are you?" "I'm fi—," Pao replied. "Like this – fiNE," emphasized Brenda. "NNNNNN, fiNE." " How are you?" "I'm fine." "How is your wife?" Brenda asked. "My wi—fine, thanks." " WiFE. FFFFFFF wife," responded Brenda. "How is your wife?" "My wife fine, thanks." Brenda holds up her fingers repeating Pao's words and pointing to her fingers as she does so. She stops when she comes to the missing word " My wife hmm fine." "What's this?" "My wife IS fine."*

Identifying each small step or piece of the language puzzle you are teaching allows you to assess and give your students feedback so you and they can see how they are doing.

> *Sambath was working on writing the days of the week with her teacher. "Great, Sambath, you remembered to write all the days with capital letters. Look at this one we did last week. Only Monday has a capital letter. You've got it!"*

ORAL DRILLS

Oral drills are a classic technique to build confidence in students and help them memorize chunks of language. They focus on accuracy, and, by speeding up the practice, are a foundation for building fluency. They allow students to practice getting their mouths around new language. And they can practice chunks of language in isolation. Devise drills that are meaningful where students can give answers that are true for them rather than have students perform grammar gymnastics such as, *the apples are in the big hat* or *the apple is in the small hat*.

What's your phone number?	*720-4590*
What's your address?	*143 South Pearl Street*

Procedure

Use picture cards as cues for drills.

Hold up a picture and have students say the sentence.

Deal the cards out faster to speed up fluency.

Have students pick cards and say the sentence.

I went to the store / park / hospital / school.

VISUAL SUBSTITUTION DRILLS

Visual substitution drills can help students understand how sentences are put together, and encourage them to create original sentences based on a particular structure. In this example, students begin with a visual representation of the statement *I eat rice every day*. Add other frequency expressions, such as *once a week* and *twice a month*. Give students plenty of practice, pointing to each slot of the sentence as students listen, repeat, or say it on their own. Paying attention to students' mastery and interest, add more options for each slot of the sentence, such as the object, verb, or subject. Ask for student suggestions along the way.
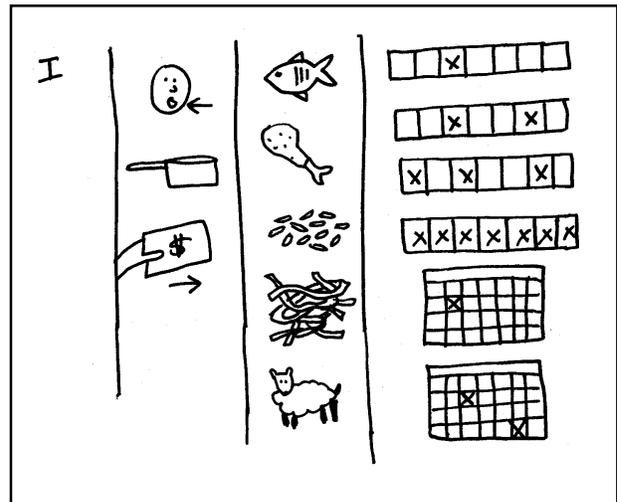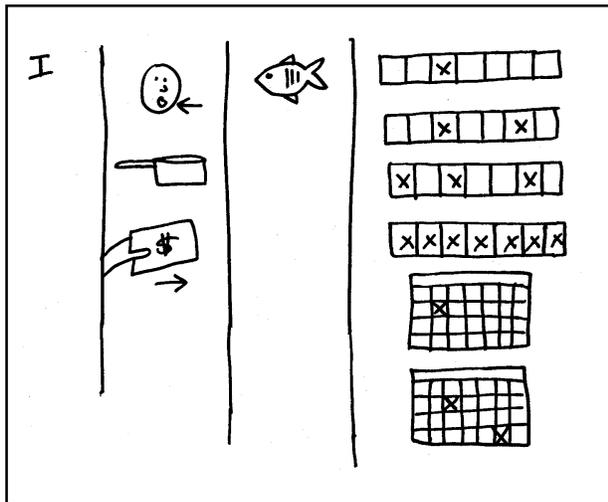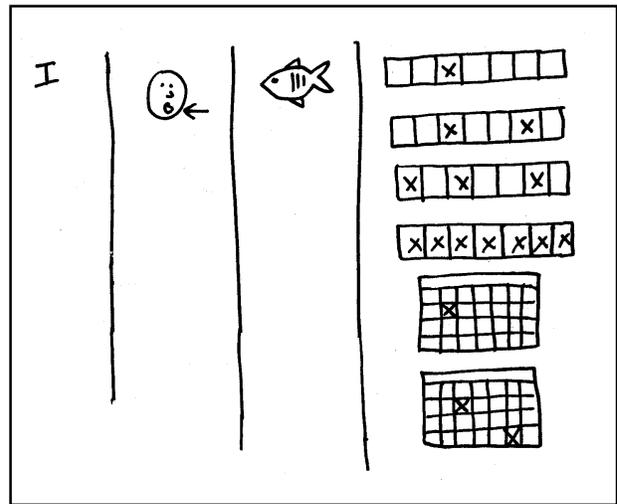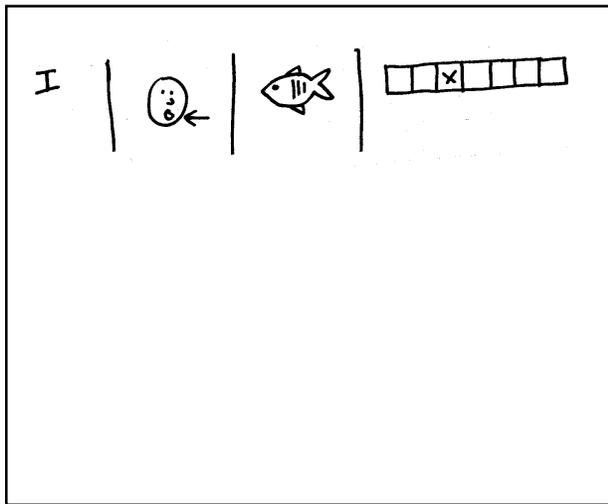
PICTURE STORIES

Create simple picture stories to illustrate an experience of your own or to help re-enact an experience your students have related. By controlling the language in this exercise, you can model useful language that students will need to tell a story of their own.

Procedure

Show the pictures one by one to the students.

Ask simple questions to identify people, context, time, and what is happening.

Review from the beginning and give a short phrase that summarizes each picture:

My arm hurt.
I called the nurse.
I went to the hospital.
My husband was worried.
I came home late.

Have students repeat the phrases.

Keep reviewing by going back to the first picture and inviting a student to say the phrase.

Hand out pictures to students for them to recall the story on their own.

Invite students to tell a story of their own that the topic evokes.

Listen to the story or write it down as a language experience story if you wish.

GRIDS

Grids work well with pre-literate students since little literacy is required. Pictures, symbols, single words, or short known phrases are used. A grid is a matrix that provides a structure for controlled oral practice and provides a bridge to conversation. The following activities are based on the sample grid.

Procedure

Introduce the topic or vocabulary set. Use pictures, a dialog, TPR, discussion, etc.

Elicit or put the pictorial information on the grid. With a group of students, add names to the column on the left. This is a good natural opportunity to ask for names and spelling if they know it. If you are teaching just one student, add names of friends and family members and include yourself.

Model the new language. Grids most naturally lend themselves to questions and answer format, but statements also work well.

	🧵	🧵	🏊	💻
Tou	✓	✓	✗	✗
Xang	✓	✓	✗	✗
Chue	✓	✓	✓	✗
Mee	✓	✗	✓	✗

Can you sew by hand?
Can you sew with a machine?
Can you swim?
Can you use the computer?

Do you like pizza?
Do you like tea?
Do you like ice cream?
Do you like crab?

	🍦	☕	🍕	🦀
Mohamed	✓	✓	✗	✗
Hawa	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kadijah	✓	✗	✓	✓
Abdi	✓	✓	✗	✓

Mark the student's answers on the grid.

Repeat for the next student.

Whenever students are ready, they can take over the role of the questioner. Grids can also be handed out for students to complete in groups, rotating the role of asking questions.

■ **Line-up**

If students need more practice with the target language in order to complete the grid, set up a line-up. Have students line up facing each other. Have students ask each other the questions. Move a student on one side of the line from one end of the line to the other. Students shuffle one partner to the right, facing a new partner. Repeat the process until everyone in the line has paired with everyone on the other side.
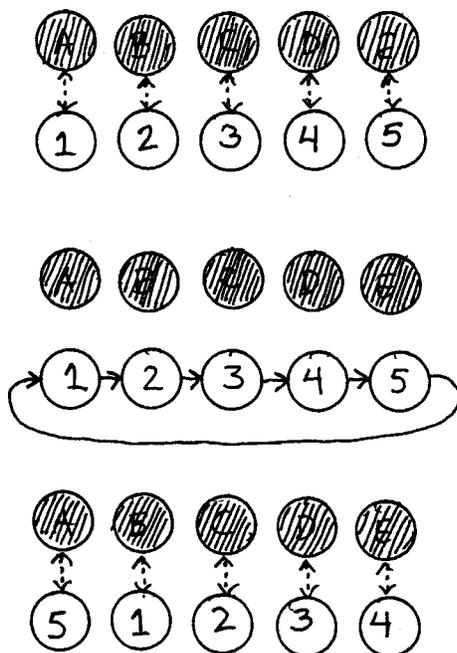
Once the information on the grid has been elicited, recorded, modeled, and practiced in this way, pick and choose from these optional practice and literacy activities below:

■ **True / false**

Make statements about the information on the grid. *Mohamed likes pizza.* Point to the squares on the grid as you do so. Have students identify it as *true / false or right / wrong.* Repeat a number of times.

■ **Other grid activities**

• Point to squares silently and have students produce appropriate statements.

• Practice various types of questions and answers:

• Yes / no questions

Do you like pizza?

Does your daughter like pizza?

- Either / or questions

  Does Hawa like pizza or ice cream?
  Who likes ice cream? Hawa or Mohamed?

- "Wh" questions

  What does Mohamed like?
  Who likes ice cream?
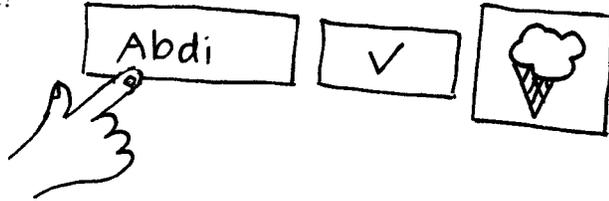
- Have students count, add, compare, contrast, analyze, summarize, generalize, or speculate about the information on the grid.

  What do most people in your family like?
  How many people like crab?
  Do many Somali students like coffee?

- Learn words and phrases to make connections.

  I like pizza, but my daughter doesn't.
  Mohamed likes tea and coffee.

- Introduce new vocabulary and structures.

  Everybody / nobody
  Nobody likes tea and coffee.

  Conjunctions
  Hawa hates red but loves blue.

  Negatives
  My husband doesn't like rain.

  Third person statements

  They like tea and crab.

- Discuss the information in a general way.

  How often did you eat it?
  Where did you get it?
  How did you cook it?
  Did you eat it in _____ ?

- Ask anything that the students can understand in this context that helps to extend the practice.

- Practice literacy activities.

- Match vocabulary words on index cards to various squares in the grid.

- Complete cloze (fill in the blank exercises).

  Mohamed likes _____ .

- Read true / false statements

  Hawa likes pizza.
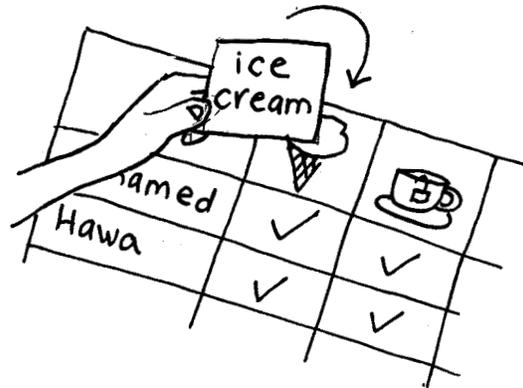
- Combine parts of sentences to match information on the grid.

  My husband likes tea.

- Have students respond to written questions.

  Do you like ice cream?
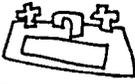
	Cambodia	U.S.
water		
food		
cook		
use		
eat		

Have you ever.....?				
	🚑	sushi	☎ 911	↑
Sahid	✗	✗	✓	✓
Qing	✓	✗	✓	✗
Luong	✓	✗	✓	✓
Habiba	✗	✓	✗	✗

New years

	U.S.	Laos	VN
Date			
Food			
Drink			
wear			
Do			

INFORMATION GAP

Students work with a partner. Each one has incomplete information. The aim of the activity is for students to exchange information so that each has complete information. Information gaps work well to focus students on target language. Students may be asking questions to exchange information, working with lists, pictures, or grids.
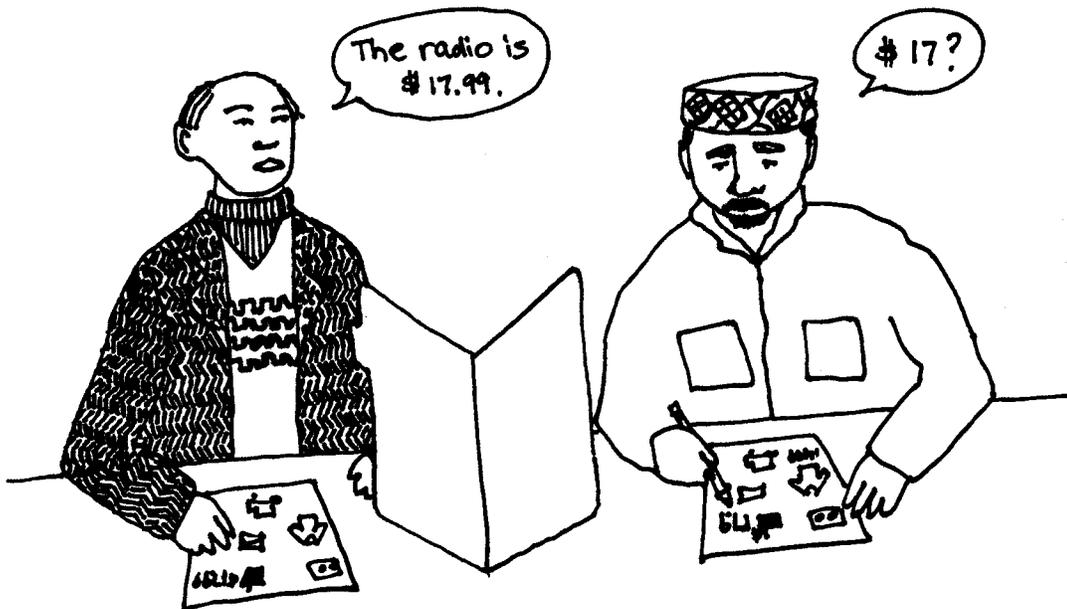
Procedure

Seat students so they cannot see the other student's paper. Sometimes having a visual barrier such as a book standing up on edge is helpful.

Model how the activity works the first few times you use it. You be Student A and have a volunteer or other student play Student B.

Model the language necessary to complete your part of the information.

The following ideas all assume that the students are working in pairs. They each have partial information. Each type of information gap can be modified for different target language.

- **Lists**

One student has a list of numbers, the other has a blank sheet of paper. Works for phone numbers, prices, and times.

■ **Pictures**

Use pictures of objects or places or items with prices attached / colors / different numbers of items / pictures of places and their opening times. Students practice asking the questions you have already introduced. *How much is the sofa? $80.*

■ **Picture story or sequences**

Each student has pictures to complete a simple picture story. They tell what they have and decide together what order they should be in.

■ **Maps**

Use simple maps with places and street names marked. Students ask for the location of services or places.
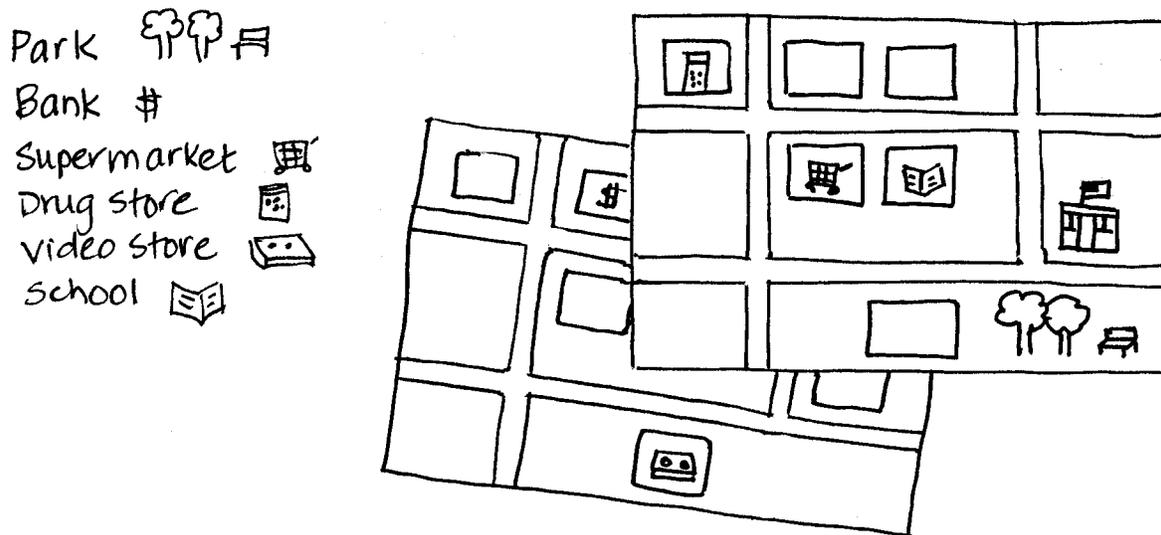
Information gap activities also provide an excellent context to introduce the language of asking for clarification. This language is very helpful and necessary for completing information gap activities. There are many ways to ask for clarification. Some helpful ways include:

The 'what' is on the top shelf?
Repeat again please.
What is #2?
722-43—?

BOARD GAMES

Games can provide focused practice with the added benefit of taking some of the focus off the language itself. Single vocabulary items, questions, and phrases can all be practiced with board games. You can cut pictures from magazines or draw items on the board. You need a basic board design, die or spinner, and a game piece for each player.
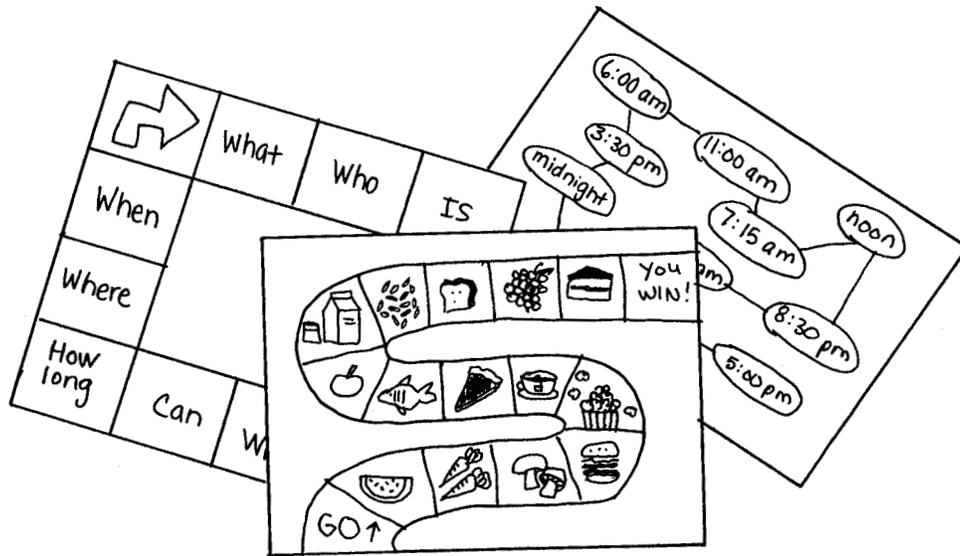
Add pictures of clothing, objects, food, or any vocabulary you want to practice. Students who land on the item have to name it or use a sentence or phrase that is your target language. For example, *He is wearing pants* or just *pants*.

As students learn sight words, you can write single words on the game squares. For example, *Address* for *What is your address?*

DIALOGS AND ROLE PLAYS

Many early acquired structures can be helpfully practiced through four to six line dialogs. Ensure that some of the dialog is language that is already known to the student. Introduce only one question and answer or a new phrase.

<u>Procedure</u>

Provide context for the dialog by showing a picture of where you say it or drawing something.

Model the dialog a couple of times or play a tape so students hear the whole thing. You may want to change hats or point to different people as you say their part.

Point to the picture of the person who is speaking and see how much students can recall what they heard.

Have students repeat the line after you.

Continue on to elicit the response for that line.

Have students repeat after you.

Go back to the beginning and motion to two students to say the line and response.

Go on to the next line of the dialog.

Repeat for the subsequent lines of the dialog until the students are able to say most of the dialog.

Put students in pairs to perform the dialog with each other.

Have students perform again making sure that everyone gets a chance to say both parts.

Conversation Activities

You may introduce grammatical structures, phrases, and vocabulary to meet common daily situations, pick and choose between competencies on a competency list, or follow a published course book. In addition to this, students need to practice language they already know, make new connections, and have the opportunity to initiate communication in a less structured way. Students experience internal "Aha!" moments which come from needing to get their meaning across in spontaneous speech.

> *Awad came late to class. Chris, his teacher, greeted him and asked the standard, "How are you today?" Awad went over to the check-in chart and put his name card under the unhappy face. "Oh, you are not so happy today, Awad. Why?" "My son doctor," he said. "Oh, I am sorry. What is the problem?" Awad paused, "He-he …" Awad pantomimed vomiting. "He is vomiting." "Eh, say again." "Vomiting," replied Chris. "Vomiting, vomiting," Awad mumbled as he took his seat.*

Creating openings for students to speak without planning out what they will say provides balance in the curriculum and gives you an opportunity to assess if your students can carry over language they have used in a controlled setting to a more authentic, natural context for speaking. Providing open-ended stimuli helps you learn about your students' lives. This helps students generate language that is meaningful and appropriate and give ways for students to talk about their life experience.

The life experiences of many refugees may have been traumatic, so giving students chances to express feelings and worries should be an important part of class time. The more you know about your students' lives the more relevant and tailored curriculum can become. In addition to struggling to meet practical daily needs in a completely new environment, many refugees have deep-seated emotional issues from witnessing or being the victim of violence and trauma. Anxiety, depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder are common.

Fatuma had been learning some basic vocabulary to talk about daily routines. She was looking at pictures and naming the actions, "cook", "clean", "eat". "Did you do the same in Kenya in the camp?" "Yes, same." She picks up the picture that represents wash clothes. "Wash clothes very, very hard, Kenya." "Hmm, why was that?" "Very hard." " Tell me more." "Go walk many, many time." "You walked a long way to wash clothes." "Yes, very scare." "It was scary to walk far?" "Yes, walk far, some people hit. Bad people." "Did that happen to you?" "Eh?" "Bad people hit you?" "Yes, many time. Hit me. Talk bad." "I'm sorry." "Yes."

Having a concrete springboard is essential with Level 1 students. Giving students the time and language to share their past lives with you gives them the motivation to learn English. Personal expression is the most critical. Pictures, drawings, realia, and videos provide an initial starting point. Students can describe and name things they see, relate them to other areas of their experience, and talk about their feelings. You can construct simple conversations around them with prompt questions and invite them to say more. Vary the question types you use. Start with yes / no questions and either / or questions, as they provide lots of clues to the answer. However, they do not lend themselves to conversation. Once you build an understanding of question types that begin with "Wh" words such as *Where*, *When*, *How*, *Who*, and *Why*, your students will be able to tell you more about themselves and their experiences.

Make the most of every opportunity to give your students a chance to practice the words and phrases they know. Ask questions about personal information and practice social language in the classroom, since chances are slim for this to happen too often for Level 1 pre-literate learners outside of class. *Good morning*, *How are you?*, *See you next week*, *I'm sorry*, *Have a good weekend*. Greetings and goodbyes at the door are all real moments, so think of them as part of the lesson. They are worth teaching to your students to get right. Practice these in the main part of the lesson, and then see if they get it right in the real context at the beginning and end of each class.

Successful conversation requires good listening skills, a relaxed atmosphere, and an eagerness to communicate. These are gifts you can offer students, and you will be amply rewarded with high interest conversations even with very beginning students. Low level students can cope with very high interest, personalized items even if it is beyond their level. Conversation activities help to practice language students already know and provide opportunities to combine language in new ways and new contexts. They generate new language by acting as a hook for conversation, provide genuine communication opportunities, and can serve as warm-up activities. They may develop into ideas for longer lessons and give you specific ideas about next steps to recycle back in your linguistic curriculum. For example, a student may say *I no like* in a conversation activity. It gets the message across at the time, but you can then set up a controlled practice activity for a subsequent lesson to give practice in expressing, *I don't like.* Conversation activities reveal many teachable moments.

A good flow of activities begins with the introduction and controlled practice of new language where students are repeating words you bring to the table. Practice then extends to activities where students get more choices within a contrived activity. The processes described below provide these bridge conversations. Finally, students need free conversation times where they can have control of the input and connect learning to their own personal lives.

Beginning students do not have a lot of hooks to hang new language on. Open unstructured conversation will be limited to your students' giving one word or short phrases as responses. As they get to know you better and become more confident with their English, you will have more authentic and extensive conversations. Warm ups and class closings are times to have free authentic conversation. Do not underestimate the value of informal talk.

Bridge Activities

A number of processes can be applied to many areas of vocabulary that give short spurts of practice and exposure to saying names of items in ways the students put together themselves. For example, you may bring in a bag of assorted clothing items. Sorting, matching, ordering, and comparing can give openings for practice.

SORTING AND CATEGORIZING

Sort into clothes for men / women / children / seasons / color / fabric. Have students tell you how they separated things into groups. Sort by the ones students know the word for and those they do not.
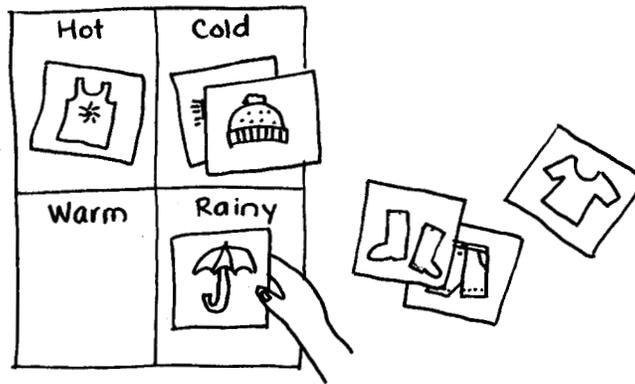
ORDERING AND SEQUENCING

Sequence from biggest to smallest, oldest to newest, by the sounds of the first letter in the names of the clothing.

COMPARING

Which clothes can you wear in your country? Why / why not?

MATCHING

Which clothing is good for Meuy, a student in the class? Why? For you? For your son?
Which clothing do you wear on the weekend / outside / for work?
Which clothes have problems? What are they? What can you do?

Tools and Techniques for Conversation / Applied Practice

MAGAZINE PICTURES

Pictures from magazines, such as National Geographic, where students see pictures of their area of the world and people like themselves, are useful to stimulate language. Here are some very simple things you can do with them.

Procedure

Name colors and objects.

Count things.

Say what people are doing.

Compare what people are doing in the pictures to the US or another area of the world.

Answer simple questions about the picture.

PICTURE CARDS

Picture cards of single items can be easily prepared. They avoid written language for pre-literate learners and can be manipulated. You can play and create games, practice questions and statements, and make up impromptu dialogs. Here is an example of things you can do with food cards.
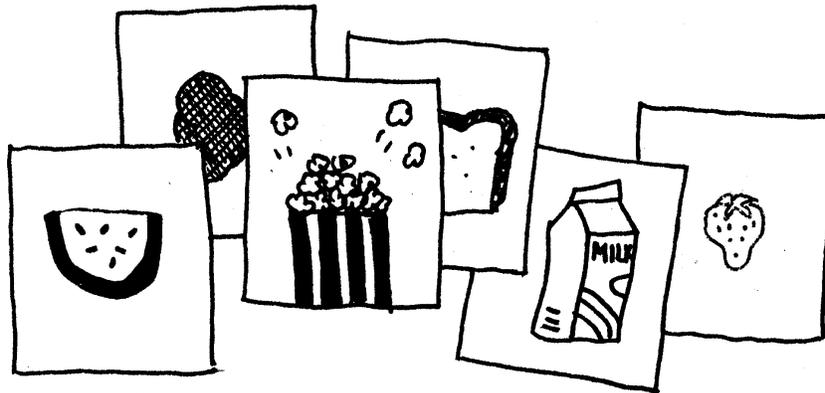
- **Matching**

Find two cards the same and name what you have. Play the memory game where 2 cards are turned over at a time. The item should be named.

■ **I like / don't like**

Students pick cards for foods they like and say.

I like _____ .   *I don't like _____ .*

■ **Sorting**

Sort foods by color, by season, by the words they know and can't remember, and by the initial sound of the word.

■ **Practicing present tense**

I eat _____ .   *I don't eat _____ .*

■ **Ordering**

When students are familiar with alphabetical order, they may put the cards in order according to the initial sound of the word.

Picture cards of objects, furniture and appliances, clothing, activities, and occupations all work well. Make the cards at least 3x5 so they can be seen from the front of the room.

REALIA

Real objects are excellent aids to introduce vocabulary and also extend practice. Pre-literate students may not be adept at reading pictures and graphics. Bringing the real thing to class where possible avoids confusion. There are many ways to use them: name the object; tell what you can do to it (*chop, peel, put on, open*); or ask a question with it (*can you give me…, where is…*).

Realia suggestions

- Pile of clothes
- Medication containers
- Maps
- Cooking utensils
- Fruit and vegetables

DRAWINGS / MAPS

Build conversation around the drawings. Model what you want. It is easier to show what you want rather than to explain. Having a drawing allows you to ask questions. There are many kinds of maps and drawings:

Map and drawing suggestions

- A map of your day, a typical week, a typical day at work
- A floor plan of your house
- A picture of your house in your country
- Draw something you like and don't like and say why
- A time line of important events in your life
- A drawing of your family

BRAINSTORMING

Pictures or drawings help focus attention and give a visual hook. Here is an example of a drawing that was done to talk about life in a refugee camp:

<u>Procedure</u>

Give students one or two ideas to start.

Don't write down the list. It is distracting for pre-literate students to have print before them.

Point to the part of the picture that is being discussed.

Make simple drawings on the board to aid memory and recall.

Brainstorming suggestions

- Things people do in a refugee camp

  Go to school / Work in the garden / Wash clothes / Take care of children / Cook / Carry water

- Good things in camp

  School / House / Friends

- Bad things in camp

  People sick / Not enough water / Not enough food / No job

Brainstorms that divide things into good / bad or I like / don't like bring out a lot of useful information and really stretch students to use their English.

- Having a job
- Not having a job
- Taking the bus
- Driving a car
- Living in _____

Taking the Bus

+ can relax on bus / can read on bus / don't worry about parking / don't buy insurance / can use a pass

− bus sometimes late / 15 min. → School slow / 45 min → / sometimes crowded / cold at bus stop / SUNDAY not enough buses on sunday
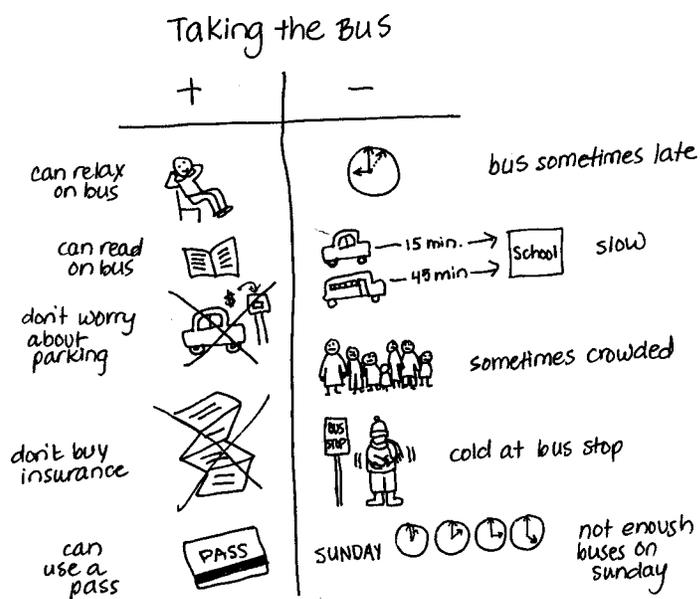
BOARD GAMES

Board games can be made easily to provide open-ended practice. You need to create a game board, have a game piece, a die or a twister. You can practice whatever language you want by drawing pictures or writing a word on each square.

<u>Procedure</u>

Introduce the board.

Have students choose a game piece (tops of colored markers work well) Students can ask for "*yellow please*."

Show where to start and finish.

Model how to play. Throw the die, move your piece, and ask or tell about the square you land on.

Pass to the next person.

There are plenty of opportunities to recycle language the students know (like saying the numbers that appear on the die) and also you can provide language to play the game as appropriate, "*Your turn,*" "*Throw it,*" "*Who's next?*"

Board game suggestions

- Use "WH" questions the students know

  Where / What / How

- Use yes / no questions

  Are… / Can…

- Draw pictures to review a vocabulary set

  Have students name or ask "*What is it?*" for the square they land on.
  Have students say something that uses the vocabulary word. "*I like pizza,*" or "*I have a car.*"

- Color or number the squares

  Have students name the color or number they land on.

OTHER GAMES

If you are teaching a group of students, games can be a way to spark students' attention, bring out their competitive spirit, and take the focus away from the language itself.

- **Card games**

Card games such as Go Fish give students practice using vocabulary and asking for things.

- **Children's games**

Children's games such as Hopscotch and "Simon Says" practice numbers and actions.

- **Active games**

Active games such as marbles, bowling (bean bags and almost empty water bottles), and shuffleboard practice numbers.

- **Guessing games**

Guessing games with pictures and objects are a fun way to practice questions.

- **Picture game**

You have a picture that the students have not seen. You may tell them the topic. *"It is a family."* Students have to ask yes / no questions about the picture. *"Is there a baby?" "Is it a big family?"*

- **Object game**

The picture game can be played with objects in a bag. Put a number of objects in a bag. Have students guess what objects are in there by asking questions as above. They can pass the bag around and pull out an object. They have to say the name of the object and say something about it or ask a question about it. Students can pull out a comb and say "*comb*," "*blue*," " *I have a comb*," or "*Do you want a comb?*"

TEN THINGS

Have students tell you ten sentences about themselves beginning, *" I am," "I can," "I have…,"* or *"I like…"* You can adjust the number to suit the level of your students. This may produce such sentences as, *"I am live in Seattle."* Accept all offerings at the time they are given. Other students may catch the mistake. You may choose to address this in a subsequent lesson, or you can provide gentle correction of all incorrect sentences at the end of the activity. This activity can also be applied to reviewing vocabulary. Name 10 things that are big / small / green / you can eat / you can wear / you have in your kitchen / in the classroom.

ROLE PLAYS

Dialogs can be scripted in advance to introduce and practice new language. Role plays are not scripted but provide a context or situation where language previously practiced would likely be needed. Students may or may not use the language you have introduced for the situation. It is helpful to have a picture or sketch of the situation or simply describe where you are. Students generally play themselves in that situation. Common role play situations include asking for directions or asking for something in a store, in a clinic or hospital, on the job, with landlords, neighbors, and in schools with service providers and teachers. You can recycle greetings and phrases you know your student understands to make the role play longer. You can throw in new things that would likely be said in that situation to see how your students cope and respond.

WORKING WITH VISUALS OF SITUATIONS: *THE STRANGER AT THE DOOR*

A picture – or better still, a real object – can be used to get across the meaning of vocabulary and to set up controlled practice activities. Pictures that depict scenes, situations, and issues are very useful for stimulating conversation and preparing students for problem posing and literacy activities.

Problem posing comes from the work of Brazilian educator Paolo Freire who used it to develop native language literacy. This approach uses a code – a picture, object, or situation that represents a problem in the community – that has been researched over a period of time. Using careful, structured questions, a facilitator can discuss an important issue before moving on to literacy activities.

Problem posing can be used with English language learners who have an understanding of all question types. Pictures that show difficult, challenging, or hot issues can be used with Level 1 students to practice question types in readiness for true problem posing activities at higher levels. Listen for critical incidents in the lives of your students. You may be able to represent them through a picture, an object, a short skit, or dialog. The same pictures may also be used in many ways to practice other language that your students know.

■ **Introduction activities**

If a situation resonates with students, they will often jump in and talk about the situation without prompting. However, it is helpful to scaffold the questions – start with easy and go toward more complex – so that all students can be included.

1 Begin with yes / no and either / or type questions
   Is this a man or a door?
   Is she inside or outside?
   Is this a man? Is this a door?
   Is she happy?
   Is he sitting or standing?

2 Ask *wh* questions
   This is a good context to introduce recognition of *wh* question types since there is a natural context for them. Point to items on the picture as you ask the questions.
   What is this?
   Where is she?
   How many people are there?
   How does the woman feel? Why?
   What can she do?

3   Ask personal reflection questions. Use gestures to help communicate meaning
How do you feel?
Has this happened to you? Tell me about it.
What did you do?
How did you feel?

- **Listening activities**

1   Use Total Physical Response
Incorporate words that students are already familiar with.
Point to the woman, man, door, window, etc.

2   Embellish the picture
Color the skirt green, the door blue, etc.

3   Ask true / false questions
Give students a way to make a non-verbal response: hold up a card, nod, or say "yes / no."
There are 2 people. There are 2 women. There are 2 windows

4   Add to the picture
Draw a cat next to the door.

- **Speaking and literacy activities**

1   Use flash pictures
Give students about 10 seconds to look at the picture. Display momentarily by holding the picture or showing it on an overhead. Have students recall what they saw.

2   Tell the story of or describe the picture

3   Write a caption or label parts of the picture

4   Create a situational dialog between people in the picture

5   Create a Language Experience Story and add follow-up activities

6   Discuss / name the feelings of people, activities, and problems

Listening Activities

As children learning our first language, we have many months to hear and observe what is going on around us before we have the desire or confidence to speak. Adult students surrounded by a new language similarly need time to hear new language and become familiar with how it sounds without being forced to make verbal responses. Students who are in this initial silent period need models of language in context, lots of visual support for meaning, and techniques specifically focused on listening to build confidence and provide exposure in a focused way.

Later on, students not only have to speak but also to monitor input and check what is being said to them. Speaking a new language is tiring, and even higher level students welcome the opportunity to focus on listening.

TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR)

TPR is a classic technique for use with beginning students. Students are presented with a series of commands and get exposure to hearing them and seeing them performed. It is a technique that can quickly build confidence and is low stress as students are not required to make spoken responses. There are many variations on this central technique where students may perform actions, draw, manipulate cards, pictures, or objects, point to pictures, or demonstrate a response that indicates comprehension.

Every TPR lesson has three stages:

1   Listening and observation
2   Practice
3   Comprehension check

■   **TPR with a series of actions**

Select objects and high frequency actions that can be combined together to create a TPR series. Some vocabulary will be previously known to the students. Do not overload students with new items. Combine words your students already know with a few new carefully selected items.

Key / paper / pen (new vocabulary)   Give me / pick up / put down (previously learned)

Pick up the paper
Pick up the key
Pick up the pen
Put down the paper
Put down the key

Put down the pen
Give me the paper
Give me the key
Give me the pen

Procedure

Listen and observe.
Demonstrate the full series of actions while giving the command.
Students watch and listen.

Practice.
Invite students to perform actions with you as you continue to model language and yourself, so students have to rely on listening only.

Comprehension check.
Give the commands, but mix up the order from the order you were using before.
If at any time students become frustrated or respond incorrectly, back up a step in the procedure and provide more support.

Please see *Tutoring ESL: A Handbook for Volunteers, Tacoma Community House Training Project*, for further explanation and examples.

Repeat the series in a subsequent lesson. If students are able to recognize the commands without much difficulty, then add objects or actions to the series. If students are hesitant, then repeat the series until they can respond with more confidence or combine two actions in one command, but do not add new items. "*Pick up the paper and the pen."* As students get lots of exposure to a limited amount of language with no ambiguity of meaning in a TPR series, the script lends itself to use for early reading activities.

TPR can be used to teach absolute beginners almost anything you can demonstrate. It works best to teach vocabulary in groups such as food items, furniture, clothing and so on. You can choose useful verbs that naturally combine with these items. For example, with furniture and appliances you could introduce *turn off* and *turn on*. If you just want to introduce a set of nouns, do so with one or two verbs that are well known, such as *point to*.

- **TPR combined with common language areas**

Classroom and numbers
Stand up / sit down / point to / look at
Clap one time / jump two times

Parts of the body
Touch your nose.
Hold your arm / leg / nose / chest.

Food, clothing and tools
Point to the apple.
Pick up the shirt.
Give the hammer to Juan.
Put down the shoes.

Prepositions of place
Put the shoes under the table.
Put them in the cupboard / on the chair.
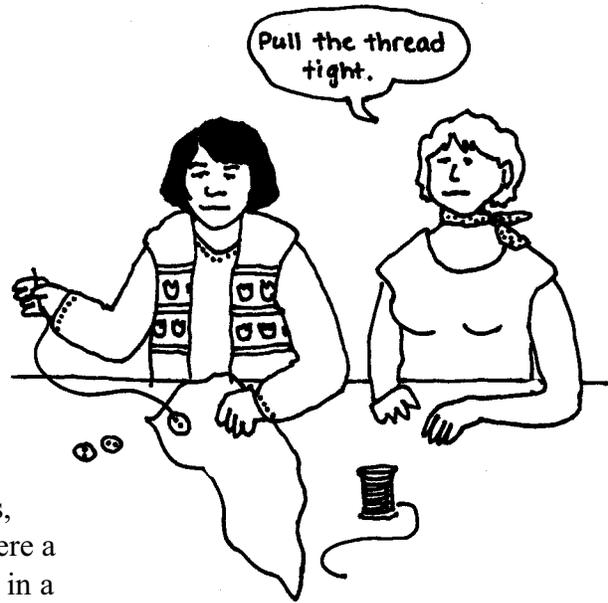
- **TPR with a sequence**

TPR can be made into a natural sequence of
actions and combined with cooking, handicrafts,
operating machinery, or an area of language where a
sequence of commands naturally exists, such as in a
doctor's physical exam. Follow the procedure outlined
above to work through the sequence of actions. Students will enjoy doing something real like
sewing on a button, preparing something to eat, or operating an appliance or machine.

- **TPR on paper**

TPR on paper follows the same theory, but the students are drawing a picture that you are
dictating to them. This is a helpful activity to provide practice in recognizing known words. It
cannot be used to introduce new vocabulary. You may have a series of numbered pictures:

"#1, draw a happy girl and a sad girl. #2, draw a small car and a big car." You can dictate one
picture, being careful to give one command at a time. In subsequent lessons, you may go back to
the pictures and give more commands. *"#1, color the girl's dress green. #2, write your name
next to the car you like and draw a circle around the small car."*

TPR on paper can be an excellent way to practice words for directionality such as, *left corner,
middle, top middle* and classroom commands that you might use in literacy activities like *above,
below, beside.*

- **TPR with a picture**

When using TPR, manipulating pictures is a good way to keep lessons active when using real
objects is not feasible. Present or review any new vocabulary:

top / middle / bottom / left / right / drawer / shelf
cabinet / hammer / tape / screwdriver / needle / key

Demonstrate and then instruct the student to put objects in various places.

EXERCISE ROUTINE

Developing an exercise routine with students is a great way to give exposure to a set of commands. Movement, music, and rhythm are also added benefits. Build recognition of prepositions of direction, parts of the body, and simple actions. You may give the directions yourself as you do the routine or put them on tape. You can ask someone else to record the routine on tape, and this gives the students exposure to hearing a variety of voices and accents.

Arms up. Arms down. Head to the left. Head to the right.

DEMONSTRATED RESPONSE

In the following activities, students are asked to demonstrate a response to show understanding rather than using words. They may raise their hands, show cards, or say just one word. Practice the response you expect a few times before you start.

■ **Same or different**

You can check pronunciation discrimination or understanding with this simple response. Teach the words same and different. Hand out two colored cards to students, one for same, and one for different. Read out your script and have students choose between the cards.

For pronunciation

Ship, sheep	13, 30
Ship, ship	40, 40
Chip, chip	15, 50
Chip, cheap	16, 16

- **True / false**

Make statements about a picture. The picture should be large enough for all to see clearly. Have students hold up pictures to show true or false.

I see four cars. There are 2 trees. There are 3 houses.

- **Personal information**

Have students hold up cards or say true or false as the information relates to them.

I am a student.
I have 2 children.
I am from Liberia.
I am married.
I have a job.
I live in a house.
I have been here 2 years.

CHALK TALKS

Beginning students do not get a lot of input that is both rich in content and comprehensible. Since you are aware of what level of language your students know, you can become a great source of rich input. You will need lots of visual support to get your meaning across. These short talks provide students with language and meaning in context. It may be as simple as finding a good picture book with adult themes that you can tell the story for and show the pictures. You might talk about an experience you've had or what you did on the weekend or on vacation using a series of drawings on the board or paper. These talks generally lend themselves to the students wanting to add their comments or tell their own stories on similar themes. You can then supply appropriate language to them as necessary.

IDENTIFYING PICTURES

You need a set of about four pictures. The pictures should be similar but not exactly the same. Have the students identify which picture is being described by a process of elimination. You can easily draw your own pictures and number them. You can tailor the pictures to introduce recognition of items you are working on.

There is a house. The house has four windows. There is a tree. The tree has apples.

There is a family. There are three children. There are 2 boys and a girl. One of the boys is a baby.

Procedure

Show the pictures to students.

Read the short script through once at normal speed.

Read again, pausing briefly after each sentence.

Have students select the picture being described by telling or indicating which picture was described.

You can also use this technique to help develop discrimination between similar sounds. Develop cards with pictures that have similarities.

The boy is by the table.   *The cat is on the floor.*
The bag is by the table.   *The coat is on the floor.*

Read the sentences describing the pictures or play a tape recorded version. Have the students sort through the cards and put them in the order that they hear them.
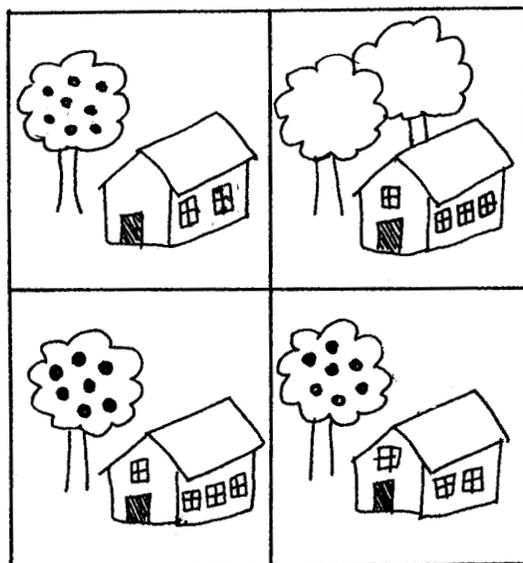
LISTENING EXERCISES

Procedure

Read out a list or simply written text containing examples of vocabulary words you have introduced.

Give the students a set of picture cards.

Have students point to or hold up a picture card when they hear that word.

As students gain more vocabulary, you can make a listening grid with categories. Have students make slash marks in the appropriate column as they hear you read a paragraph that contains words that fall into the labeled categories.

Putting It All Together

Introduce Introduce new words and phrases in context. Use pictures, realia, mime, and gestures.	Gets meaning across.
Provide a model of the language	Allows for time to hear new language.
Provide listening activities for students to hear the language without having to speak.	Provides additional exposure.
Show how you form sounds. Give clear enunciation.	Shows students how to do it.
Controlled Practice Use controlled practice activities.	Builds confidence for students. Gives few opportunities to make errors. Stop students to correct them as necessary.
Bridge Activities Use bridge activities to give students chances to work independently with new material	Allows you to help those who need more support. Gives opportunities for students to try on their own. Assess whether students are redy to go on or provide additional controlled practice.
Applied Practice / Conversation Have students apply language to a real life situation / context.	While you stay out of the way and let the students do what they can and keep assessing how students are actually using language.

INTRODUCE

Begin by introducing the new language in a context to provide a guide to meaning. Let your students see and hear you give clear models of the language.

Pao was working on language to describe the location of tools on shelves. Brenda, his tutor, brought in some small tools such as a hammer, nails, screws, and screwdriver. He already knew four of the names of the tools. Brenda showed him a picture of a supervisor motioning a worker to some shelves in a workshop.
She pointed to the supervisor and asked, "Who's this?" Pao said , "Manager." Brenda pointed to the worker and Pao said, "Mechanic."

Brenda presented the new words top, middle, and bottom by pointing to the shelves. She repeated them slowly. She pointed to the supervisor, modeled his directions, and pointed to the shelves.

Put the nails on the middle shelf.
Put the hammer on the top shelf.
Put the screws on the middle shelf.
Put the saw on the bottom shelf.

Brenda brought out a picture of empty shelves and some picture cards of the equipment. She repeated the directions and placed the cards on the picture of the shelves. She gave the picture cards to Pao. First she checked recognition of the pictures. She said, "Show me a saw. Show me some nails. Show me the top shelf." Finally, she gave Pao the directions and motioned for him to place them on the shelves.

They collected and shuffled the equipment cards. Brenda modeled the word, and Pao repeated them. Screw and screwdriver were challenging. "Sk, sk, sk, sk, scr, scr, scr," he repeated, to get the consonant cluster clearer. "F, f, f, f, f," they repeated. "Shelf, shelf, shelf." Pao kept omitting the f sound from this word. Brenda exaggerated how her teeth bit down on her lip to make the final f sound.

CONTROLLED PRACTICE

Shift from your providing the models and the students being receptive to having the students use the language in a limited context. Here, language choices are controlled and the activity, while not realistic, is contrived to provide focused practice opportunities.

They did some quick substitution drills with the cards. Brenda pointed to a card and a shelf, and Pao gave the directions. "Put the _____ on the _____ shelf." They repeated the more challenging directions a few times.

Brenda then had Pao give her directions and she placed the cards on the picture. Then they did an information gap activity. Each had a picture with some things on the shelves, but the pictures were different. Brenda picked up a picture card and gave the direction that matched her picture, "Put the hammer on the middle shelf." She did this for all the objects in her picture and then motioned for Pao to give her directions and said, "Tell me." He picked up a card and said, "Bottom shelf." Brenda motioned for him to continue with the others. They compared pictures at the end.

BRIDGE ACTIVITIES

Set up an activity for students to do with little assistance. You can then work with students who you have already identified as needing more support. The students who are doing the bridge activities are gaining confidence, and the teacher is checking to see if they are ready to go on to the next step. If they are not ready, return to controlled practice again.

Brenda brought out a pile of picture cards she had kept from previous sessions. She chose all singular nouns. Some were classroom objects, some were food items, and some were tools. She handed them to Pao along with the blank picture of shelves. She demonstrated what she wanted him to do. He arranged the picture cards on the picture of the shelf any way he wanted. "Are you ready? Okay, tell me what you want." Pao described which shelves to put the items on. Brenda marked where she was putting the items on her copy of the shelves. When he was done she checked with him. "The rice is on the top shelf. The eraser is on the middle shelf." He checked on his copy. Brenda then gave him a worksheet. It was open-ended and had ten single commands on it with the noun and the shelf location removed.

Put the _____ on the _____ shelf.

Brenda placed pictures in the blank spaces and read the sentence for Pao. She then motioned for him to place any cards he wanted in the spaces. When he had placed the cards, she had him read back the sentences he had created. When he had read the sentences, Brenda flipped over the picture card and showed the written word on the back. Although most of these nouns were not sight words for him, he was able to read the sentence, turning over to check the picture when he was not sure. He then copied the nouns into the blank spaces from the back of the card.

APPLIED PRACTICE

In this stage, students apply what they know to a new situation. With Level 1 students, you cannot have authentic native speaker-like conversations, but you can approximate them. Choose a situation or role play where your students can use the language they already know and combine it with any new language they can.

Brenda and Pao went to the supply closet and looked at the shelves. She said, "Tell me," and Pao identified the things he knew like paper and pencils and books. There were four shelves, so Brenda pointed to the top and Pao said, "Top," and she pointed to the bottom, and he said, "Bottom." She pointed to the middle shelves, and Pao said, "Two shel." "Right, you could say two middle shelves," Brenda said. "Let's clean up." They removed a lot of the things from the shelves. She then let Pao decide where to put the things. Brenda said, "Where shall we put this?" Pao would sometimes indicate and sometimes say in words where it should go.

In the classroom, they looked again at the tools. Brenda pointed to the picture cards and asked, "At home? Do you have this at home?" If Pao said "Yes," she gestured and said, "Where?" He motioned with his hands in and out and looked around the room. He pointed to a drawer and Brenda supplied, "Drawer. In Thailand, did you use these?" "Yes," Pao replied. He pointed and named the things he used.

Brenda then went back to the original picture of the supervisor. She pointed to the supervisor and to herself and said, "Me," and she pointed to the worker and said, "You." Brenda started an impromptu role play. " "Good Morning, Pao." "Good morning." "How are you today?" "Fine, thanks." "Pao, put the book on the middle shelf, please. Thanks. Oh, can you put the hammer on the top shelf? The pen goes in the drawer."

Pao looked confused at the last one. "Ask me again," coached Brenda. Pao said, "Again." "The pen goes in the drawer."

"Pen?" repeated Pao. "Yes, in the drawer." He put it on the picture of the shelf. "What's this?" Brenda asked. "Shelf," he said. "Do you remember drawer." She enunciated more slowly. "At home, in your house, the hammer is in the drawer." "Ah!" Pao turned around and pointed to the drawer of the cabinet.

Brenda got out a picture dictionary and turned to the picture of a supermarket aisle. "Tell me" she invited. "What do you see?" Pao named some food items. He sometimes said short phrases like, "coca-cola top shel". "Juice," Brenda would prompt. "Where is the juice?" "Top shel," he replied.

REVIEW AND REPETITION

Pre-literate students need a lot of repetition and review of new language. At this beginning level, any tiny piece of the puzzle that you can keep reviewing is enormously helpful. Just like learning anything, the more chances you have to do it, the easier it becomes. The curriculum can be spiraled to practice the same language in different contexts, and over time, additional language can be added to flesh out a situation previously taught to extend language competency in that situation.

Fatuma, who first came to class with minimal language, is learning greetings and leave takings. After she has practiced a greetings dialog in the context of greeting her teacher, Mike shows her magazine pictures of people greeting each other. He points to one person and says, "Hello." He points to another and motions for Fatuma to respond. "Hello, how you?" The pictures show different people in new situations greeting each other. When Mike shows Fatuma a picture of people in a hospital waiting room he says, "Hello, how are you?" Fatuma responds, "No fine!" "You're right. He's sick," Mike responds.

Students will need to meet this language many times in different contexts. Firstly, provide authentic contexts for them to use this language with you as you meet and greet them. In addition, when you move on to learning something from, let's say, the health section, review the greetings and leave takings they know and include them in a new context. By switching the context and using the language again in the classroom, street, clinic, and so on, you can provide review and practice. It builds confidence so even if that day your students are struggling with the new language, they should have opportunities to use the language they know and feel more confident with.

FEBRUARY: Registration

MARCH Bank Role-Play

APRIL: New Job Role-Play

Once students have learned *"bye, bye,"* you can introduce and add *"see you tomorrow."* Once this language is intelligible, and stated from memory although still spoken with some hesitation, move on to other items in the Basic Language section of the checklist.

We are constantly working with this idea of reviewing what is known and incrementally adding new items that extend the practice and also review the language. Students such as Fatuma may learn the names of nouns.

A book.

Then, you might add a color

A red book.

Followed by numbers

Two red books.

Add an action

Give me two red books.

Add a context and create a dialog

Hello. How are you today?
Fine, thanks.
Give me two red books, please.
Here you are.
Thanks.
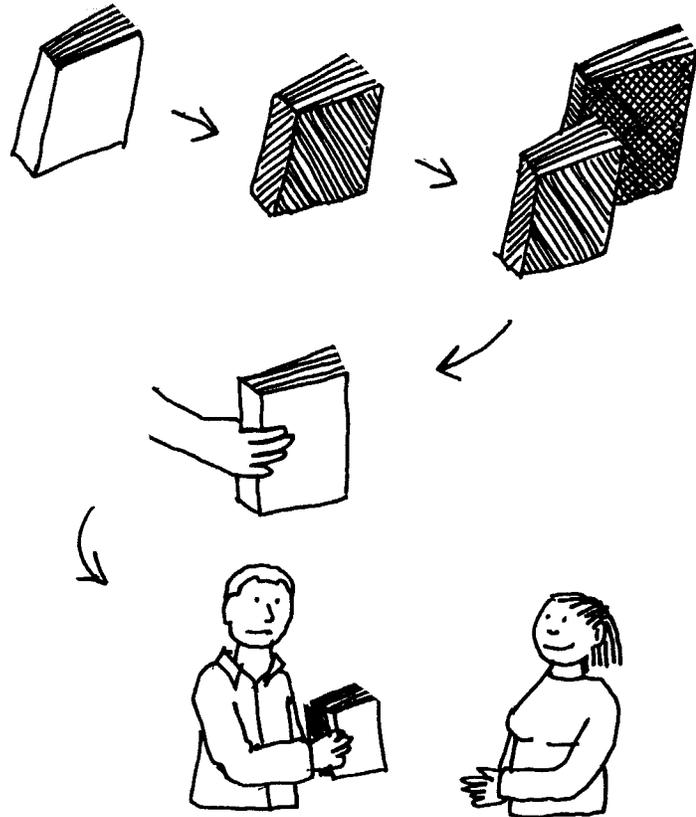
PRE-LITERATE LEVEL 1

Upon completing this level, student will be able to:

- Understand carefully phrased, simple sentences in controlled classroom settings and in some everyday situations.
- Express some personal information and simple needs in very short learned phrases or sentences in controlled environments and with great difficulty in real situations.
- Read some familiar common sight words and symbols.

TEACHING READING AND WRITING

> *Awad is waiting at a bus stop. He looks down at the bus number and street name written on a piece of paper and wonders if he'll ever get there. He looks up and gazes at all the words he sees around him zooming by – advertising billboards, street signs, signs on buses, and people reading newspapers. He knits his eyebrows to concentrate harder as a bus approaches. Is this the right one? He steps in front of the bus and compares the destination to the words on his paper. He takes a deep breath and gets on the bus.*

It can be a bewildering world for those who cannot read and speak English. It takes courage and nerve to go out in the world, but it is essential for survival. There is so much to learn and very little time to become self-sufficient. Therefore, it is crucial to find out what our students need literacy for in their lives and to provide curriculum in literacy that works toward these real goals.

Teaching literacy parallels teaching spoken language in that we want students to read things that they already know the meaning of and use material that has relevance and interest for them. All the learners we have met in this text are beginning in terms of literacy but already have ideas about what they want to use reading and writing for in their lives.

> *Sambath is thinking about her retirement. She wants to become a citizen so she can ensure state benefits in her old age. She needs to pass the citizenship test.*
>
> *Fatuma would like to reduce her grocery bill and wants to be able to read the ads from the supermarkets and fill out forms.*
>
> *Awad is concerned about getting a job. He wants to access resources that will help him.*
>
> *Pao has a large family. He would like to be able to read some of the material that comes home from his children's schools.*
>
> *Although each of them has needs in English beyond their current literacy level, Meaning Based approaches to literacy use material relevant to their goals that will help make small steps toward meeting their needs.*
>
> *Sambath can learn basic sight words to move her towards being able to do a dictated sentence in the citizenship test.*
>
> *Fatuma can learn how to read prices and quantities of food.*
>
> *Awad can learn sight words that commonly appear on job application forms.*
>
> *Pao can learn how to complete a simplified permission slip for a school field trip.*

Reading and writing another language requires being able to learn the alphabet and the sounds of the letters and to learn how to form the letters in writing. However, learning these skills is not an end in itself. Instruction should be focused on what students can do with these skills to read and write what is necessary in their lives. Adult learning theory tells us that students are much more likely to be motivated and stick with a program if they can see the relevance to their lives, with curriculum content that reflects their personal situation and is responsive to their needs.

Approaches to Teaching Reading

An effective literacy program provides the right balance between Meaning Based approaches and Parts to Whole approaches. The right balance will differ for each student. It depends on where they are starting, the time they have available to study, and the way they learn. A reading program should have opportunity for students to apply literacy in a real way to meet their needs as well as time spent on bottom-up processing where students learn how to sound out the constituent parts of a word.
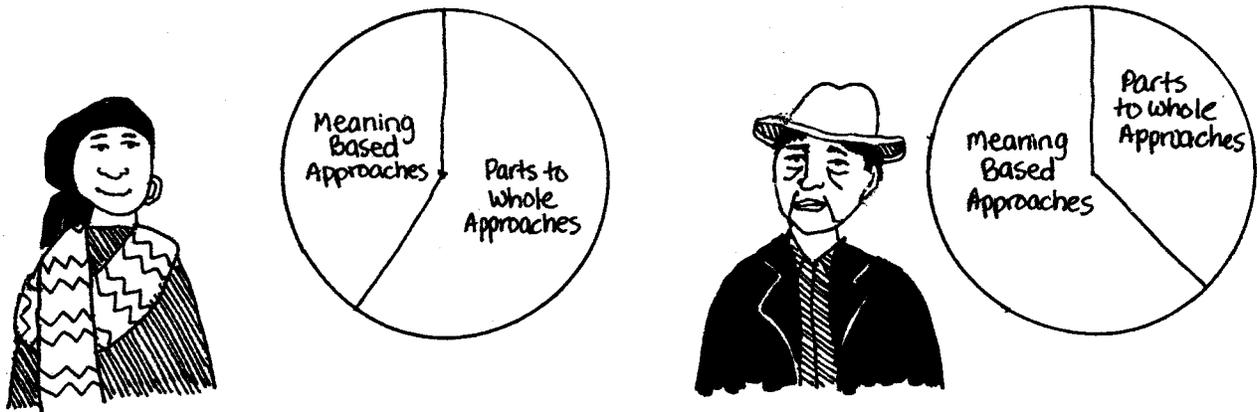
In Meaning Based approaches, students learn what whole words look like without breaking them into separate sounds. High frequency words, such as *the*, *my*, and *she*; words commonly found in environmental print such as *stop, walk*, and *address*; as well as high interest, emotion-laden words such as *baby*, *war*, and *job* can be taught early because they have immediate application and are meaningful to students. In this kind of approach, students are learning to read complete language in sentences and in authentic contexts.

Awad is working with Chris on filling out forms. First, Chris orally reviews some of the questions on the form. "What is your first name?" "Awad." "What is your last name?" "Abdallah." "Can you tell me your address?"

Then Chris provides index cards with the statements written on them – one word on each card:

| My | first | name | is | Awad |

Chris asks him to read the sentence. Then she asks, "Point to the word, Awad, and then to the word name." He looks at the card and points to name. She then brings out a variety of forms. Some are simplified and some are real. With the index card of the word name, Awad looks at each form in turn and circles where he sees name written. Finally they review and Chris points out a few places that he missed.

In Parts to Whole approaches students learn the sounds the letters and combinations of letters make. As you teach the sounds of the alphabet, embed these sounds in words that are meaningful.

Fatuma was learning the sound for the letter M. "The name of the letter is M. The sound is mmmmm," modeled Mike, exaggerating his lips. "Mmmmmmm," Fatuma repeated. "Sound mm like 'man'," said Mike, as he pointed to a picture of a man. "Mmmm, like in your son's name, Mohamed," said Mike. "Mmmm like …… 'milk'," supplied Fatuma. Mike wrote all the M words on a list.

The alphabet and sounds of letters are abstract concepts. Literacy is a puzzle; no part has meaning unless connected to another part. Get sounds into words and words into sentences that your students can use in daily life. Endless drilling of sounds with flashcards can become a memory game and has no connection to meaningful use of literacy. Refugees have only eight months of refugee cash assistance in which to get themselves acculturated and ready for the job market. An approach that introduces only sounds will take too long before students can do something with this skill.

A Continuum of Beginning Literacy

We are teaching a huge variety of students. Some may be able to communicate their needs orally but not read and write in English. Others may be a beginner in all skills. In order to better identify where to start and what approaches will work with students, we need to find out who our students are and what their history is with the written word.

Every student is going to have varying experiences and this affects the materials you select, your instructional focus, and the rate of your students' progress. Beginning literacy can be viewed as a continuum.

PRE-LITERATE

Pre-literate students come from an oral language tradition. Awad and Fatuma speak Af-Maay, which is a language that is not written. For his reason, the concept of communicating through reading and writing can be difficult to grasp. Holding a pen and opening a book are all new experiences. It is important for pre-literate students to have a foundation of oral language skills before focusing on reading and writing.
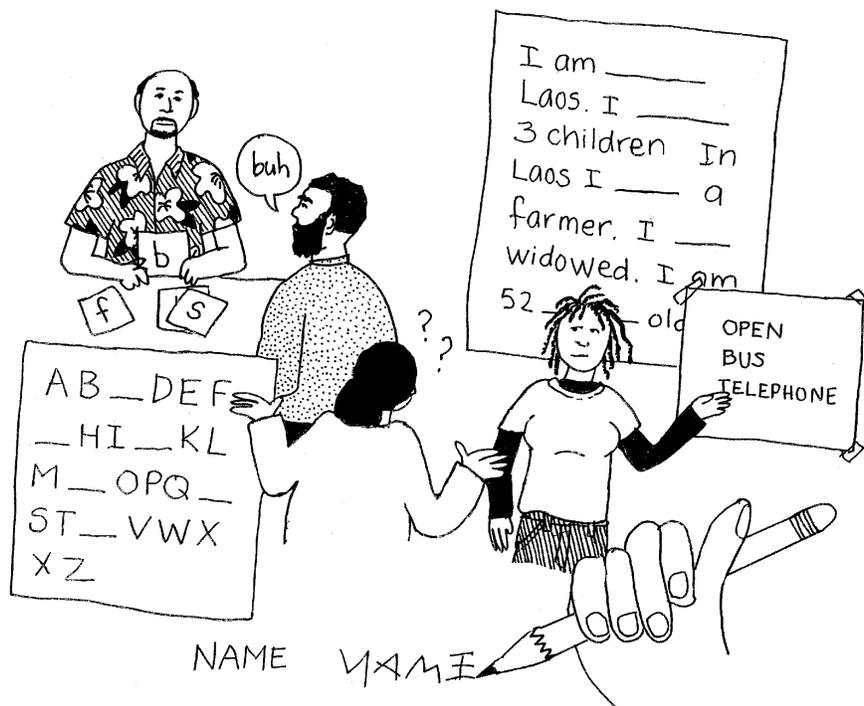
NON-LITERATE

Non-literate students come from a culture with a written language, but they have had little or no exposure to literacy in their first or second language. Sambath's first language is Khmer. It has a written form, but she did not have any formal schooling and did not learn any native language literacy. For non-literate students, instruction should still emphasize the connection between spoken and written language.

SEMI-LITERATE

Semi-literate students have some but minimal literacy in their own language. They may be very nervous and hesitant and lack confidence in their literacy skills.

NON-ROMAN ALPHABET LITERATE

Students may speak and are literate in a language that does not have a Roman alphabet. Some writing systems are alphabetic and some are not. Chinese is symbolic where symbols represent a word or idea rather than separate sounds. Arabic is alphabetic where the symbols represent sounds, but it is not a Roman alphabet. Students from these backgrounds can transfer skills from one language to another even if the script is completely different. These students have usually had some schooling in their native language. If you have an opportunity to watch your students read or write in their native languages, note their comfort level. Do they write with ease? If so, they probably have good native language literacy skills.

If you are unsure where your students lie along this continuum, try the following activities. If students are pre-literate, you may find them unable to complete any of the tasks.
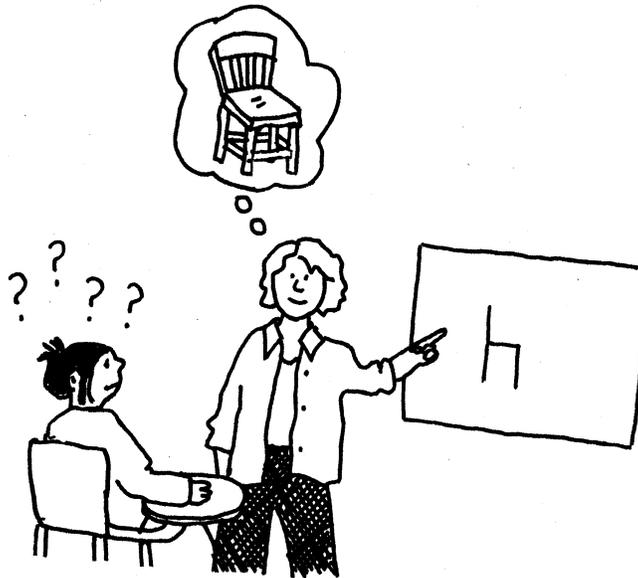
1   Can my students write their names in English?

2   Can my students identify any basic sight words from cards?

3   When pointing to the following letters, do my students have a concept of what sounds they make?

4   Can my students complete an English alphabet cloze exercise?

5   Can my students copy sentences in English?

6   Can my students read simple sentences in English?

7   Can my students write simple dictated sentences?

8   What are my students' educational backgrounds?

Whatever you discover about your students' levels, what you teach must have meaning for them. Start with oral language and begin to make connections to the written word.

Here is a list of differences and some similarities between literate and non-literate English learners.

Literate Learners	Non-Literate Learners
Learn from print	Learn by doing and watching
Tend to be visually oriented	Tend to be aurally oriented
Make lists to remember	Repeat to remember
Spend years learning to read	Have limited time for learning to read
Know they can learn	Lack confidence in their learning ability
Learn best when content is relevant to their lives	Learn best when content is relevant to their lives
Can distinguish between important and less important points	May accept all content as being of equal value
From What Non-Readers or Beginning Readers Need to Know, The Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning, 1999	

Non-literate students may have difficulty with other visual concepts. Simple drawings for houses, furniture, and so on may not be recognized. For some, two-dimensional pictures may not be viewed in the same way. Therefore, maps, charts, graphs, floor plans, and other simple schematics which help literate people organize information will all be challenging for non-literate students to figure out. You have to teach students the skill of how to read schematics. Using a pointer or your fingers, show how to track vertically and horizontally to locate information.
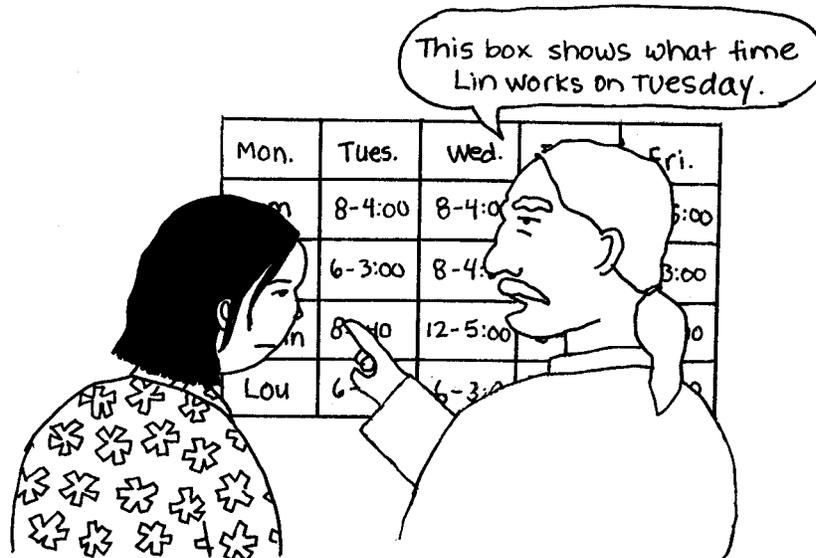
Literacy Basics

When students are pre-literate and have had little or no exposure to literacy education, they will need to start with some literacy basics before attempting reading and writing activities. Some students may have difficulties in seeing shapes and patterns. Try using non-print sources to help with this such as wooden block puzzles and use Cuisenaire rods to represent words. You may also need to work with paper orientation, pen holding, directionality, and tracing before starting any kind of writing or copying.

HOLDING A PEN

Demonstrate for students how to hold a pencil between the thumb and first two fingers about an inch above the point. Check that the end of the pencil is pointing back towards the shoulder of the writing arm, and the pencil is held an inch above the point. The index finger controls the pressure and should rest on the pencil. Demonstrate both right and left handed. Students should imitate you. Often students grip the pencil too tightly, so help them to relax their hands by shaking them out every so often.

MAKING SHAPES

Demonstrate and have students practice drawing lines, circles, and patterns. Start with having students tracing over models you have prepared and gradually move to them producing the model on blank lines.

DIRECTIONALITY

Students need to recognize left-to-right and top-to-bottom directionality. Draw lines on the board or paper from left to right. Have students copy, air drawing from left to right and / or drawing with fingers on the table. Provide paper for students to trace lines from left to right. Repeat for top-to-bottom directionality.

PAPER ORIENTATION

Students need to know how to orient their body to paper on a table. For right-handed students, the paper should be perpendicular to the edge of the table. The left-handed paper position is about a forty-five degree angle from the edge of the table.

TRACING

Provide a number of worksheets for each student with their own name printed on them. Don't expect students to recognize or write their names at this point. Have students trace over their name. Keep observing them and note how they are holding the pen.

STUDY SKILLS

Pre-literate students have little experience with paper, pens, and books. They will need help to organize their worksheets. If possible, have students purchase a lined notebook and a binder or folder for filing papers. Number the handouts you provide so students can organize them. Use colored paper to photocopy any especially important pages so they can be located easily. Take time with students to organize their work as they go along. An organized notebook helps to facilitate home study. Leave space at the top of each worksheet for them to write their name and the date. Students will become familiar with the sight words and get practice in writing these concepts. Help students with book orientation. Show what margins are used for, how to turn pages to write on both sides of the paper, and where to write the date.
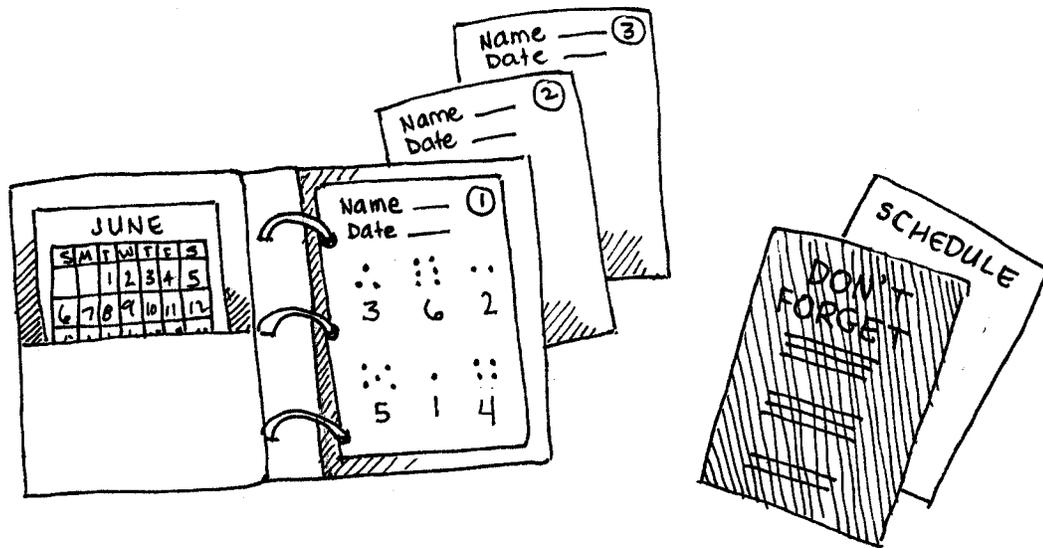
Meaning Based Approaches

Meaning Based approaches to literacy focus on having students learn whole words. They develop a bank of sight words. As the collection of sight words grow, they can be used to create sentences and stories and provide a basis for phonetic analysis. Meaning Based approaches include meaningful reading words that students commonly find in their environment, student-generated texts where students read their own words, and teacher generated material where students read texts based on classroom activities or material carefully selected and graded for content by the teacher.

GETTING STARTED: READING FIRST WORDS

Students who are beginners in all skill areas first need to develop some oral competence before tackling reading. It is vital that students who have always expressed themselves orally understand the meaning of the words they are learning. Much of the spoken word may appear as a stream of sound. Use colored math rods to represent words. You could also use beans or colored index cards. Although students have very little English, they often have an urgent need for document literacy. To fulfill their life roles, they need to fill out forms, read schedules, and understand notes. They quickly need to learn as sight words the terms they encounter in these documents.

Start with common questions, phrases, and sentences that they recognize orally. Use one rod or bean to represent each word. Say the utterance, and while you do this, place one representation of each word down on the table.

What   is   your   name?

What   is   your   phone   number?

What   is   your   address?

It may be completely new to students to see words represented in print. Using colors to differentiate the words may help students to see grammatical patterns. Being able to see patterns is the beginning of unlocking reading. You might point to a color rod in a number of utterances and say, *"What is this word?"* You can invite students to make other utterances in the same pattern. You or they could place the rods to represent the words. Following this, you can introduce the written form of the words. As you point to the rods, ask students to repeat the utterance as you place a written word for each rod. Then read the utterances back with the students.

Follow-up activities may include copying the utterances, answering the questions, mixing and unjumbling the word cards, and identifying key words such as *name* in other contexts.

Representing words with something other than the written form of the words is a helpful first step for students who have never had experience with the printed word before.

Fatuma was working on recognizing her address. Mike brought six colored index cards to class.

"What is your city?" "Tukwila." "Show me the pink card." Fatuma pointed to it. "Write your city on the pink card." Fatuma could not write the city from memory. She looked through some other practice worksheets. "T-t-t-t," prompted her teacher as she scanned for the word. "What is your zip code?" " 9-8-1-1-8." "Show me the blue card." "Write your zip code on the blue card."

They continued this way until all parts of the address were written on cards.

"Now, Fatuma, show me your street." Fatuma pointed. "Say your street." "Tukwila International Boulevard." "What color is the card?" "Yellow."

Once all parts of the address were reviewed, they arranged the cards together on the desk in the correct order. Fatuma then copied the address onto a simplified form and filed the index cards in her word bank.

Other common useful first words are those found in environmental print. They are words that appear on signs, notices, and commonly encountered documents.

Examples of these include:

STOP   WALK   WOMEN   MEN   TELEPHONE   NAME   CLOSED   OPEN

Notice how these all appear in upper case letters. Many teachers choose to first teach recognition of upper case letters, because they appear so frequently in signs and environmental print and because the letters have more significant differences between them that are easier to spot.

Have students copy any printed words they come across that they think might have relevance for them. Discuss what they think the words might mean. Discuss where they saw the word. When words are connected to reality this way, when they are seen to be part of the students' experiences, they are more likely to be learned, retained, and used.

◆ Sight word activities

Once students develop a few sight words, build in redundancy by reviewing and practicing these words in various ways.

■ Sight word sets

Students can keep a set of their own sight words. These can be stored in an envelope or small box. Students can then review their sight words on their own. They can match the words to separate picture cards or flip the cards over to show a student-drawn illustration on the back. For self-correction, a great final activity in class is to add a new sight word to the bank. Students can access and review their sight words whenever they want. Once there are 10 or so words in the bank, words can be categorized by first letter or by topic. Have students divide the words into two piles labeled *words I know by myself* and *words I need help with*. Students can keep a tally of the *words I know* pile so students get a sense of progress. Use these key words over and over. Students can sequence them to create sentences.

■ **Sight word wall**

Record new sight words in some way. Create a word wall. This can be done by topic area.

HOME	SCHOOL	WORK
cook	pen	job
clean	book	

Or alphabetically:

M
man
milk
Mohamed

N
name
no
new
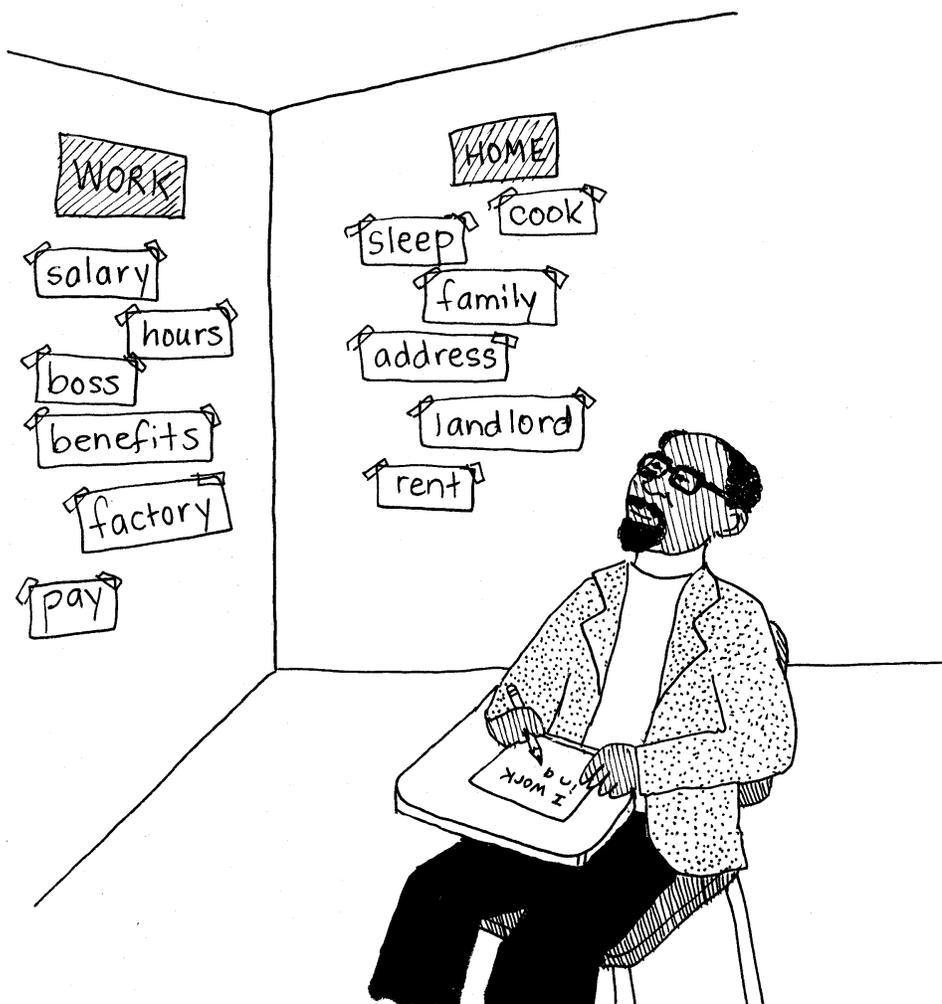
You can often point to the place for students to access the information themselves when they ask for help by having print all around the room.

- **Target letter chart**
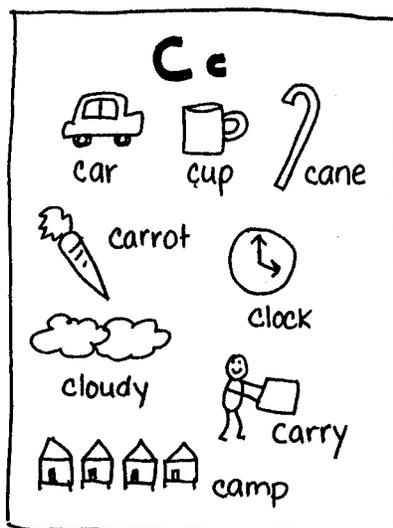
- **Worksheets**

Draw lines to match words and pictures
Pre-literate students are not familiar with how worksheets operate. You will need to teach all operations such as drawing lines to match. It may be helpful to do the activity on index cards first of all so students can manipulate the cards and then transfer to a worksheet.

Circle the target word

Cross out words that are not target words

◆ Games

■ **Memory**

Students have a set of word cards and picture cards face down. In pairs, they turn over one picture card and one word card at a time. If they match, the student keeps the pair. If they do not, they are replaced face down again, and the second student turns over two cards. Once students gain confidence in recognizing these words, you can remove the picture card and transition to finding matches between two word cards.

■ **Board games**

Create a board game with sight words written on squares of the board. If students can read the sight words they land on, they may stay there. If they cannot read them, then they go back to their previous space and another student takes a turn.

■ **Bingo**

Create bingo cards with sight words on them.

last	an	hit	pin	fat
lid	dad	in	hat	did
sit	☆	lap	sat	
in	fit	lip	list	
lad	tip	list		

uncle	mother	daughter	relative
brother	nephew	family	aunt
husband	cousin	father	sister
wife	parents	niece	son

All of these activities with sight words can be modified for use with learning letters and sounds.

STUDENT-GENERATED MATERIAL

For students who have a basic level of English, it is difficult to find appropriate high interest, low-level reading material they can master. Therefore, student-generated reading material provides print that they can comprehend. It is based on the idea that students read their own spoken words. This approach avoids vocabulary and grammatical structures that students do not know. Material that is developed from interacting with the students is the heart of the matter. Both speaking and listening are integrated and provide the starting point. The activities described in this section are based on this premise. They build from what students can say to what they are able to read and later to what they can write. Many of the activities integrate skills and build naturally from one skill to another.

◆ The Language Experience Approach (LEA)

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) promotes reading and writing through the use of personal experiences and oral language. Beginning literacy learners are guided through a discussion of an experience and then on to a transcription of that experience. These transcriptions are used for other reading and writing activities. In LEA, all communication skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking – are integrated. It is a process that is personalized, communicative, and creative. Vocabulary and grammar use are determined by the learner's own language use. Students talk about the experience and then see their words transformed into a written text. Connecting written and spoken language may not be something students have done before. A real experience, picture, photo, student drawing, anecdote, or shared experience such as a field trip are all possible prompts to get LEA stories.

Pao was discussing his work experience with Brenda. "So, in Thailand, what was your work?" "My work farmer." "Only a farmer? You worked building houses too, right?" "Yes, work little time build house." "Did you work for a company?" "I don't know." "Did you work by yourself." "No. I work Thailand people." "You worked with people from Thailand. Did you get money every month?" "No month. Work one day get money." "Oh, so you worked for one day and then you got money at the end of the day." "Yes." "How long did you do this?" "Ummm, maybe one month. I don't know. Man tell me come work. I work. Sometimes no work." "Did you like building houses?" "Yes, I like." "Okay, let's write down your story about work. Tell me again about your work in Thailand." Brenda picks up a pen and a clean sheet of paper.

"In Thailand, I work farmer. I work build house."

Brenda writes what Pao says. She asks, "Did you like working as a farmer? Did you like building houses?"

Pao continued and Brenda wrote:

"I like work farmer. I like eat. I like build house work Thailand people."

"In Thailand, I work farmer. I work build house. I like work farmer. I like eat. I like build house work Thailand people."

Brenda then read over the complete story a few times, sentence by sentence, pointing to the words as he read them.

"Show me Thailand in the story." Pao furrows his eyebrows and concentrates hard. He spots the word and points to it. "Thailand comes two times in the story. Circle Thailand two times." She hands Pao the pen. "Can you circle the word I?" Pao completes this quickly with no hesitation. "Great! Show me 'work' in the story." Pao looks at the story and cannot pick out the word. "I think work is in your word box." Brenda points to the box containing Pao's sight words. They shuffle through the cards until they find the word. Brenda holds up the card. "This is 'work'. Can you find this in your story?" Pao looks at the story and picks out one of the examples of the word in the text.

Although originally intended for use with individual students, LEA can also be used effectively with groups. The benefits of writing the students' language verbatim may no longer be so valid in a group effort. A group-written piece where many voices are contributing tends to be created with the teacher who may paraphrase statements to help students formulate thoughts. Asking questions such as, *How else could we say it?* or *Do you mean…?* or *Maybe we can say it like this...* It requires delicate balance to produce a text that students can practice reading. It helps for the teacher to make choices as to what gets written down while being faithful to what the students are trying to communicate. It is helpful to set up a group experience and then create an LEA story to follow it.

Possible experiences

- Taking a field trip

- Planning a party

- Making a food or beverage

- Making a craft

- Making cards (holidays, get well, thank you)

Once there is a written text, there are many activities that can be integrated into the experience.

Possible activities

- Read with the students a few times. Model it first and then have students shadow your reading – read along with you.

- Have students circle key words / words they know / important sight words or repeated words.

- Select words from the story and have them written in list form for students to practice out of context.

- Write the story with each sentence on a separate strip of paper. Post the strips out of order. Have students rearrange sentence strips to tell the story.

- Write the story word by word on cards and have students work together to recreate it.

- Include word-attack strategies. Have students group words in the story by the same beginning sound or ending sound.

- Have students match words with pictures.

- Create a cloze and delete every eighth word or key words.

- Connect to ongoing literacy work. Have students add words to their dictionaries, word boxes or a word wall.

A note about errors

It can feel very strange to write down grammatically incorrect or incomplete utterances. The value of this activity is for students to focus on reading their own words so there is no distracting unknown vocabulary and structures. Honor the students authorship and write down exactly what they say. The students will read and remember what they said, not a doctored, corrected version. However, you do not need to ignore these errors. They provide helpful clues as to what you need to review or introduce in a subsequent lesson.

◆ The news

Informal chatting at the beginning of a session is a common and helpful activity. This activity formalizes the process a little further and creates a class newsletter. It can become an ongoing and repeated activity. Creating classroom routines such as this helps students predict what to do and feel comfortable with the process.

Generate ideas by having a sentence starter that everyone completes.

On the weekend I _____ .
I feel _____ , because _____ .
I like _____ .

You may also start by discussing and sharing good and bad news or reviewing a past event. Students then work on writing their sentence in a notebook. You may transcribe the news for someone unable to write. Students then post their sentences on large paper with markers, sign their name, and then circulate and read each other's news.

Type up the news on a handout and bring it to the next class. Have students find their name and read over their news. Have a group reading of the text.

Many follow-up activities can be generated from this text. Have students circle common or repeated words, answer questions about the text, write / speak their own follow-up questions about the news, or jumble sentences and have students work on grammar, sentence structure, or punctuation. It is a great activity for a multi-level class as the follow-up activities can be tailored to individual needs.

> *Weekend. I busy. I cook and shopping. Sada*
>
> *My weekend busy. I clean house and cook a lot. I go work. Enat*
>
> *My weekend very sick. Manh Choy*
>
> *Weekend busy. Very fun. Crabbing, cook. Meuy Finh*

Circle: cook   weekend   I

How many students cooked? _____

How many students cleaned house? _____
Who was sick? _____

Who went shopping? _____

◆ Community language learning

Community language learning is a technique that requires students to record a conversation or a series of utterances onto a tape. The tape is then transcribed to create reading material and provide a text to practice grammar, word-attack skills, and reading skills. You may set a topic for discussion or leave it open depending on the level and interests of the students. Topics such as the weekend, my family, and my job work well. This is a chance for students to extend the oral practice of phrases and sentences they already know.

Procedure

Seat students in a circle. Tell them they are going to have a conversation. The facilitator moves around the outside of the circle.

Place the tape recorder in the center. A hand held microphone really works better.

Invite the students to begin. When the first student is ready, hand her the microphone and have her record her voice on the tape. The student may want to check with you or ask you for help. If it is a long utterance, the student may want to record it in chunks.

Have the next student respond to the question or statement and record his voice on the tape. Continue in this way until the students are ready to stop.

Play back the tape in full and have the students listen to the conversation.

Play back again, stopping at the end of each sentence, question or utterance. Have students recall what was said and transcribe it on to large paper or a board. Number each sentence.

Here is an excerpt from a conversation:

1   Hadija, yesterday, problem?
2   Yes, I did.
3   Hadija, right now are you ok?
4   Yesterday, I was sick. Today, okay.
5   Good morning, everybody.
6   You talk English.
7   I go school. I happy. After school, I go Redmond.
8   Hello, students. Don't worry. Talk in English.

Students may at first be hesitant. Encourage them. Notice how students are encouraging each other to speak in the above excerpt.

Follow-up

- Model reading the transcript. Have students read along with you.
- Bring back the transcript to future classes. You can provide a copy of the transcript on a handout. Blank out some of the words and have students complete the transcript.
- Pick out a word attack skill to focus on. Choose one sound to focus on and find examples of in the text.
- Read the transcripts to pick up common sight words. Have students circle these sight words.
- Play grammar computer. Using the transcript on large paper, use a pointer to tap out a sentence using words that are in the transcript in random order. Go slowly and repeat it a few times. Have students say the sentence you are tapping out.

I-talk-English. / Hadija-was-sick-yesterday. / Are-you-students? / I-was-happy.

Have students come up to the transcript and tap out a sentence they can see.

◆ Writing labels and captions

Begin with conversation about a picture. You may bring in photos, magazine pictures, or graphics. If teaching a group, you can make a list of all the words that were used to label the pictures and have students practice reading words on the list. If there is great interest in the picture, it may develop into an experience story. Students may also draw and label their own pictures. This works well for cultural sharing but also can be done around many other activities. If you have students illustrate the activities they do in a typical day, have them add words as labels wherever they can. This can be repeated for many other topics such as floor plan of their home, a map of the neighborhood, or a picture of their family.
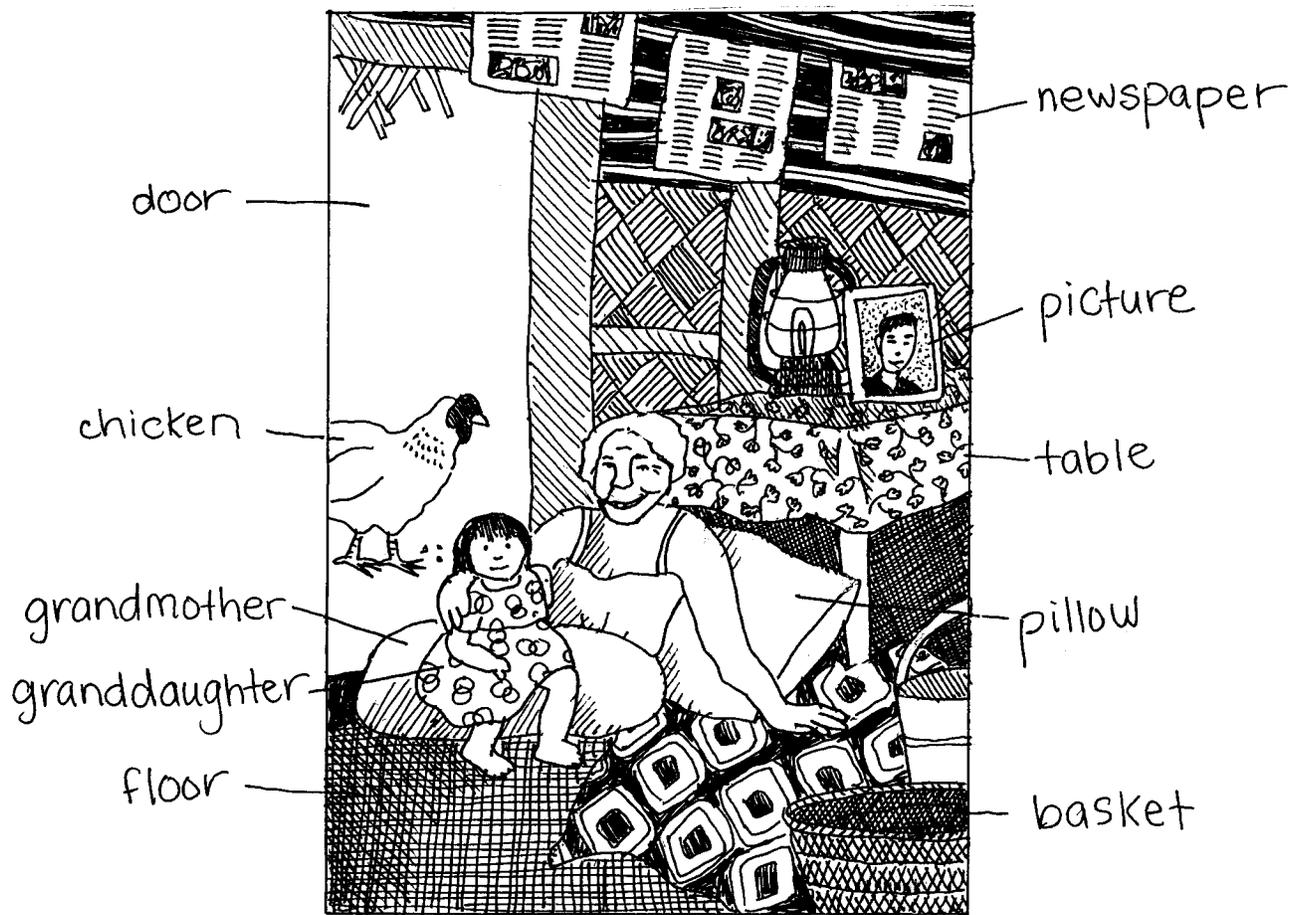
TEACHER-GENERATED MATERIAL

To avoid having students develop their own private language, teacher-generated material is also helpful as it can control vocabulary and grammatical structures and provide accurate models of English to supplement a student's own words and provide high-interest, low-level reading material.

◆ Re-writes

As you get to know about your students' lives, you may have many interesting conversations with very few words. It is not always possible to stop the student and start to transcribe an experience story. It can inhibit the flow of conversation and the student may not have all the words she needs to describe the experience. So, you can supply the words as the story unfolds. These are valuable experiences, and you can reinforce any new vocabulary that arises from it by writing a brief story for your students. It provides a natural context to integrate skills and build from speaking to reading.

> *Sambath was talking about her first experiences in the United States almost 20 years ago. She was animated; words tumbled out as she described things that had surprised her. "Big, so big, buildings big, all the food so big, cars were so big. I very scare about that. I scare for freeway, big trucks, and bus, and many, many cars. America big country. People bigger than Cambodia and very fat! In my country, people not fat. I remember I am laughing because American have big nose." Her teacher Ann remembered her comments and returned to the next class with a re-written version of her story.*
>
>> *Sambath's story*
>> *When Sambath arrived in the Unites States, she was surprised at many things. Everything seemed big to her. Buildings were very big. Food was big. Sambath was scared to go on the freeway because there were so many cars and trucks and buses. The people in the Unites States were bigger and fatter than in Cambodia. Sambath thinks Americans have big noses!*
>
> *Copies of the story were distributed to students. First, Ann asked students to recall what they could about Sambath's experiences. Then they read through the story together. As some students could read the story without difficulty, Ann asked them to complete a sentence frame about their own experiences. When I arrived in the United States, I was surprised _____ . Sambath was asked to underline all the words she could read in the text. She read through the text, pointing at each word and mumbling as she did so. She underlined 'Sambath', 'she', 'was', 'to', and 'so'. Ann introduced the sight word, 'was' and had Sambath look for this in the story.*

◆ Simplifying

Many students are interested in the news and see it on TV. Students may bring up a story at the beginning of class or you might bring in pictures from newspapers or magazines showing current events. It is a great time to find out what students understand about the world around them. Students can learn relevant key vocabulary to tell about the news such as earthquake, election, and war. Students are unable to read material about these real events so you can write an account of a news story, carefully controlling grammar and vocabulary, and bring it to class for reading practice. Also, check out the publication Northwest News. In this ESL newspaper, articles from local news are simply written at four different levels of difficulty.

In Pao's class they had looked at pictures from Time magazine depicting some of the destruction that was caused by the tsunami in December 2004. Students orally gave captions for some of the pictures, and they were transcribed by the teacher. The word 'lost' was supplied to describe one of the pictures. Brenda then wrote this story on the board.

The tsunami killed many people. Many people lost their houses. Many people lost their family. Many people lost their jobs. Many people are sad.

The story was then treated much like any text. Students watched Brenda read the story. They read it together, and then started working on sight words.

◆ Picture stories

Picture stories are an effective way to tell a story, learn new vocabulary and lend themselves to a reading follow up.

Procedure

Introduce the story and show the pictures after some conversation and vocabulary work with pictures.

Review the pictures one by one. Give one short sentence to describe each picture.

Have the students repeat this sentence.

Review from the beginning of the story again after doing a few pictures. Point to students to supply the sentence.

Introduce written words when students are able to describe the sequence of the story well. Depending on the level, you can introduce one key word for each picture or have students read short, whole sentences.

Many other follow-up activities are then possible including cloze, sequencing sentences, and matching words to pictures. Students should be very familiar with this material before they are asked to read it.

Any material that students are mastering orally can be turned into opportunities to practice literacy. You may introduce a written script for Total Physical Response (TPR) or provide a written copy of any short dialogs students have practiced and mastered.

◆ Building literacy into work with grids

Grids are a versatile tool for practicing grammar and vocabulary through asking questions. They also provide an excellent context for practicing reading. Many students need document literacy where they need to grasp how to read schedules, forms, graphs, and charts. Grids provide good practice in the horizontal and vertical alignment that is necessary to do this. Students can read simple sentences based on the information in the grid. Then, you follow-up with true / false sentences, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and writing and reading questions and answers.

PARTS TO WHOLE APPROACHES

All of the above activities provide students practice with learning sight words and looking at whole texts. At the same time, it is useful to give students the tools to sound words out. However, for students with limited knowledge of literacy in any language, this can seem pretty arbitrary and abstract. As each sound is identified, it should be put into a word and a word into a sentence as soon as possible. There are a number of published textbooks which provide systematic introduction, practice, and recognition of the sounds of English. There are a few recommended texts in the Resources section on page 104. If you do not have access to or resources for published books, the checklist on page 86 gives a teaching order for introducing sound-symbol correspondence in English.

It is helpful to use a systematic approach to phonics, but it should be used in conjunction with other approaches. Building knowledge of sounds and their combinations is a slow and painstaking process. Students generally need to access literacy much faster than the time it will take to learn all the sounds, their combinations, and exceptions.

In using Parts to Whole Approaches, you can still create interactive activities using words students know the meaning of.

◆ Lists

Identify words that start with the same letter. Have students think of words they know that start with the same letter. Students can then copy the words into a dictionary they make into a notebook.

◆ Rhyming words

Once a simple phonetic pattern has been grasped, rhyming words can be fun to think of that match the same pattern. *Cat*, *mat*, *sat*, *fat*. Make a chain so each student says one word he knows in the pattern until that pattern is exhausted.
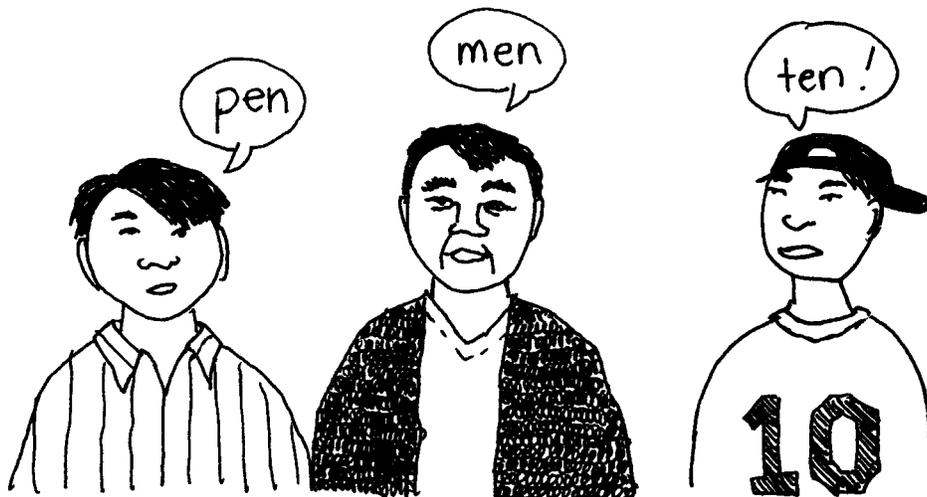
◆ **Bingo**

Play bingo using initial sound, ending sound, or words with a certain vowel sound. Provide bingo cards with pictures on them. You can include vocabulary that the student knows. The student has to listen to the words and cover all words that have the sound /b/ or the vowel /i/, etc.

◆ **Word families**

Once students have a sense of the sound of some letters, work with word families to make phonetically simple words. For example work with the groups – at, it, ap, ack. There are text books available that teach this, but if they are not made specifically with ESL students in mind, they contain many unknown vocabulary words. Always supplement texts with material containing words that your students know the meaning of.

◆ **Sound discrimination**

Once students have been introduced to some simple single consonant and short vowel sounds, discrimination activities help students to distinguish between words. Discrimination activities ask students to identify one of two words that are phonetically similar but differ by one sound only. For example, *hat* and *has*. Provide a worksheet with choices, say one word, and students circle the words they hear. You will have to go slowly and enunciate clearly. Once students get the hang of doing them, they provide good assessment information for you. Remember to include words that differ in sounds in the initial position – *hot* and *pot*, the medial position – *hot* and *hat*, and in the final position – *cat* and *cap*.

Once students have started to recognize and build a bank of phonetically simple words, you may introduce more choices within one activity. For example, choose one word from a list of three.

Circle the word you hear.	
A	B
map	mat
cat	cap
rap	rat
sap	sat

The processes described above for practicing sight word recognition, matching, circling, crossing out what does not follow a pattern, sequencing, and categorizing can all be applied to practice sound – symbol recognitions.

◆ Activities that teach the alphabet

Teaching the alphabet to pre-literate students can be daunting. It seems like an obvious place to start; however, knowing the names and order of the letters is not the same as reading. It helps to work on the alphabet before attempting writing as it helps with spelling. Teach the names of the letters as they come up. It is helpful to teach the letters that spell out important information that the students may need to give frequently such as their address or names. Teach the letters a few at a time.

> *Fatuma is learning some of the names of the letters. She can hum along to the alphabet song as her children have taught her, but she cannot yet connect the name of the letter with its symbol. Her teacher lays out the alphabet cards and asks, "What is your name?" "Fatuma." "How do you spell it?" Fatuma looks blank. Mike pulls out the letters one by one, saying them as he does so. "F-A-T-U-M-A." She repeated the questions and answers and Mike helped Fatuma say the names of the letters. "Do you know other words that begin with letter F? Fatuma, feel, Fatima, Fiona," he prompted.*

Procedure

Write the alphabet on a sheet of paper and place a pack of alphabet cards in random order on the table. Have students pick out the letters in their name and match them to the letters on the sheet.

Teach the alphabet song pointing to a written alphabet as you do so. The rhythm and grouping of the song can help recall the names of the letters.

Have students put the letters in order as they start to recognize them.

Have students begin to produce letters in written form as they begin to identify them.

◆ Connecting the alphabet to sounds

Students can be confused by the difference between the name of the letter and the sound of the letter. Try this analogy:

What's your name?   *Fatuma*
What do you speak?   *Maay-Maay*
What's her name?   *Jane*
What does she speak?   *English*
What's its name?   *A*
What does it speak?   */a/*

◆ Writing and letter formation

Procedure

Teach students how to form letters in a systematic way. In published textbooks, they are often grouped by similar shapes which can be helpful. Introduce one letter at a time. See the Resources section for suggested textbooks.

Introduce the name of the letter by holding up a card or writing it on the board.

Show the order of strokes needed to make the letter.

Have students write the letter in the air. You can easily spot a student who is going the wrong direction.

Have students write the letter on the table with their finger.

Give out paper so students can first trace over the letter. Adding a point or arrow to show the start of the first stroke and the sequence of strokes is helpful.

Provide a commentary as you show how to form the letter.

Letter M   Up, down, up, down

Provide lined paper for students to practice writing the letter over a number of times.

Ask for words students know that begin with this letter.

Provide words with the target letter missing. Students write in the letter.

Letter M   _____ ilk   _____onday   _____y

Tips

When developing written materials, there are a few things that can make the material more accessible.

- Use a larger font.

- Use a font that reflects how we write, for example, Century Gothic and Comic Sans.

- Have plenty of white space on the sheet. Too many words on the sheet can be intimidating.

- Use visuals, graphics, and icons to accompany written material.

- If you are in a classroom setting, provide a print rich environment. Label parts of the classroom and furniture, write common sight words on charts, and make lists of words containing common sounds. These resources will allow students to access information more independently.

- Build literacy routines into classroom management. Have students sign-in or check-off their own name on a sign-in chart, get students to write the date on the board, and have students write their name and date on every hand-out.

- Communicate with students in writing. Write a daily message and read it at the beginning of class.

  Good Morning. Today we are going to write letter M.
  Today we are going to learn about food.

- Write a page reference on the board as well as telling students orally.
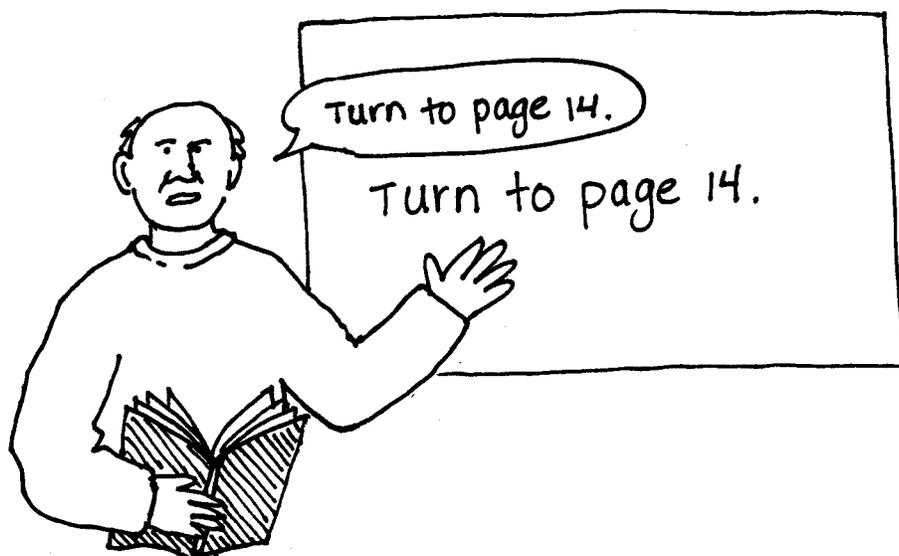
- Review continually. Build in redundancy using the classroom routines above. Recycle known sight words in new contexts. Play games, for review and for fun.

Give hints and clues rather than the answer every time. Say things like, *"What sound does that make?"* Give the beginning sound as a clue to a word you think they know. Cover up words to make them shorter, so they can read a piece at a time. When reading longer words, like *today*, cover half the word. Have students sound out the part they know and encourage them to guess. Answer requests for spelling with, *"What letters do you think are in it?"* or *" What sounds can you hear?"*

◆ Play human computer

After introducing a short dialog or story, write sentences on paper or the board and number the lines. Have a student choose the number of the line she wants to practice reading again. Stand behind the student and be the computer. The student makes an attempt to read the line first. Then, you, as the computer, automatically repeat the whole line after the student has tried. If the student reads the line again, repeat it again. Repeat this as many times as the student wants. Have the student signal when she wants you to stop.

Observe what students are doing. Close observation tells you a lot about where students are and where you need to go next. Who needs extra help? Who has memorized but cannot read out of context? Who is pointing to one word while saying another?

MANAGING A MULTI-LEVEL LITERACY CLASS

Almost every English class could be called multi-level since students' pace of learning, rate of acculturation, style of learning, and previous educational experiences vary a lot. A variety of materials, activities, and approaches can help. Adjusting groupings, modifying tasks, and providing individualized and self-access materials all help to make a multi-level class run more smoothly. Managing a multi-level class can be exhausting since you might be planning for and supporting multiple activities going on simultaneously in your class.

Strategies for Teaching Multi-level Groups

There is no middle ground in a multi-level class. The key is to provide instruction and materials that match every level that is represented. For each level in the class, be clear about what the learning objective for that level should be within a single lesson plan.

For example, within the topic of communication with doctors, some students will learn how to request an appointment. Another group, at a higher speaking level, may learn how to change an appointment. A third group, at an even higher level of speaking proficiency, may learn how to change an appointment giving details and negotiate a new appointment time.

For literacy, the lowest group may work on reading numbers or times. Another group will read a simplified appointment card and extract details. The highest level may read a variety of authentic appointment cards or learn how to fill out a health history survey.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Careful needs assessment is crucial in a multi-level setting. To ensure some success for all levels in the class, find out what the students need and want to know. Your program may administer a standardized test initially, but ongoing needs assessment is necessary.
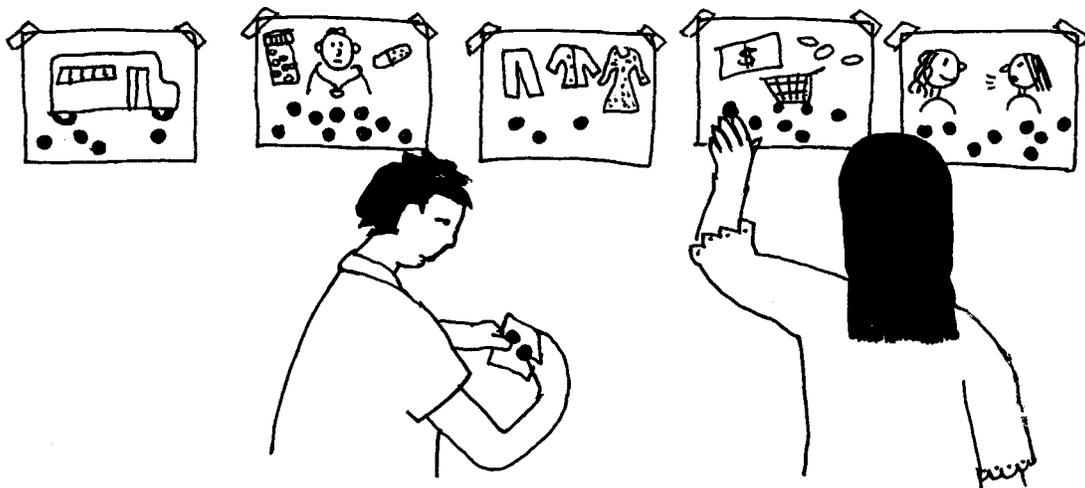
Some tools

- Hand students a picture dictionary and have them put sticky notes on 5 different pages that they want to know about.

- Use brainstorming and prioritizing with the whole group. Use a pictorial checklist.

- Ask individual students what they need English for.

- Use pictures of places in the local community and have students select the places they go and need help with language.

- Create a picture story about a learner who needs English. *Ahmed wants to learn English to get a job, to take his child to the doctor, and to talk with his neighbors.* Ask students to substitute their own reasons for wanting English. Use the native language where possible and appropriate to get this information from students.

Once you have some idea of the students' expressed needs, go ahead and start planning. You have a place to start, but you will need to revisit your list with students at a later date.

GROUPING STRATEGIES

Grouping students in different ways is one of the main strategies to cope with differences in level. For any activity, consider which type of grouping will best meet the needs of each level. Students may be resistant to being grouped together because of factors such as age, status, and gender. Be sensitive to these factors. Your enthusiasm can encourage students to try unfamiliar or non-traditional activities.

◆ Whole groups

Decide if your activity will work with the whole class participating together. Despite differences in level, it is important to have some whole group time as it helps students feel part of the larger group. You might consider including a regular warm-up time and class closing. In whole group time, you can introduce the theme or the topic with the whole group and then follow with some small group and individual tasks. By using visuals and carefully placing questions you can help to include everyone in whole group activities. For example, if your theme is shopping, you could begin with large visuals of places where people shop. Remember the question hierarchy. Low-level students may be able to answer personal and other questions beginning with *what*, *where*, and *when*. Here are some activities that work with the whole group but may have different small group tasks: field trips, viewing video tapes, picture stories, brainstorming, and whole class projects such as making a book.

◆ Small groups

Small groups can be used to give students practice in language skills. They could be temporary and the make-up of the group may change depending on the activity and the needs students have.

◆ Cross-ability groupings and pairs

Cross-ability groupings allow lower level students get exposure to a greater pool of language. Higher level students reinforce and demonstrate what they know by helping other students. Activities that work well with this grouping are jigsaw activities, board games, and role-plays where the more demanding role is given to the more proficient learner. LEA activities can be utilized in pairs where one student dictates and the other writes. Students can conduct interviews where one student asks the questions and the other answers only.

◆ Same-ability groups and pairs

These groupings are made up of students with roughly equivalent skills. Problem solving, information gaps, and dialogs work well in this format.

◆ Individualized work

Each student can work towards specific goals at their own pace and with material appropriate to their level. Writing activities such as dialog journals, writing about or writing captions for visuals, and worksheets can all be done individually.

ACTIVITIES FOR MULTI-LEVEL GROUPS

◆ Dialog journals

Appropriate for all levels, pre-literate students can work on an LEA story in their journal while literate students can respond to a prompt written by you.

◆ Pictures

Show a single picture or series of pictures for oral and literacy practice. Have students tell a story or describe the picture. Start with a whole group and move to small group tasks. Cross-ability groups, where one student is literate and the other not, can write a caption or story. Same-ability groups can order sentence strips or create their own story.

◆ Grids

Grids can be utilized with either cross-ability or same-ability groups. For same-ability groups, students take turns asking and answering. For cross-ability groups, higher level students can take the role of asking questions and writing written information on the grid.

For information gap activities, have students of mixed ability work together to complete a task.

Dictation grids work well with cross-ability groups. Student A has a list of words. Student B has a numbered grid with word cards or pictures. Place a barrier between pairs of students. Student

A reads the list, *"Number 1 is t-shirt,"* and Student B places the picture card on the correct square. This helps review previously introduced material. First, review the language necessary to complete the task and demonstrate how to do the activity.

◆ TPR on paper

Have one student describe a picture to another. The literate students can read a description or a higher level student can give a description. The non-literate or lower level student can draw the picture.

Draw a table. There is a cat under the table. There is a chair next to the table.

◆ Clocks

Have Student A tell the time on a series of clocks while Student B writes the time or draws the hands on the clock. A lower level student may be able to read digital time and the higher level students could draw the hands on an analog clock.

Other information gap activities are better utilized in same-ability groups as they demand that students understand all the information. They may be using the same language to complete a timetable or schedule or follow directions on a map.

◆ Dialogs and stories

Practice dialogs in small groups. More demanding roles can be given to more proficient students. Ensure plenty of visual clues as a guide to meaning and to help establish context. Follow-up literacy tasks can be provided at a variety of levels.
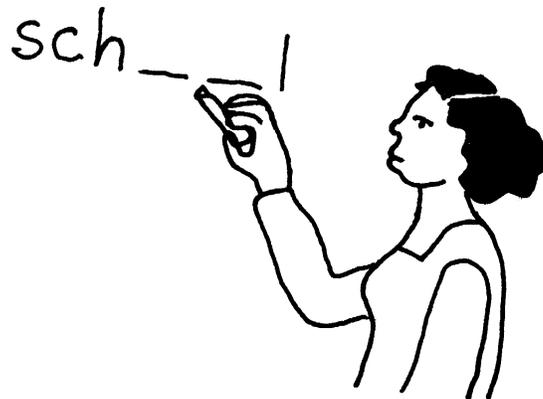
■ **Low-level literacy**

Circle key or repeated words in the dialog or story.
Circle sight words that the students already know.
Fill in a missing word in a dialog.
Guess single words in the story from skeleton clues – H_ _se (house).
Match single words to pictures in a picture story.

■ **More advanced literacy**

Order lines in a dialog or story.
Delete one speaker in a dialog and have students complete the missing portion.
Write an extension of the dialog or story.
Match whole sentences and pictures.
Complete a cloze exercise with every 8th word deleted.
Write the whole story or dialog from memory.

SELF-ACCESS MATERIALS

When students are doing independent or solo activities in class, self-access materials can allow them to take responsibility for their learning and allow students to have something to do while waiting for other students or groups to complete tasks. Timing activities to finish at exactly the same time is very challenging. Self-access materials allow students to be engaged in something meaningful and of their choice and interests. It helps reduce dead class time and can create a relaxed but work-like atmosphere.

A self-access component can include activities from all skill areas. With these kinds of materials, each task is set up to need minimal assistance from you. Answers, where applicable, are written on the back of the activity or on the envelope.

Keep material in a box that can be passed around easily. Color coding the activities helps students make appropriate choices. Color code for level and also for skill, if appropriate. Paste a

picture on the envelope to help students make choices. Make sure that you never throw material away! Every worksheet can be placed in the box with a key on the back. Many activities can be cut up and recycled into the self-access box.
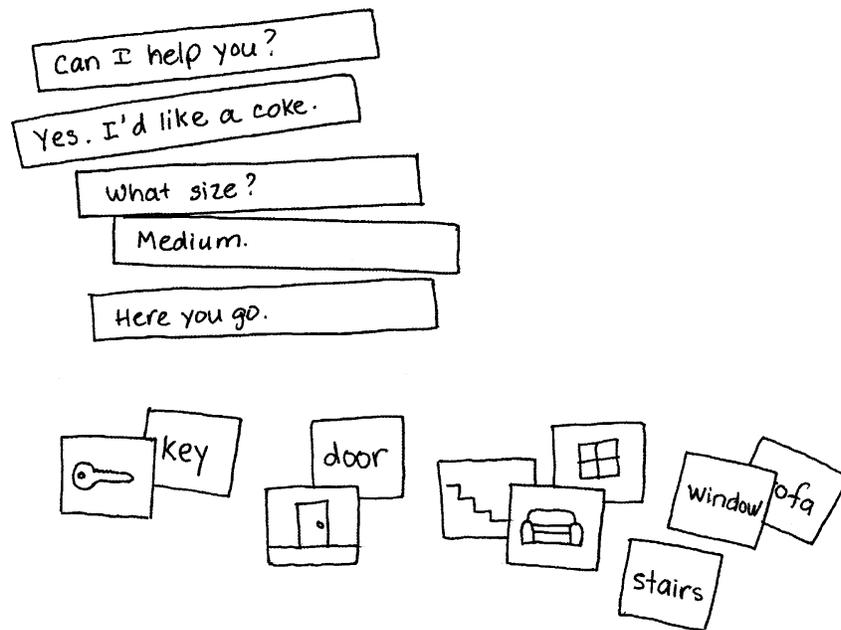
Self-access activities for the box

- Match words and pictures.
- Complete cloze activities.
- Scrambled sentences with each word written on a card.
- Whole dialogs cut up into separate words to be reassembled.
- Scrabble tiles for creating own words.
- Dictated stories or task completions on audio tapes. Students will need headphones.
- Writing tasks with directions.

  Draw a picture of your neighborhood. Label the streets.
  Draw your family. Write names and ages.

- Board games you have created.
- Card games such as Go Fish, Undo, and Snap.
- Copies of texts that you have used previously in class.

Computer software programs can be purchased for students to get independent practice.

It is helpful for students to be able to redo some activities at their own pace. Self-access materials can help students who have been absent catch up.

TASKS

Depending on the exact breakdown of level you have, students can work on the same material at the same time, but they will be doing tasks that vary by level. For example, for class surveys and interviews, lower level students need to ask the questions only once or to one person. Higher level students must ask multiple students perhaps multiple questions.

Choose an activity that has several parts to complete a whole. The parts vary according to difficulty. The final product incorporates everyone's efforts. For example, in making a class calendar, a group of lower level students fill in the dates only. Higher level students add the days of the week. They may also read another text or extract information from a 'What's happening?' community bulletin or newspaper, so they can incorporate events or holidays. Finally, all groups transfer their work into the calendar.

MANAGING A MULTI-LEVEL CLASS

You may feel like a circus performer as you are trying to keep multiple balls in the air at once. Generally, you start off and close the lesson as a whole group. When breaking into small groups for small group tasks, you may work with one group while another is doing something they can complete independently. At some point, you will need to switch groups so that all students feel they are getting your attention. Some teachers manage groups by utilizing volunteers. Students themselves can act as group leaders and peer tutors. Be sensitive in your choice of leaders as learning styles and expectations, language and cultural background, age, and sex can all play a part in finding an appropriate person.

PLANNING FOR A MULTI-LEVEL GROUP

Careful planning and sequencing of activities will help make your lessons successful. Ask yourself these questions as you plan.

1 Will this strategy / material / activity allow students to respond at their own level? Will they succeed?

2 Will this material allow each student to discover something new about the language? Will each student be able to push the edges of their current knowledge?

3 What language skills are being practiced? Will the students be able to go from one skill to another to support the learning? How can I extend the material?

4 Are there visuals and non-verbal clues built into the material? Will they understand the meaning without the language?

5 What is the objective for each level of student in the lesson?

Careful planning that includes clear objectives for each level for each lesson is essential. Teaching multi-level groups requires skill and sensitivity, but by utilizing grouping and task strategies and using self-access materials, all students will be able to experience some success.

USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

Teaching Multi-level Classes in ESL, Bell, Jill. Dormac, Inc., 1988

Input / Output, Boyd, R. and Boyd, M. Abaca Books, Inc., 1989

Teaching Multi-level Adult ESL Classes, Shank, Cathy and Terrill, Lynda. An ERIC Digest, May 1995

CHECKLIST FOR PRE-LITERATE LEVEL 1

The checklist is a set of vocabulary, basic structures, and functional language that beginning students need to know. The section on Basic Language provides essential starting items for informal interactions and is good for anyone who needs to start interacting in English. Once the students have mastered the Basic Language, they can move on to Other Language, which is divided into topic areas.

Since students learn best when they can see that their needs are being met, organize instruction into topic areas rather than starting at the beginning of the checklist and working your way down. Program coordinators, bilingual counselors, or the students themselves can help prioritize topic areas. Awad is concerned about finding a job. He would be interested in items in the Employment section of the checklist so he could learn vocabulary for common jobs, state his past work experience, and talk about his skills. Fatuma is pregnant and needs to interact with health care workers. The competencies in the Health section of the checklist will be of more immediate relevance to her – naming basic body parts, describing common illnesses, and following directions in a medical exam. The selected items from the checklist keep you on target and provide a basis for assessment. By using the checklist, you can be clear about what you have covered, and you can show students their successes. This method of instruction provides discrete, measurable steps toward a goal. You are teaching and measuring what students will be able to do with language. Grammatical concepts are embedded in the checklist items. You or your institution should decide when or if instruction should be given on specific grammar points.

Checklist for Pre-literate Level 1

SPEAKING / LISTENING

Basic Language

◆ Greeting and leave taking

Greet someone and respond to a greeting
Hello.
How are you?
Fine, thanks.

Greet and respond to a greeting at different times of day
Good morning / afternoon / evening.

Say good-bye and respond to farewells
Bye.
Good-bye.
See you tomorrow / next week.

◆ Personal information

Ask and answer questions about personal information
What is your name?
Where are you from?
How old are you?
When is your birthday?
What is your phone number?
What is your address?
Are you married / single?
How many children do you have?

Identify relationships
Mother, father, friend, relative, etc.

Respond to requests for spelling of personal and family name

◆ Asking and answering questions

Ask and answer Yes / No questions beginning with "Are" and "Do"
Are you from Somalia?
Yes, I am.

Are you Amina?
No, I'm Trini.

Do you live in Wenatchee?
No, I don't.

◆ "WH" questions

Ask and answer simple questions that begin with who, what, when, where, what time, how much
Who is he?
He's my son.

What is this?
It's my house.

When do you study?
I study at night.

Where do you shop?
I shop at Safeway.

What time do you eat lunch?
I eat lunch at 1:00.

How much is the shirt?
It's $4.50.

◆ Numbers, letters, time, and date

Count to 100 using cardinal numbers

Name the numbers

Put numbers in order

Know the value

Count by 5's, 10's

Identify and name ordinal numbers 1ˢᵗ – 30ᵗʰ

Tell time in simple terms
Five o'clock
Five thirty

Say and recognize days of the week

Say and recognize months of the year

Identify and state the names of the letters of the alphabet

◆ Social interaction

Express lack of understanding and state communication problems
I don't know.
I don't understand.
I don't speak English.

Express needs and wants
I need / want / have / would like.
I don't need.

State and ask likes / dislikes
I like oranges.
Do you like oranges?

Request assistance
Help, please.
Speak slowly, please.

Attract someone's attention
Excuse me, Mary.

Introduce someone and respond to introductions
Hello, this is my _____ .
Nice to meet you.

Ask and respond to questions using common action verbs in the simple present tense to describe daily routine
Come, go, put, bring, clean, cook, give, come, eat, watch, wash, etc.
What do you do on the weekend?
I cook / watch TV / play / clean my house.

Other Language

◆ Banking, shopping, and money

Identify money and understand values
Dime = 10c = 2 nickels = 1 nickel and 5 pennies
Quarter = 25c = 5 nickels = 2 dimes and 1 nickel
Nickel = 5c
One dollar = 100c = 4 quarters = 10 dimes

Recognize, read, and say written money values
$1.35 = one dollar and 35 cents
$12.06 = twelve dollars and six cents

Count money

Name common foods
Fruits, vegetables, meats, drinks, staples

Ask and understand questions about location of items in a store
Where is the rice?
Aisle 10.
Next to the beans.
On the bottom shelf.

Name clothing items
Shirt, jacket, pants, skirt, shoes, etc.

Give and respond to a compliment
I like your shoes.
You speak English well.
Thank you.

Count by 1's, 5's, 10's

◆ Health

Describe how one feels
I am sad / happy / angry.

Describe one's general condition
I am hungry / thirsty / tired.

Describe a health problem
My _____ hurts.

Identify body parts (major external)
Arm, leg, stomach, back, hand, head, etc.

Name common illnesses
Cough, cold, flu, sore throat, fever, etc.

Follow three to four word directions in a medical exam
Open your mouth.
Look up.
Roll up your sleeve.
Make a fist.

Describe people
He is young.
She is tall.
He is happy.

◆ School

Describe objects by color
The pen is blue.
They are green.

Describe objects by size
The chair is big.
They are small.

Identify classroom and common personal items
Eraser, book, purse, comb, etc.

Ask and make statements of identification using demonstratives (this, that, these, those)
Is this your eraser?
That is my book.

Inquire about classroom objects and personal items
Are these your shoes?
Where is my pen?

Follow one and two word classroom instructions
Copy, write, repeat, listen, ask, stand up, sit down, etc.

Give two to three word basic everyday instructions
Tell me.
Please, repeat.
Show me.
Wait.
Coffee, please.

Ask and respond to questions about work and school schedules
What time do you start?
I start at 3:00.

Ask and respond to questions about the location of items
Where is the pen?
It is next to / under / on / behind / near the book.

◆ Housing

Identify rooms in a house / apartment
Living room, bedroom, kitchen, etc.

Identify furniture in a house / apartment
Sofa, stove, sink, table, etc.

Ask and describe locations using prepositions
In, on, under, over, above, next to, etc.

◆ Community services

Identify commonly used community resources and places
Supermarket, welfare office, school, hospital, post office

Ask and respond to common action verbs in the present continuous tense to describe where you are going
Where are you going?
I am going to the store / welfare office, etc.

Describe basic weather conditions
It is sunny / windy / raining / cold, etc.

Dial 911 and provide basic information (name, address, problem)
Fire, police, ambulance, hospital, sick, hurt, etc.

◆ Transportation and directions
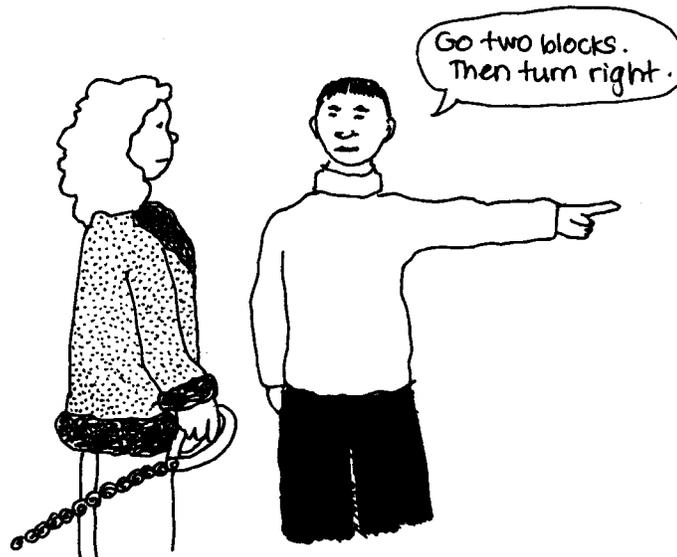
Use basic spatial directions
Left, right, north, south, up, down

Give and follow simple directions relating to movement and position
Go straight.
Go north.
Turn left.

Ask for and give directions to a place
Where is the school?
It's on 2nd Avenue.

Identify common types of transportation

Read a street address using ordinal and cardinal numbers
103 South 23rd Avenue

◆ Employment

Identify common jobs
Mechanic, teacher, construction worker, driver, etc.

State job skills using action verbs in the present simple tense
Type, drive, read, cook, use a computer, speak English

Describe one's work skills using verb 'can'
I can drive.
I can't use a computer.

Follow three to five word job related directions appropriate to students' experience or area of interest
Cook the meat and vegetables.
Put sheets on the bed.
Cut the grass.

Ask and respond to questions using common action verbs in the simple past tense
Came, went, worked, washed, gave, closed, etc.

Use 'was' as the past tense of 'am' to refer to self
I was a farmer.
I am a student.

Describe previous work experience in simple terms
I was a farmer.
I worked in / at _____ .

READING AND WRITING

◆ Literacy basics

Recognize left-to-right and top-to-bottom directionality

Hold a pen correctly

◆ Numbers and alphabet

Recognize numbers 1-100

Teach in stages 1-10, 10-20, 21-30, etc.

Recognize numbers 1-10 as symbols that represent quantities

Recognize numbers 1-10 as a sequence

Write numbers 1-100

Print upper case alphabet

Print lower case alphabet

Write name, address, phone number, age

Read digital clock times

Read dates

Read prices

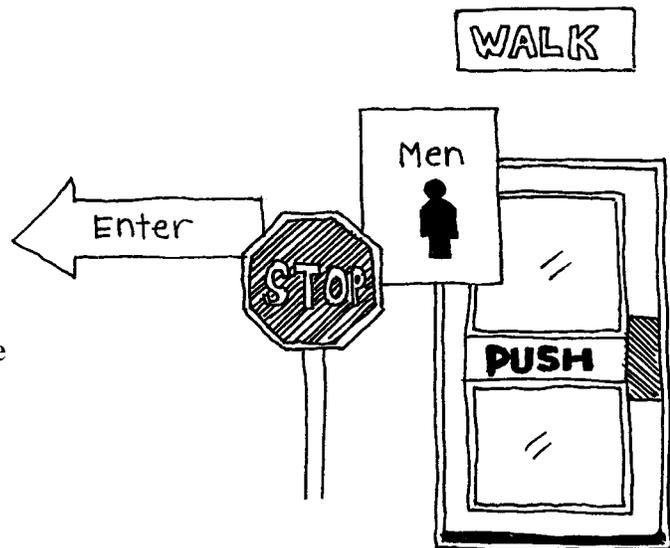**Dial a number on a telephone dial pad**

Read days of the week including abbreviations

Read months of the year including abbreviations

Write a phone number on a piece of paper from listening

Read and understand basic sight words / symbols in the environment.
Men, women, walk, stop, etc.

◆ English sounds

Recognize sound-symbol correspondence of all initial consonants

Recognize sound-symbol correspondence of all the following letter combinations

Short vowels appearing in initial and medial position
In, on, at, hat, ten, sit, hot, sun

Initial consonant blends
cr, dr, tr, fr, br, gl, sl, c, bl, pl, sk, sm, sp, st, sw

Final consonant
-g, -n, -m,-b, -s, -p, -x, -t, -d

Final consonant blends
-nd, -nk, -nt, -mp, -lt, -ft, -st, -sk ,-ff, -ss, -ll, -ck

One syllable plurals
Map, maps
Pot, pots

Initial digraphs
Sh-, ch-, qu-, th-

Final digraphs
-sh, -ch, -th

R-controlled vowels
Car, corn, bird, turn, herd

Silent e combinations
Plane, nine, home, June

Diphthongs
Ou, ow, oi, oy

Read and write simple statements
I have 3 children.
I am from Nigeria.
I live in Kent.
My son is sad.
I like rice.

Use spaces between words

Use a capital letter to begin a statement and a period to end

Fill out a simplified form

TRACKING PROGRESS

An easy way to keep track of what you are doing and how the students are responding is to record the competencies on an assessment grid. If you are teaching one student or a small group of students, you can chart progress by keeping a grid for each student. For larger classes, you might keep a grid for each group of students by level. Having a number of columns on the grid reminds you to keep recycling and reviewing the competencies to help retention. This is a simple way to share progress with your students, too. You can show how much they know on one day and can point out their progress when you have reviewed material on a subsequent day.

Student Name: Fatuma

Date	1/16	1/18	1/24	1/26	2/2
Recognize and say basic body parts	Knows 'nose' only	Reviewed, all ok, pronunciation of stomach			Could do whole TPR sequence
My _____ hurts	Not known	Can respond to question and substitute body parts			Completed substitution drill
Common illnesses (fever, cold, cough, flu, sore throat, runny nose			Knew fever only	Did well with 'How are you?' dialog; did not remember sore throat	Role play in doctor's office; could make some substitutions but need to review difference between flu and cold
Describe how I feel (I'm sick, happy, angry, sad, tired)				Knew sick already	Could talk about pictures; need to review tired
Follow directions in a medical exam			Followed TPR sequence	Reviewed TPR	Followed directions in role play

THE FIRST 100 COMMONLY USED ENGLISH WORDS

The most commonly used words are ranked by frequency. The first 25 make up about one-third of all printed material in English. The first 100 make up about one-half of all written material, and the first 300 make up about sixty-five percent of all written material in English.

The First Hundred				
1. the	21. at	41. there	61. some	81. my
2. of	22. be	42. use	62. her	82. than
3. and	23. this	43. an	63. would	83. first
4. a	24. have	44. each	64. make	84. water
5. to	25. from	45. which	65. like	85. been
6. in	26. or	46. she	66. him	86. call
7. is	27. one	47. do	67. into	87. who
8. you	28. had	48. how	68. time	88. oil
9. that	29. by	49. their	69. has	89. its
10. it	30. word	50. if	70. look	90. now
11. he	31. but	51. will	71. two	91. find
12. was	32. not	52. up	72. more	92. long
13. for	33. what	53. other	73. write	93. down
14. on	34. all	54. about	74. go	94. day
15. are	35. were	55. out	75. see	95. did
16. as	36. we	56. many	76. number	96. get
17. with	37. when	57. then	77. no	97. come
18. his	38. your	58. them	78. way	98. made
19. they	39. can	59. these	79. could	99. may
20. I	40. said	60. so	80. people	100. part

Taken from: *The Reading Teachers Book of Lists, Third Edition*; by Edward Bernard Fry, Ph.D, Jacqueline E. Kress, Ed.D and Dona Lee Fountoukidis, Ed.D.

Sambath

Sambath came to the United States in 1986 as a refugee fleeing persecution in Cambodia. She is 59 years old. After spending eight years in a refugee camp in Thailand, she was resettled in the United States. Sambath is a single mother with 2 adult children.

In Cambodia, she helped on her family farm until the Khmer Rouge destroyed her village and she was forced to flee. In the United States, she has worked in various jobs including fish packing, janitorial, home day care, working in a bakery, and in manufacturing. She has recently been laid off from her manufacturing job.

Sambath has studied in English classes a number of times since her arrival. She has a basic oral fluency and can easily meet face-to-face basic communication needs. She says she enjoyed the English classes she took previously but was forced to stop because of her work schedule. She did not attend school in Cambodia and is not literate in Khmer or English. She can recognize some letters of the alphabet, write her name and address when copying, identify numbers orally, and can read some numbers up to 100. She has come back to English classes because she wants to improve her English and learn to read and write. She is also looking for a job. She relies heavily on her youngest daughter, who lives with her, to negotiate most written communication but her daughter is about to get married.

Fatuma and Awad

Fatuma and Awad are Somali Bantu. They have been in the United States for four months. They arrived with their three children 17, 14, and 9. In Somalia, Bantu are a persecuted minority group since their arrival as slaves in the 19th century. Fatuma and Awad fled Somalia during the civil war. They walked to Kenya where they lived in two different refugee camps. They were housed in the camps for a total of eight years. Life in the refugee camp was dangerous. Somali Bantu continued to be attacked. It was unsafe to go alone to collect firewood and water.

In Somalia they were farmers. Awad did the agricultural work and Fatuma did some bartering and selling in a market. In the camps, they received some English instruction and cultural orientation. They speak Maay Maay which is not a written language. They also know Somali and Swahili but are not literate in any language. Awad has more confidence in using the few words he knows. Fatuma is more hesitant. Awad is concerned about finding a job. The children are all in school. Fatuma is 5 months pregnant.
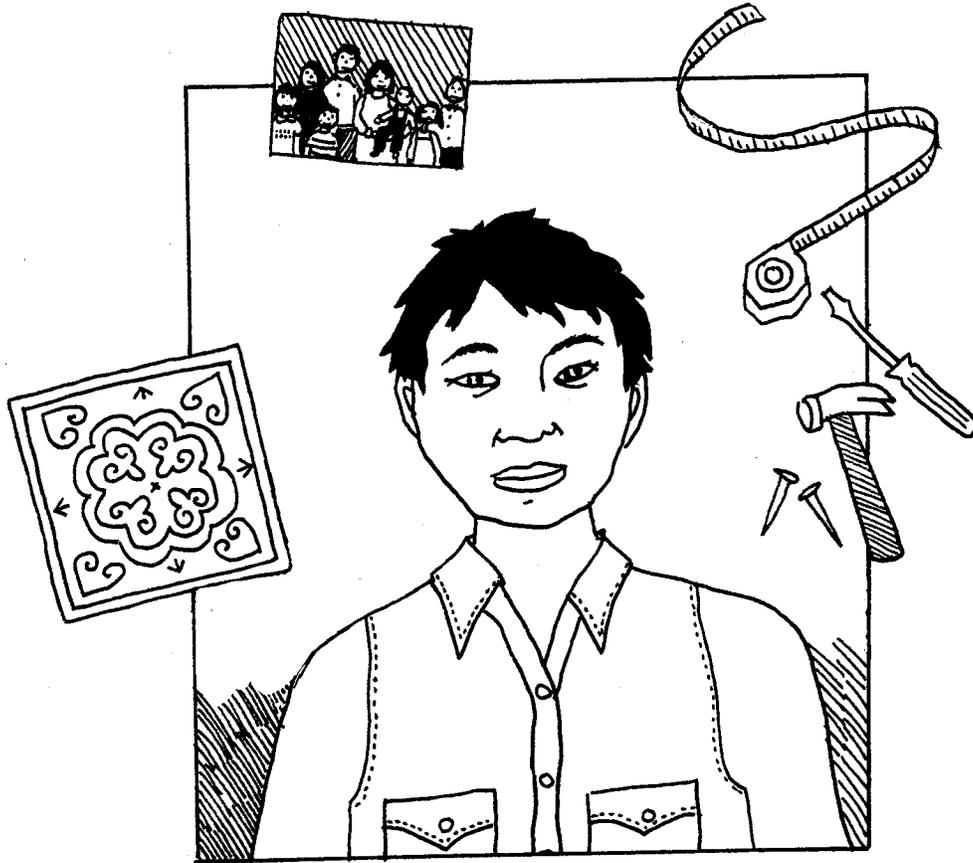
Pao

Pao Moua is Hmong. He is thirty-five years old. His family fled from Laos to Thailand when he was six years old. He has lived in the United States for six months. He arrived with his wife and six children aged 16 to 2 years old. He went to school in Thailand for about three years. He speaks Thai and Hmong, but he is not literate in any language. He was forced to stop going to school in Thailand as a child because he had to help his family. He had little preparation for coming to the United States and has very little spoken English.

In Thailand, he worked in a rock quarry and for a local construction company.

ESL RESOURCES

Web Sites

CULTURE

Cultural Orientation
www.culturalorientation.net

Offers links to information about refugee resettlement in the United States, information on the type and length of training provided to refugees overseas, basic facts about new refugee groups arriving in the United States, and cultural orientation activities for trainers overseas and in the United States. Download, view, and / or order articles and other materials regarding refugee resettlement. A division of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL).

International Rescue Committee
www.theirc.org

Browse articles detailing IRC's activities overseas, general news reports, specific IRC program information, links to government and non-government agencies, general refugee news and information, and country-specific web sites.

United States Committee for Refugees
www.refugees.org

Provides current information about refugee issues in the form of newsletter articles, photo galleries, short video testimonies from refugees, and statistical reports. Extensive site with glossary of terms, online store to purchase publications, and links to other refugee information on the Internet.

Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning
www.spring-institute.org

Offers information, materials, and technical assistance to ESL teachers and tutors of refugees and immigrants. View articles with teaching and lesson ideas, program planning information, and pre-employment training ideas.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
www.unhcr.ch

Provides current news and historical background about the world's refugees. Contains topic and country-specific articles, press releases, statistics, photographs, and maps, plus back issues of the magazine, Refugees.

LANGUAGE

Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC)
www.ed.gov/NLE

Link to the National Library of Education. Also provides various information about and access to the ERIC database (www.eric.ed.gov) which is the largest education database in the world. Contains more than 1 million records of journal articles, research reports, curriculum and teaching guides, conference papers, and books. Digests can be downloaded. Provides short articles on a wide range of topics for teachers of ESL.

Center for Applied Linguistics
www.cal.org

An extensive site with educational and cultural resources dedicated to "improving communication through better understanding of language and culture." Download, view, and / or order articles and other materials about current CAL sponsored projects in a variety of topic areas including Immigrant Education, Literacy and Adult ESL, Refugee Concerns, and Workplace Literacy. Link to ERIC and the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA). Connect with a number of national resource centers including the Cultural Orientation Resource Center which offers cultural orientation materials online and for purchase. CAL offers other ESL instructional and cultural information for purchase including books, videos, CD-ROMS, and tests. Various CAL-published reports and papers can also be viewed online along with issues of the CAL newsletter. CAL also maintains a detailed listing of Internet links by topic to other websites of interest.

Dave's ESL Café
www.eslcafe.org

Interactive site includes a bookstore for purchasing ESL / EFL materials through www.amazon.com, an idea cookbook where teachers can share quick activity ideas, and forums for students and teachers to send e-mail messages to each other. An always expanding site with good graphics, links, and information for a variety of audiences. A free copy of Dave Sperling's **Internet Activity Workbook** is available by calling the Pearson's Help Desk at (800) 266-8855.

Eastside Literacy
www.eastsideliteracy.org/tutorsupport/ESL/ESLRes.htm

A user-friendly website with FAQs and links to resources. Useful links to Absolute Beginner, Internet Picture Dictionary, and ESL Teacher's Guide.

Minnesota Literacy Council Resourced Reviews
www.themlc.org/index

Provides reviews of published materials for teachers.

National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education
www.ncle.org

Books

LANGUAGE

Total Physical Response (TPR): A Curriculum for Adults
Silver, Margaret, Adelman, Barbara, and Price, Elisabeth. Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. www.spring-institute.org
Presents a detailed explanation of the purpose of TPR. Includes step-by-step directions for sample TPR lessons covering basic Level 1 content.

What Non-Readers and Beginning Readers Need to Know: Performance-based ESL Adult Literacy
Brod, Shirley. Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. www.spring-institute.org
Describes beginning adult English learners and factors affecting their literacy development. Discusses performance-based instruction and why it should be used. Includes worksheets that may be photocopied and a list of Web and print-based resources for instructors.

Before Book One: Listening Activities for Pre-Beginning Students of English, 2nd Edition
Boyd, John and Mary Ann. Longman. www.longman.com
Activities center on listening and non-verbal responding based on communication situations like writing down a phone number. Designed for very low-level students.

Picture Stories: Language and Literacy Activities for Beginners
Ligon, Fred and Tannenbaum, Elizabeth. Addison-Wesley / Longman. www.aw-bc.com
Each of the 16 stories, told through a sequence of 10 pictures, deals with a particular cultural topic such as using the telephone, on-the-job responsibilities, household safety, and shopping etiquette. Designed for Level 1 students.

COMPREHENSIVE TEXTS

Lifeprints: ESL for Adults
Grognet, Allene and Crandall, Jodi, editors. New Readers Press. www.newreaderspress.com
This core instructional series develops language and cultural understanding through a wide variety of activities that present authentic, natural English and provide opportunities to manipulate language in learning situations typical of student's everyday lives. Books available for Literacy (pre-Level 1) and Levels 1, 2, and 3.

Literacy Plus A and B
Saslow, Joan. Longman. www.longman.com
Literacy Plus A is designed for students with no native language literacy. Literacy Plus B is meant for students who are literate in their native language but not in English. A comprehensive

text that presumes no previous literacy experience. Weaves useful oral language, with civics concepts and basic literacy. Has a useful visual packet, CD-ROM for supplemental activities, audio tapes, placement test, achievement tests, and teacher's book. Has a structured and systematic approach to learning phonics. A good amount and variety of practice activities suggested. Moves slowly. After completing Literacy Plus A, students should move on to Literacy Plus B, which is a review and extension of the first book.

Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary Literacy Program
Templin-Imel, Garnet. Oxford University Press. www.oup.com
Designed to be used with the dictionary, this comprehensive four skills program can be photocopied. Lots of literacy activities for true beginners using the pictures in the dictionary.

Easy Way to English: An integrated Approach for Beginners.
Kill, Maureen. Scholargy Custom Publishing. www.scholargy.com
A workbook style text that introduces phonics, printing, numbers and beginning English.

LITERACY

Tales From the Homeland: The Language Experience Approach
Bell, Anita. Tacoma Community House Training Project. www.tchtrainingproject.com
Provides examples of language experience stories and follow-up activities used with pre-literate refugee adults. Includes many ideas for including speaking and listening skills into LEA.

First Words in English
Mrowicki, Linda. Linmore Publishing. www.linmore.com
A beginning ESL textbook which provides pre-literate students with basic survival oral and literacy skills. It contains a variety of activities dealing with school, work, health, shopping, and emergencies.

Longman ESL Literacy – 2nd Edition
Nishio, Yvonne Wong. Addison-Wesley / Longman. www.aw-bc.com
Chapters are organized around alphabet, money, family, and school. Many visuals. Presumes some literacy in native language.

Literacy in Lifeskills
Gati, Sally. Heinle and Heinle. www.heinle.com
Designed for learners with little or no exposure to English, no basic literacy skills in their primary language, or no familiarity with the Roman alphabet. Students learn to write numbers, personal information, and addresses.

Personal Stories: Book 1
Koch, Kamla. Linmore Publishing. www.linmore.com
Easy to read stories divided into topic areas. Follows the same characters throughout. Not for complete beginners but useful material when students have some sight words. Comprehension and guided writing exercises follow.

The Bantu in our Midst: A Resource for ELT Classrooms
Brod, Shirley. The Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. www.spring-institute.org
Presents specific Bantu cultural information and a short curriculum of lesson plans – From the Very Beginning: Getting Started in the ESL Classroom with Pre-literacy and Non-literacy Learners by Shirley Brod.

Cultural Adjustment, Mental Health, and ESL
Adkins, Myrna Ann, Birman, Dina, and Sample, Barbara. The Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. www.spring-institute.com
Contains a very comprehensive explanation of the effects of the traumatic experiences of refugees on their mental health. Includes lesson plans for ESL activities for dealing with culture shock issues in an ESL classroom.

Stories to Tell Our Children
Weinstein-Shr, Gail. Heinle and Heinle. www.heinle.com
The stories are written by learners themselves. Practice and comprehension exercises provided that lead students to writing their own story on the same topic. Not for complete beginners. Some stories are quite short. The content of the stories is relevant and motivating.

CULTURE

The Somali Bantu: Their History and Culture
Lehman, Dan Van and Eno, Omar. The Center for Applied Linguistics. www.cal.org
Cultural profile of the Somali Bantu.

Muslim Refugees in the United States: A Guide for Service Providers
Maloof, Patricia and Ross-Sheriff, Fariyal. The Center for Applied Linguistics. www.cal.org
Gives an overview of the Muslim refugee experience in the U.S. Covers basic tenets of Islam, resettlement issues, and special concerns for men, women, children, and the elderly.

The Hmong: An Introduction to Their History and Culture
Ranard, Donald, ed. The Center for Applied Linguistics. www.cal.org
Cultural profile of the Hmong. Covers people, history, life in Laos, the Thailand refugee experience, literacy and education, resettlement, and language including common words, phrases, and sayings.