

Teacher tips

April 2000

Competency-based hotlinks added to training homepage

Nevada Adult Education programs have adopted the CASAS assessments for Life Skills and in some cases the CASAS assessment system for Employability Skills, both competency-based. The materials needed for appropriate curriculum, courses, and lessons may or may not be available through textbooks or in the community.

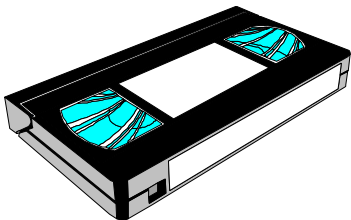
The Internet offers an opportunity to gather these materials from around the country and around the world. Martin Bauer has added a wealth of information on competency-based teaching to the Adult Education Teacher Training homepage (www.tmcc.edu/att). Click on "Competency-based Teaching and the Internet" and you'll find a collection of hypertext links to materials loosely organized into topic areas.

If you have ideas, lessons, or interesting sites (even your own) that you'd like to share via this resource, contact Martin at 775/829-9030, MBauer@tmcc.edu

COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHING HOTLINKS MENU	
Resources: Basics	Math
ABE	Finance
ESL	History
Literacy	Weather
Vocational Education	News Services
Career Guidance	FYI: General
Maps	Educational Research
Social Studies	Internet Tutorials
Science	Distance Learning
Health	Internet/Computer
Law/Government	Colleges
Reading/Writing	

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Employability skills for inmates



"Okay, ex-inmate: now that you have a job, keep it!" is a series of three videos designed to prepare ex-inmates or pre-release inmates for the world of work. Frank Smith, Instructional Resources Coordinator at the Northwest Regional Literacy Resource Center, noted "the set is a bit price-y (at about \$500) but excellent." According to the NWRLRC's review, "The acting in the skits isn't perfect, but it does represent some important realities that ex-offenders need to be aware of; (the tapes) are excellent jumping-off points for more participatory classroom activities. The on-screen discussion gets a bit tedious but is full of essential information." These and other materials are available from The Correctional Education Company in Buffalo, NY, 716/882-3456; Prisonedu@aol.com

Seven Easy Pieces: Writing Activities for Beginning ESOL Learners

—Excerpted from an article by Shirley Brod, *Focus on Basics*, December 1999

Note: The easiest activities, which focus on pencil holding and letter formation, come first.

1. **Vanishing Letters:** Using words that learners will face frequently, write the complete word. Then write the word with one letter missing, replaced by a blank that learners fill in. Keep adding blanks until learners are writing (and spelling) the entire word on their own.

N	A	M	E
_	A	M	E
_	A	_	E
_	A	_	_

2. **Document Literacy (Form Language):** All our learners have to fill out forms, whether they are ready to or not. Instead of subtracting letters, add items, one at a time, beginning with NAME (first, middle initial, last), which learners always want to learn first. In another lesson, when you have taught the meaning of *address*, give them a new form that repeats NAME and adds ADDRESS. Continue this simple spiraling until they can complete a simple form with their own personal identification items.

3. **Labeling Pictures:** This activity works well with a picture dictionary, such as the *Oxford Picture Dictionary* from Oxford University Press. After your learners have worked with new vocabulary, such as parts of the body, have them transfer what they've learned. Give them a new and different picture, with blanks beside targeted body parts, and have them copy the appropriate words from the picture dictionary, or from a labeled work sheet you have provided. This is a good starting place for learning how to use a dictionary, and the completed page provides each learner with a vocabulary list to keep for review.

4. **Dictation Pairs:** Give your learners practice in speaking and listening, reading and writing, and asking for/giving clarification through paired dictation. Make a worksheet that can be folded in half vertically, so each student sees only one side of the page. One side is for Student A; the other, for Student B. The top of A's sheet has the items that A is to dictate to B. The bottom of A's sheet has blank lines for words B will dictate to A. B's page is the reverse. When you model the exercise, be sure to model ways to ask for clarification: *Please speak slowly. Please repeat.* When both students have dictated and written, they spread the page out and check their work. Learners can be introduced to this activity very early on, using such simple items as numbers, letters of the alphabet, times, dates, or simple words they spell to each other.

Student A	Student B
SAY:	WRITE:
1. 3:00	1. _____
2. 5:45	2. _____

5. **Lists:** Take learners a step forward by providing an opportunity for them to choose their own items. The simplest way to do this is with lists.

a. *Shopping lists* - Learners write a list of things they want to buy. Then the class can take a field trip to a store where they locate the items and their prices, or learners can do this as an outside activity. If food items are used, they can locate them on an aisle directory.

b. *Family lists* - After studying family vocabulary, learners make a list with the names of members of their families, including their ages and relationship to the writer. If they add telephone numbers, this can be their emergency contact information.

c. *'Who am I?' lists* -Learners list all the naming words they know that refer to their identity: wife, student, mother, refugee, female, daughter, Mexican, etc. A reader can read the lists while the class tries to guess the identity of the writers.

6. **Scaffolded Writing:** A satisfying first prose writing assignment can be an extended fill-in-the-blanks activity. Perhaps learners want to write notes for their children when they have been absent from school. Learners copy a basic note, filling in blanks for the date, child's name, and the reason for the absence, and sign their names. They select items from a word bank, or ask you for additional items if needed. The final product is a complete handwritten letter. Thank you notes are another good choice, and are especially motivational if they are actually mailed.

(continued on back page)

TUTOR TIPS FROM CAEPA*: READING SKILLS TECHNIQUES

—Compiled by Eric Melbye, Community Educational Outreach, using information from T3: "Training the Trainer," prepared by Colorado Literacy Action, Colorado Department of Education, 1991.

Hints for remembering

Many people have difficulty retaining information. Studies show that the average person forgets 50% of what s/he learns within an hour and 70% within three days. Students frequently comment on their poor retention skills, particularly in retaining information that has been read. Following are a few techniques that can be used to increase retention.



There are two kinds of memory, short and long term, and one reason why people have difficulty remembering is that they don't transfer information from short term memory, which is good for about 15 seconds, to long term memory. One way to transfer memory is repetition — repeating it over and over. Another way is to find a way to organize the information into a pattern, or categorize information. The phone number 787-8787, for example, has a recognizable pattern; a grocery list can be categorized into food/nonfood groups. A third way is to use a mnemonic device. A mnemonic usually involves turning information into an acronym, so that Repetition, Organization, and Mnemonic Device becomes Raccoons Occasionally Make Dams.

Information isn't always meaningful unless it relates to a student's life. If a student can find a way to relate information to his/her life (using something like a "That reminds me of the time when ..." exercise) it will become meaningful and will "stick" in the student's mind. This also helps the student make sense of the information, which is another key to memory; nonsensical information isn't retained for long. Relating information to the student's own life involves association, which is a more reliable form of memorizing than rote memorization (memorizing facts independent of realia). The key to associative memory is realizing the information needs to be remembered and then deciding to remember it.

Context Clues



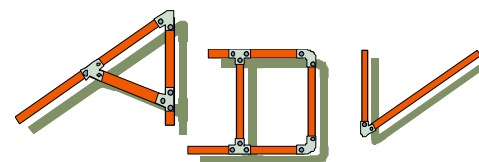
The purpose of using context clues is to enable the reader to guess from the meaning of words and phrases surrounding an unknown word what the meaning of the unknown word might be. In using context clues, the reader does not stop reading for meaning in order to examine letters or letter-clusters within the word. Readers at all levels use context clues. Conscious knowledge of this decoding skill can make it a powerful tool for any reading student. Using context clues involves:

- ◆ **Rereading text preceding the unknown word.** Looking for word meanings and relationships that give clues to its meaning.
- ◆ **Reading further in the text:** Reading for a word or phrase that may shed some light on the unknown word.
- ◆ **Visualizing the scene:** Imagining what is being described in the text in order to understand its elements. For example, if the reader is stuck on the word "supplication" in a passage describing a man pleading to heaven on his knees, the reader would visualize the scene and ask, "What might a person be doing in that position?" To plead or ask for help is one answer that describes supplication.

* Colorado Adult Education Professional Association

Cluster Technique

The cluster technique deals with the relationship of letters and letter-clusters to sounds. When readers stop to examine the letters making up an unknown word, they have for the moment stopped reading for meaning. Using the cluster technique, readers are reading for sound. If the word they pronounce is in their oral vocabulary, when they hear it they will know its meaning. This is how the cluster technique enables a reader to extract meaning from print. Beginning or reluctant readers very often are afraid to try to sound out longer words; reliance on only sight words can interfere with students' development of word attack skills. The cluster technique can help a student in this situation. An important aspect of this technique is that it teaches a reader to look at a target word analytically. Sometimes a student sees an initial letter, or the overall look of a word, and makes a guess on that basis. When this leads recurrently to error, the tutor may introduce the cluster technique. It not only guides a reader to examine all parts of the word, but demonstrates that word attack need not begin with the first part of the word. Successful readers know this, though perhaps not consciously. You should choose the cluster technique only when you know the target word is in the student's vocabulary.



The cluster technique involves breaking a word down into known or pronounceable parts. A word like "instruction," for example, can be broken down piece by piece, not necessarily beginning to end, into parts: in/struc/tion. If the student recognizes the "tion" ending, the word "in," and all or part of "struc," (the str sound is common), students can then piece the sounds together into a word.

Syllabication Technique

This technique helps students recognize two common consonant-vowel patterns and use these patterns to determine word pronunciation. Like the cluster technique, the purpose of syllabication is to enable students to recognize a word that is already in their oral vocabulary. Using this technique, students identify two consonant-vowel patterns which tell them how to pronounce the initial vowel in each pattern, and how to divide the word into syllables. This information enables them to pronounce and recognize the word. As with other techniques, the effectiveness of this one depends on appropriate application. Tutors would present this technique to students who consistently had difficulty distinguishing between written words such as dinner and diner, or hopping and hoping. The tutor should introduce this technique only to students who already know that there are 26 letters in the alphabet, and that a,e,i,o,u, and sometimes y are vowels and the remaining letters are consonants. There are three steps to this technique:

- ◆ **Step 1:** Introduce students to a simple notation system for identifying the consonants and vowels in their reading material. Write **v** or **c** above every letter in a sentence. They will use the notation system to help them see two vowel-consonant patterns: **v-c-v** and **v-c-c-v**.
- ◆ **Step 2:** If students don't already know, introduce the concept of long and short vowels. If appropriate, let students choose short, familiar words as examples of long and short vowel sounds. A good way to help students memorize these sounds is to use a mnemonic device. Make two sentences for long and short vowel sounds — Bad Ed Is Not Up, for example, for the short sounds.
- ◆ **Step 3:** When students are accustomed to marking letters as vowels or consonants, and are familiar with long and short vowels, introduce the v-c-v and v-c-c-v rules:

v-c-v rule: The first vowel in a v-c-v sequence is likely to be a long vowel.

v-c-c-v rule: The first vowel in a v-c-c-v sequence is likely to be a short vowel.



KEYS TO READING COMPREHENSION

by Dee Sweeney MEET YOUR MIND Copyright 1998



The Problem

We've all had those experiences where we read something and then wonder what we've just read. And we've worked with students whose reading is fluent except they have no idea what the words mean. So what can we do about it?

Keys to Reading Comprehension

To understand what we read, we must "picture," hear or create our own sense of what the words are saying. Our brains must be active, not on automatic pilot. Making internal pictures or movies of what we read (using visual memory) is a strategy that good readers use. It works well, because, after all, "A picture's worth a thousand words." Pictures provide us with all of the information in them at once, and they allow us to access that information quickly and randomly.

Why don't people make mental pictures?

Lots of reasons. The common ones include:

- They're not active with the material (not making connections to their own existing knowledge)
- Their brains don't know how (lack of know-how)
- Their brains don't know to apply picture making to the task of comprehension (wrong brain tool)
- They're so stuck in negative emotions and self-talk, their brains aren't free to do anything else (stuck)
- They try to tackle pieces of information that are too big (chunking)
- They don't give their brains a frame of reference for what they want it to do (previewing)

How do you train yourself or someone else to make mental pictures or enhance their pictures?

It's really quite easy to train the brain to do something new — the secret is doing it in small chunks, getting it ready, and using appropriate eye movements. Small chunks make sense, you say.

And creating a context for the activity (previewing) makes sense. But what does eye position have to do with it? A LOT!!!

Eye Position

Here's the Thinking Model that was developed by the founders of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). Please test this information for yourself — and it's a great classroom activity.

When we're stuck in **negative emotions and self-talk**, our **eyes** are looking **down** (I feel so dumb, I never get this right, I never know what all those words mean, etc.). When our eyes stay down, we stay in that loop.

When we are doing internal **auditory processing**, our **eyes** look towards our **ears** (singing a song to ourselves, saying the alphabet, etc.).

When we do internal **visual processing**, our **eyes** naturally go **up** (thinking about what our house looks like or what it would look like if it were painted, etc.). These are natural and automatic eye movements for all of us. Some of us "see" photo quality pictures while some of us may only have a sense of information.

What they also discovered in NLP is that our **eyes act kind of like a light switch** to our three major (visual, auditory and kinesthetic) ways of processing information. AND, that **we do one internal process at a time**, even if we do really fast switches back and forth. This means that when we are stuck in "feel bad" with eyes down, our brain is not available to do visual processing (eyes up). Conversely, when we are doing visual processing, we are not stuck in "feel bad."

Reading Comprehension Strategy

The following strategy puts all these pieces together to address the common problems listed above. It also tends to provide immediate success.

Overview of the strategy

Have your students use a blank wall or board as a "movie screen." Tell them that you are going to read some information to them. Their job, as a group, will be to make a movie on the screen of the information to help them remember it. At the end, you are going to give them a quiz at a detailed level so that they can see how their "pictures" assist them in remembering. Let them know that this is a method to develop a skill and they may be uncomfortable with it initially or even find it hard to do — just be with the process wherever they are. I'm going to assume that you will use the article on flying fish below, but anything will work.

Preview the article.

Tell them you're going to tell them about a flying fish. Ask them what they already have in their pictures based on that information.

Read the article, at normal speaking pace, one sentence at a time.

Each time you stop, ask them to share what they're putting into their movies. Proceed to the end, one sentence at a time.

During this phase, it's important to acknowledge every idea — even if it doesn't seem to make sense. For instance, if the idea is too broad for later use (palm trees to indicate warm waters), ask them if it will tell them later on exactly where this fish lives and how. In most cases, they'll need some additional detail, but sometimes they'll surprise you. Feel free to share your own pictures during the process.

"Test" to demonstrate that they know.

Ask questions randomly about the information in the article, having them look up at their movie for the answers.

Comprehension (continued)**Review the whole strategy, talking about why it works.**

“**Visual space**” — they’re looking up at the screen.

Preview — You told them what it was about so that they could have the right context (so they wouldn’t start picturing bees, birds, planes — more commonly linked to flying). You also let them know that they would need to remember details.

Chunking — You gave them one idea at a time, then had them a “picture.”

Testing — You “tested” them at the end of a short block of material to demonstrate what they know. On extended reading projects, it would be better for them to know they’re “out to lunch” at this point so that they can make corrections, rather than ten pages down the road.

Active with the material/connecting — You have to be active to make pictures. The pictures are coming from your data bank of information, and making pictures forces you to connect new information to what you already know.

Yes! This works great, BUT how can we read books one sentence at a time? And how can you hold your book over your head in “visual space?”

Remember, this strategy is geared to train the brain to do the visual processing automatically in the future. But as with learning to drive a car, there has to be some deliberate, systematic practice before all parts of you move into being on automatic for driving.

When reading to yourself, you start with reading one sentence at a time, and looking up into “visual space” to think about or picture what you’ve just read. Then, test at the end of a paragraph or so. When you are satisfied that you consistently get what you need from the reading the first time, then start reading two

sentences before each picture.

If you are reading bigger passages and not getting it, go back and practice with smaller chunks. The more familiar you are with the subject area, the bigger the chunks you will be able to handle. The less familiar, the smaller the chunks you will need to use.

Notes:

Noticeable results can be seen in as little as a week when the strategy is practiced 5-10 minutes a day. (The “family library” room is a great place to practice for a few minutes at a time.)

The brain trains really quickly.

The strategy can be used for reading out loud, reading aloud to oneself, or reading silently. It can also be used with any age group. Thus, it’s a great strategy to teach to adult students in family literacy programs to use for themselves and with their children. It’s easiest for students to initially practice when they are read to because they don’t have to deal with reading the words. Check each way of reading because mastery in one area may not automatically transfer to the others. Simply go back to small chunks and build up again in each mode of reading.

Good luck and have fun trying this! Please feel free to call me, or send me an e-mail. (303/759-1630) (dg-rows@msn.com).

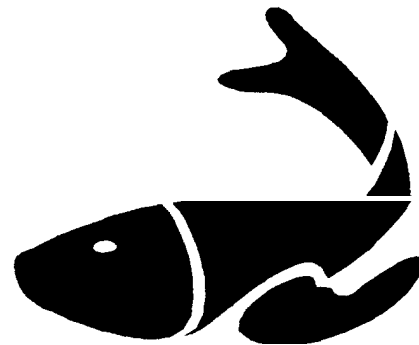
About the Flying Fish (With ideas for movie)

A rather unusual fish that can fly through the air for relatively extensive distances is called the flying fish. (Participants may add color, height, motion to their movie)

It may fly distances of merely a few feet, but may also soar through the air for distances up to 200 Yards.

Two football fields, or a picture of a yardstick with 200 on it)

This particular type of fish only flies when it is pursued by a predator. (shark, Jaws, etc.)



This particular type of fish may stay aloft only momentarily, but it may remain airborne for a duration of up to ten or fifteen seconds. (An hour glass, a stop watch stopped at 10-15 seconds)

Among the creatures of the ocean who prey on the flying fish are tuna, sharks, dolphins and porpoises. (Charlie the tuna, can of tuna, Jaws, flipper, albacore tuna, TSDP)

If the flying fish is endangered, it is able to use its tail to strike a sharp blow on the water’s surface to give it added momentum in making its ascent. (whale’s or beaver’s tail)

When the fish makes its exodus from the water it may attain speeds of up to 35 miles per hour. (Speedometer pegged at 35, 35 mph speed limit sign)

Once the fish is airborne, it spreads its pectoral fins and proceeds to use them as wings. (bat wings, fins enlarged into wings)

These fins are not actually wings but elastic membranes that enable them to be flexible. (elastic, rubber bands, webbing in duck’s feet)

There are approximately 65 species of this unique fish, and they commonly inhabit the warm waters of the Atlantic Ocean. (Florida, “retired” fish age 65, lots of fish with 65 on them, football jersey with 65)

Why retain? And how?

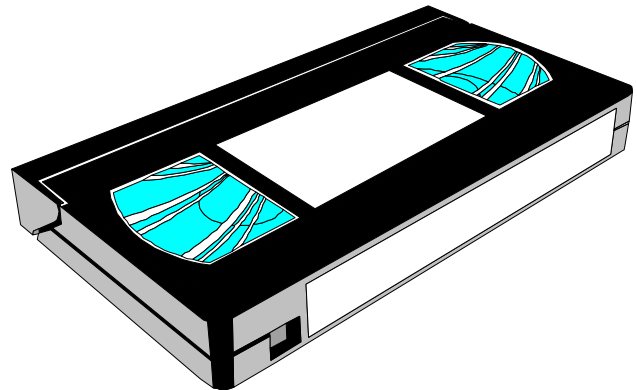
The Workforce Investment Act mandates that adult basic education programs meet performance standards that the state of Nevada has negotiated with the US Dept. of Education. These standards reflect improvements in certain core indicators. If we don't meet those standards, we can lose federal funding.

Emphasizing intensity and duration should help us help our students learn—and it is critical that students “stay with the program.”

Why do students leave? And how can teachers and tutors help them overcome barriers to retention?

Aryola Taylor has some answers. She was instrumental in developing and implementing strategies that decreased the attrition rate by over 25% for the WATTS ABE Outreach Program in Los Angeles. Her one-hour videotape describes factors that influence retention and includes a host of ideas, both hers and those of adult educators throughout the country, for how to improve it. The discussion offers strategies for students who enroll but do not attend the first class, those who do not return after the first class, those who habitually miss certain days, those who have irregular attendance, and those who have dropped out.

You may check out a copy of the tape (Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Adult Literacy Students, Part 2, tape #M41B) from:



Community College of Southern Nevada	Bob d’Orleans	702/651-4974
Great Basin College	Shirley Chantrill	775/753-2252
State Literacy Resource Center	Emmy Bell	800-445-9673
Truckee Meadows Community College	Karen Özbek	775/673-7093
Western Nevada Community College	Aurora Ruiz-Hurte	775/445-4453

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CATESOL (CA Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Conference April 6-9 Sacramento, CA
Janet Lane (530)754-6357, jrlane@ucdavis.edu

MPAEA (Mountain Plains Adult Education Association) Conference: April 26-29 Salt Lake City, UT
Gaylin Rollins (801)227-2440, gaylin.rollins@allc.alpine.k12.ut.us

International Reading Association Convention: Reading the New World
April 30-May 5 Indianapolis, IN www.reading.org

Nevada Summer Institute: Several strands; college and graduate credit available
June 7-9 Elko, NV Linda Zaczek (702)897-7684, LZLV@aol.com

Seven easy pieces (continued from page 2)

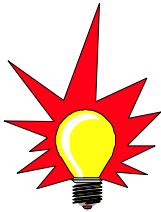
7. **Tiny Books: Individual Composition:** This activity is an outgrowth of a show-and-tell class. Students bring a favorite object to class and tell the other learners about it. My learners used photographs, handcrafted items, ethnic costumes, musical instruments, and even special foods. You take notes as learners talk, and provide a simple story that each learner copies into a tiny book (3"x5") with construction paper covers and several lined pages, adding a signature. Here is an actual example: "Nyous's Picture."

My husband took the picture at my home. This picture is from 1984. I went to a party for Hmong people's New Year. My dress was White Hmong. I wore a black dress and a green sash. I wore a Hmong "sao" or necklace. My hat was red, white, and black. This was a happy day.

Type the stories, one to a page, and have each learner sign his or her story. If they wish, they can draw the item on their page. Combine the stories in a booklet and give each learner a copy. These booklets can form the basis for individual reading practice.

About the Author: Shirley Brod, an ESOL teacher for more than 20 years, has written and edited materials for ESOL students and their teachers for Oxford University Press, Steck-Vaughn Company, and Spring Institute for International Studies. She was director for Spring's English Language Training/Technical Assistance Project, which provided consultation and training for refugee ESOL providers throughout the country.

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Your tip could be here!

Share your bright ideas with adult educators throughout Nevada! Send them to the address below:

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This professional development project is a leadership activity funded by a grant from the Nevada State Department of Education, Workforce Investment Act, Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy). There is no discrimination or denial of participation on the basis of gender, race, national origin, color, disability, age, or sexual orientation.