



# Creating Learning Partners

A facilitator's guide for training  
effective adult literacy tutors

## **Creating Learning Partners:**

A Facilitator's Guide for Training Effective Adult Literacy Tutors

### **Units 1 to 12**

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

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## **Candice Jackson**

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Literacy Alberta*

# Creating Learning Partners

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## Facilitator Guide Notes

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## Useful Resources

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

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

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

*Dr. Paul Pederson, University of Hawaii*

# Introduction

## Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Using a participatory approach

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

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

## Adapting to levels of experience

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

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

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

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

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

## **CD**

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

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

## **Adapting overheads**

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

## **Adapting times**

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

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

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

## **Adapting to train one tutor**

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

## **Training schedule/agendas**

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

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

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

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

## **Tutor handbook**

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

## **Use of pronouns**

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

## **Bibliography and references**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Fundamental Facilitation

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

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

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

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

## Principles guiding facilitation

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

### **We begin with these assumptions as facilitators**

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

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

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

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

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

### **We need to plan ahead**

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

### **There are ways we can help each person to feel heard**

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

### **We need to remember to work with the whole person**

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

## **Tapping into learners' experiences**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **We can ask the group questions to bring the stories together**

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

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

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

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

## Including icebreakers

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

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

### **Icebreakers that connect people with one another**

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

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

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

### **Icebreakers that lead into content**

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

## **Uncovering creativity**

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

### **Suggestions for being creative in designing learning opportunities**

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

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

### **Activities that stimulate “out of the box” thinking**

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

### **Working with diversity**

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

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

# Practical Pointers for Facilitating

## Preparing for facilitating

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

## Time

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

## During facilitation

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

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

### **After facilitating**

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

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

## Example of a Training Schedule

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

### **DAY ONE: Orientation and Adults as Learners – 4 hours**

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

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

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

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

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

### **DAY THREE: About Literacy and Reading – 6 hours**

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

**DAY FOUR: Writing – 5 hours**

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

**DAY FIVE: English as a Second Language – 6 hours**

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

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

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

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

Unit 8 Spelling (3½ hours)

Unit 9 Numeracy (3½ hours)

Unit 10 Learning Disabilities (2 hours)

# Sample Agenda One

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

## **9:00–9:05 Welcome**

### **9:05–10:30 Unit 3 Learning Styles**

#### Section 1: Introduction to Learning Styles

Activity A. Pig Psychological Test

Activity B. Preferred learning environment

Activity C. We learn in different ways

#### Section 2: Auditory/Visual/Kinesthetic

Activity A. We use different ways to learn new things

Activity B. Determining your learning style

Activity C. Characteristics and tutoring strategies for each style

## **10:30–10:45 Break**

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

#### Section 3: Right/Left Brain Dominance

Activity A. The two sides of the brain

Activity B. Determining which side is dominant

Activity C. Characteristics and tutoring strategies

#### Section 4: Culture and Learning

Activity A. The meaning of culture

Activity B. Cultural attitudes that may impact learning

Activity C. Cultural differences

## **12:15–1:00 Lunch**

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

#### Section 1: First Steps

Activity A. Getting to know your learner

Activity B. First meeting

#### Section 2: Learning Situations

Activity A. Problem-solving skills

Activity B. Ways to handle difficult situations

## **2:15–2:30 Break**

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

#### Section 3: Developing a Learning Plan

Activity A. Why we use goals

Activity B. How to set goals

Activity C. Developing your own learning plan

Activity D. Developing a learning plan for your learner

#### Section 4: Lesson Planning

Activity A. Planning a lesson

Activity B. Components of a lesson

Activity C. Developing a lesson plan

Activity D. Assessing lesson plans

#### Section 5: Portfolio Development

Activity A. Developing a portfolio

## **4:50–5:00 Evaluation**

# Sample Agenda Two

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

## **9:00–9:10 Welcome/Introductions**

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

## **9:10–10:05 Unit 2 Adults as Learners**

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

## **10:05–10:20 Break**

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

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

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

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

## **12:10–1:00 Lunch**

## **1:00–2:30 Unit 3 Learning Styles**

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

## **2:30–2:45 Break**

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

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

## **3:20–3:30 Evaluation**

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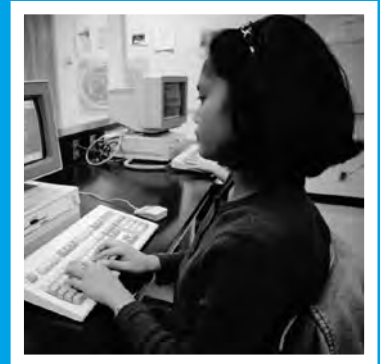
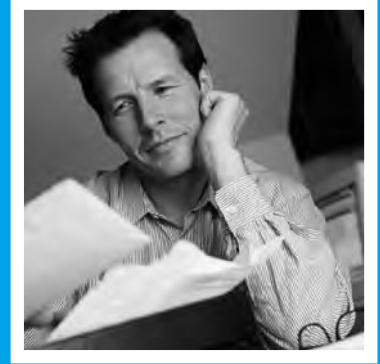
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Bishop, A., Huntly, A., Isaac, S., & Johnson, M. (Eds.). (1985). *Basics and tools: A collection of popular education resources and activities*. Ottawa, Ontario: CUSO Education Department. ISBN 0-9692635-3-8.

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

*Ann Goldblatt*



# Orientation

UNIT  
**1**

## Unit 1: Orientation

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

## UNIT

# 1

# Orientation

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

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

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

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

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



**Approx. 1 hour**  
using core activities

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

### Concepts

- **How your program works**

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

Evelyn Battell

## Activity A

### Welcome

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

#### Icebreaker, reflection, discussion

##### Materials and equipment

An icebreaker of your choice

Coloured paper, coloured markers

##### Preparation

Make copies of the icebreaker as needed.

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

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity B

### Background of our program

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

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

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

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

#### Discussion, viewing objects

##### Materials and equipment

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

Program brochure

##### Preparation

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

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

Review any goals or objectives of your program.

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

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity C

### Our students

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

#### Talk about the program

##### Materials and equipment

None

##### Preparation

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

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

#### Facilitation tip

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

## Activity D

### Being a tutor

#### Discussion, completion of necessary forms

##### Materials and equipment

Tutor job description

Forms for tutors to fill out:

- registration (if not done already)
- confidentiality

Record-keeping sheets

Sample of resources from your library

##### Preparation

Gather the forms you use to register new tutors.

Make copies of your tutor job description.

Gather samples of resources from your library.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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

## Activity E

### Program staff and facility

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

#### Talk about the program staff, tour

##### Materials and equipment

Business cards – if you have them

##### Preparation

Make arrangements as needed to tour your facility.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

if tour is  
possible

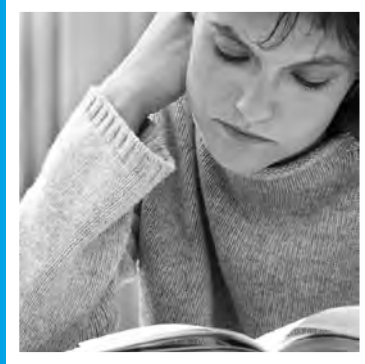
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*Volunteer tutors are the key people who make the program work because they share their knowledge and skill with others while donating their time.*

Rocky View Adult Literacy, *Policy Handbook*



# Adults as Learners

UNIT  
**2**

## Unit 2: Adults as Learners

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

## UNIT

# 2

# Adults as Learners



**Approx. 2½ hours**  
using core activities

### Concepts

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

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

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

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

*Tutor Tools*

# Useful Resources

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

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

## Section 1

### Characteristics of Adult Learners

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

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

#### Activity A

#### Different backgrounds and experiences

##### Option 1 Reflection and group discussion

###### Why choose this option?

Choose this activity if you are comfortable facilitating a discussion.

This activity works well for training more than one tutor.

The activity uses a personal approach.

###### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

##### Option 2 Reflection and sticky notes posted around a picture

###### Why choose this option?

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

The activity uses a less personal approach.

###### Materials and equipment

Sticky notes

Markers

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

###### Preparation

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

#### Variation

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

## Facilitation tip

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

## STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity B

### Characteristics of adult learners

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

#### *Plain Talk – On Stereotypes*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Tutoring tip

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

## Option 1 Discussion, reflection, use of overhead

### Why choose this option?

Tutors have an opportunity to look at their own characteristics.

### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Overhead 2.1: *Adult Learners*

Overhead projector and screen

### Preparation

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

Prepare overhead.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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

### Why choose this option?

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

### Materials and equipment

Markers

Sticky notes

Overhead 2.1: *Adult Learners*

Overhead projector and screen

### Preparation

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

Prepare overhead.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity C

### Some learner stories

#### Video, discussion

#### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

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

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

TV and VCR

#### Preparation

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

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

#### Facilitation tip

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

## Section 2

### Helping Learning Happen

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

#### Activity A

#### What makes a positive learning experience

##### Facilitation tip

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

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

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

##### Materials and equipment

Small index cards

Flip chart and markers

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

##### Preparation

Copy handout.

Write the following questions on the flip chart or handout:

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

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity B

optional  
activity

### What makes a good tutor

#### Why choose this activity?

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

Reflection, creative expression, discussion, use of handout

#### Materials and equipment

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

#### Preparation

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

#### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

#### Facilitation tip

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

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

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

Patricia Frey in *LITSTART*

## Activity C

### Guidelines for promoting positive learning experiences

#### Reflection, discussion, use of handouts

##### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

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

Handout 2.3: *Helping Learning Happen*

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

##### Preparation

Copy handouts.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity D

### Barriers to learning

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

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

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

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

## Reflection, discussion

### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

### Preparation

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

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

### Facilitation tip

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

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

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

## Activity E

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### Good communication skills

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

#### Why choose this activity?

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

#### Guest speaker

##### Preparation

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

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

As per the guest speaker

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

Patricia Frey in *LITSTART*

## Section 3

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### Active Learners

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

#### Activity A

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#### The value of active learning

##### *Active Learning Concepts*

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

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

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

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

#### **Tutoring tip**

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

## Facilitation tip

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

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

## Use of overhead, reflection, discussion

### Materials and equipment

Overhead 2.2: *Involving Learners*

Overhead projector and screen

### Preparation

Read over the background information.

Prepare overhead.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity B

### What is an active learner?

## Use of handout, reflection

### Materials and equipment

Handout 2.5: *Active Notes*

### Preparation

Copy handout.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity C

### Expanding on learning experience

Reflection, use of sticky notes, discussion

#### Materials and equipment

Sticky notes

Flip chart

#### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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

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

#### Variation

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

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

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# Working with Adult Learners

## **Confidence**

Adults often come into a learning situation with fear and apprehension, following a long history of failure. It takes a great deal of courage to admit their needs and ask for assistance. Once in a program, some may exhibit negative attitudes because of their past failures.

## **Competence**

Each adult learner has unique talents and has succeeded in some area of life: church, neighbourhood, family, job, hobbies, sports or as part of a network of friends. They are mature people who deserve to be treated as such.

## **Energy**

Adults sometimes are tired when they attend classes, as a result of their other responsibilities. They may be working fulltime, looking after a family and attending classes.

## **Goal-orientation**

Adult learners usually have definite goals when starting an educational program. These goals may include self-improvement, getting a driver's licence, reading to their children, improving job skills, getting a job or a promotion and getting a high school diploma or equivalent.

## **Learning styles**

Different people have different styles of learning. Some will learn best if they can see or feel what is to be learned, while others may have to hear it to know it. Most adult learners know how they learn best if you help them to think about it.

## **Life experience**

Adults have a wealth of personal, family, work and life experiences that provide unlimited possibilities for the creation and understanding of lessons.

## **Motivation**

Adult learners are usually highly motivated when they begin. Their motivation can quickly diminish if they become discouraged, if progress is slow, or as time passes and other responsibilities affect the amount of time and energy they can give to their learning.

## **Motives**

Adults often attend classes with a mixed set of motives: educational, social and recreational. Sometimes they attend from a sense of duty, or because they are required to by their employer or to receive certain benefits.

**Changing needs**

The needs of the adult learner will change over time. The goals identified by the learner at the beginning may become more realistic, evolve as learning takes place or change with their life circumstances. For example, wanting to read with their children may become secondary to learning to read messages from the school and write messages to the teacher if a child is sick or having problems at school.

**Reaction time**

Increased age or poor health or even fatigue can affect the reaction time, vision and hearing of adult learners. Even time of day can be a factor in how effective learning is. However, learners do not lose their capacity to learn simply because they are no longer children.

**Responsibilities**

Adult learners have many responsibilities. They are busy earning a living, taking care of a home and family, often just trying to survive. As a result, many learners have little time to review and absorb large amounts of material at one time. They don't have time to spend on things they don't perceive as contributing directly to their learning or their lives.

**Results**

Adult learners need to see immediate change and growth. They may be intolerant of anything that does not help them achieve their goals. Often, as adults, learners' goals are overly ambitious. It may be necessary to break goals into smaller steps that are more readily achieved.

**Self-consciousness**

Many adults develop strategies to conceal their lack of education and skills. These strategies may show up as excuses for non-performance. Being aware of this helps to identify it as a cause for lack of performance and helps to find strategies to overcome it.

**Self-motivation**

Many adult learners are strongly motivated to study because they see education as a way to improve their self-image and reach other personal goals.

**Uneven learning**

Adult learners will not necessarily learn at an even pace. It may simply be because some things are more challenging for the learner than others. Or, there may be external factors affecting their ability to concentrate.

*Red Deer Adult Literacy Program tutor handbook. (n.d.). Red Deer, Alberta: Red Deer Public Library. Adapted with permission.*

# General Instructions to Tutors

Remember that it takes a lot of courage for adults to return to learning and to re-address skills that many of us take for granted. An adult's past learning experiences may have been frustrating, humiliating, frightening or even neglected altogether. As a tutor, you can help the adult learner's return to learning be very different. Use the following guidelines to help make this a positive learning experience for both you and your learner.

1. Be sure you use the learner's name correctly and can spell it. Ask him what he likes to be called.
2. Be sure the learner knows and can use your name correctly.
3. The learner may have been away from school for a long time, or school may have been a discouraging place. Your learner will need reassurance and encouragement.
4. Sit next to the learner so you can work with him, not across from him to teach at him.
5. Show an interest in the learner. Your interest will build confidence and trust. Respect the line between interest and prying, and treat all information as confidential.
6. Praise the learner frequently. Look for all areas of improvement. Remember, however, to praise only for genuine success. Insincere praise is counterproductive.
7. Make sure your directions and instructions are clear and at the appropriate level for the learner. Do not preach. Do not talk down. Do not use your time with the learner as a forum to show how much you know. If the learner does not understand, assume the clarity or complexity of the directions is at fault, not the learner.
8. Use a logical sequence of skills for instruction. Do not skip around or quiz learners on something you have not taught yet. Do not try to "trick" the learner to test his skills.
9. Build and expand on what the learner already knows. Do not teach things he already knows.
10. Respect the dignity of the learner. Correction is different from criticism. Criticism will destroy self-confidence and interest in learning. Do not ridicule or shame the learner. Never be sarcastic. Do not "parrot" the learner to point out errors or belittle.
11. Accept the learner's present level of knowledge. Corrections in too many areas at once are discouraging. Concentrate on one small area of skill development at a time. It is appropriate to teach and review skills and re-teach when necessary.
12. It is your responsibility to plan carefully for the lesson. A lesson without planning can be a frustrating invitation to failure. This will be highly discouraging for both you and the learner. At the same time, you must be prepared to be flexible. Take your cue on content and pacing from the learner.

13. In planning the scope of the lesson, your goal should be to have the learner leave the lesson with a feeling of accomplishment.
14. Only promise what you can deliver. Remember, as an adult, your learner may have a history of broken promises and disappointments. Make every effort to show that the learner can have confidence in you.
15. Be careful not to overwhelm or overburden the learner. Many adult learners are dealing with jobs, families and financial challenges in addition to trying to improve their skills. You will want to decide with the learner whether homework or additional assignments are desirable or feasible.
16. Form questions so that the learner must give the answers thought and attention. Avoid phrasing questions so that the learner only needs to answer “yes” or “no.” For example, say: tell me about...; what would happen if...; what will you do when...; why do you think....
17. When playing an educational game with your learner, do not arrange to lose so that he will win. Winning is not the aim of a learning game, and winning is only a victory when it is achieved honestly.
18. Be patient. Progress is very slow, especially at the beginning. You cannot hope to catch up overnight what the learner has found challenging for years. There may be many difficulties to overcome. The learner will likely be apprehensive, may have job or family worries, may have a learning difficulty, may be intimidated by memories of a poor school experience, may feel insecure and inferior or may have a poor image of his ability to learn. Try to remember a time when you were learning something you found difficult to master.
19. It is appropriate to be sure you are both clear about the time and place of your meetings. Let your learner know you want him to tell you ahead of time if he needs to cancel a meeting. Set up a procedure for cancellation to avoid the frustration and annoyance of being prepared and ready for a learner who does not arrive.

*Red Deer Adult Literacy Program tutor handbook. (n.d.). Red Deer, Alberta: Red Deer Public Library. Adapted with permission.*

# Helping Learning Happen

Tutoring often uses the same skills and techniques as coaching.

A list of ways you can help your learners

- Provide meaningful content.
- Guide the learning process.
- Share your own experiences of life and learning.
- Share the way you use literacy in daily life by showing the learner letters, greeting cards, newspaper clippings, recipes and so on.
- Get to know your learner.
- Allow time for your relationship to develop.
- Ask what your learner found helpful in the tutoring session.
- Ask what parts of the session were enjoyable.

Three rules to get learners talking

1. Don't explain anything you don't have to explain. Find out what your learners need to know first.
2. Ask questions your learners can answer.
3. Make sure you allow enough "wait time" for your learners to think through the questions you are asking.

Play the **Three Questions Game** to get to know your learner:

- Each person asks three questions and then answers three questions.
- Choose topics like favorite sports, TV programs and common interests.
- Make sure the questions are not too personal.

## Qualities Developed by Good Tutors

A survey of adult learners reveals that the qualities they need the most in their tutor was to do with the tutor's **attitude**, not **aptitude**. The qualities most often desired in tutors have little to do with being "an expert" and everything to do with being a caring human being.

An adult who returns to learning has made a commitment that takes a great deal of courage. People are not comfortable when they feel they don't know something. On the tutor's part, it takes patience and sensitivity to sustain this courage.

### **Patience**

Learning can be very slow. Do not set your expectations too high or you will increase the risk of frustration and disappointment.

### **Understanding**

Many learners have other problems in their lives that are compounded by their lack of skills. These problems will have an impact on their concentration and ability to learn.

### **Concentration**

You meet with a learner for a learning session. Try to keep your time focused on the lesson you have planned or skill you want to develop rather than getting sidetracked by personal or social concerns.

### **Adaptability and creativity**

Because each learner is unique, you have to adapt your teaching to the individual's needs and abilities.

### **Enthusiasm and encouragement**

Praise your learner for small successes. He may have found learning discouraging in the past with little positive feedback. You may have to establish learning as an opportunity for personal satisfaction as well as skill development.

### **Sense of humour**

A sense of humour will reduce tension in what may otherwise be a stressful situation. A shared joke or a funny story will help keep the relationship on a light and equal footing.

### **Awareness of special problems**

There can be many reasons why an adult has not learned to read. Some have had limited opportunities. Some learn more slowly than others. There may be a sight, hearing or perceptual problem. Many adults are experiencing problems at home or work that have an impact on their ability to learn.

## **Dedication and influence**

Your achievements with your learner may seem small and short-term at times, but you may never know what far-reaching influence you may have on your learner and his family.

## **Perseverance**

Not all adult learners become successful readers. Some never do. You will confront problems. Don't give up too easily. Working with you may be the learner's last hope.

## **Commitment**

By making a real commitment to tutoring, you may greatly influence the life of another.

A survey of learners has produced this list of qualities they want their tutors to have.

- are kind
- talk with the learner
- are open
- encourage questions
- go over things several times
- don't try to do too much in one lesson
- turn failures into victories
- are sincere
- are prepared
- let the learner make suggestions and then use them
- go over the work and review
- work on just what the learner needs
- treat you like a grown-up
- respect and encourage the learner
- don't yell
- are patient
- are committed and show up on time
- should listen
- don't make light of it
- shouldn't be phony; they don't put on airs like they care when they don't
- are honest and let the learner know if they do not agree
- are honest and don't praise everything
- are not all work and no play
- include some learning games to show learning can be fun!

*Red Deer Adult Literacy Program tutor handbook. (n.d.). Red Deer, Alberta: Red Deer Public Library. Adapted with permission.*

# Active Notes

Date and Place:

| New and exciting ideas: How does this fit with what I already know? | What activities helped me learn? | Ideas I can use: How does this fit in my life? | Things I don't understand | What I want to learn more about and resources to check out |
|---|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
|   |                                  |  |                           |  |
|   |                                  |  |                           |  |
|   |                                  |  |                           |  |

# Adult Learners

## Adult learners

- want to be respected for their knowledge and experience
- have their own goals and values
- choose to attend voluntarily
- have a wealth of experience
- want to learn what is relevant in their lives
- have other commitments that demand their time
- hope they will be successful

Those who don't have strong reading and writing skills have developed other strategies to cope, such as visualization and memorization. Use these skills as strengths to build on.

# Involving Learners

| <b>An active learner</b>  | <b>A passive learner</b>  | <b>To promote active learning, a tutor should</b>  |
|---|---|--|
| takes responsibility for deciding what she wants to learn                                     | doesn't decide how literacy skills can help her and lets the tutor make all decisions about what to learn | ask the student what she needs and wants to learn  |
| organizes information and ideas mentally, comparing new information to what she already knows | doesn't relate new information and ideas to old   | ask "Is it a new idea? Does it fit with what you already know? Does it contradict ideas/information you already have?" |
| recognizes when she does or does not understand   | doesn't assess her own understanding  | ask "Do you understand? Can you tell me what this means? Can you use your own words to explain?"                       |
| sets goals and evaluates progress towards them  | allows goals to be established by someone else and allows all evaluation to be external                   | discuss goals and progress with his or her student   |
| judges what helps her learn and what doesn't  | doesn't judge if methods are effective or ineffective   | ask "What way do you think helped you the most? Does this help? In which of these ways would you learn best?"          |
| monitors her retention by self-quizzing and reviewing   | doesn't take initiative for review  | explain the necessity for review and ask the student to construct a review schedule and record system                  |

Cameron, J., & Rabinowitz, M. (1988). *A guide for tutoring adult literacy students*. Victoria, British Columbia: Province of British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training. ISBN 0-7718-8698-5. Copyright © Province of British Columbia. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission of the Province of British Columbia. [www.ipp.gov.bc.ca](http://www.ipp.gov.bc.ca).



# Learning Styles

UNIT  
**3**

## Unit 3: Learning Styles

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

## UNIT

## 3

# Learning Styles

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

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

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

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

---

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

*Red Deer Adult Literacy Program Tutor Handbook*



**Approx. 4¾ hours**  
using core activities

General overview, Sections 1-3:  
2¼ hours

Cultural focus, Section 4:  
1 hour

Aboriginal focus, Sections 5-7:  
1½ hours

## Concepts

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

# Useful Resources

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

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

## Section 1

### Introduction to Learning Styles

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

#### Activity A

#### Pig Psychological Test

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

##### Icebreaker

##### Materials and equipment

Pig Psychological Test explanation below

Blank paper and markers

##### Preparation

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

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

##### Pig Psychological Test explanation *(Source unknown)*

*If you drew the pig*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Okay, who didn't draw a tail?*

## Activity B

### Preferred learning environment

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

#### Variation

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

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

#### Reflection, discussion

##### Preparation

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

Think a bit about your own preferences.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity C

---

### We learn in different ways

#### Discussion

##### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

---

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

*Saskatchewan Level 2 Learning How to Learn*

## Section 2

### Auditory/Visual/Kinesthetic

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

#### Activity A

#### We use different ways to learn new things

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

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

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

##### Why choose this option?

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

##### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Paper of different colours

Ziploc bags

##### Preparation

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

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

They

are

kinesthetic

learners.

Cut up each word in a sentence like a puzzle.

Place the cut up sentences into the Ziploc bag.

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

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

#### 1. Auditory learning preferences

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

#### 2. Visual learning preferences

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

#### 3. Kinesthetic learning preferences

If you have a small group

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

If you have a larger group

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

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

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

### Facilitator note

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

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

### Why choose this option?

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

## Facilitator note

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

## Variation

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

## Materials and equipment

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

## Preparation

Gather the materials you need for the craft or activity.

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

## STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity B

### Determining your learning style

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

## Discussion, completing an assessment

## Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

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

Handout 3.2: *Learning Channels Inventory*

## Preparation

Copy handouts.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity C

### Characteristics and tutoring strategies for each style

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

#### Use of handouts, discussion, reflection

##### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 3.3: *Learning Styles Matching Activity*

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

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

##### Preparation

Copy handouts.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Section 3

### Right/Left Brain Dominance

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

#### Activity A

##### The two sides of the brain

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

#### Lecture

##### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

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

##### Preparation

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

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

---

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

## Activity B

### Determining which side is dominant

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

#### Activity with movement or handout

##### Preparation

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

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

##### Analytical/Global Activity

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

##### Step to the left

OR

##### Step to the right

Do you rely on words to communicate?

Do you rely on visual or kinesthetic clues?

Do you listen to what the word means?

Do you react to the pitch and feeling of the speaker?

Do you remember facts and dates?

Do you remember images and patterns?

Do you like things in logical sequence?

Can information come at you from all directions?

Do arguments need to be logical to convince you?

Do arguments based on emotion convince you?

Do you need to plan ahead?

Do you like spontaneous activity?

Do you remember names?

Do you remember faces?

Do you speak without or with few gestures?

Do you speak with a lot of gestures?

Do you take time to think things through?

Are you impulsive?

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

##### Variation

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

## Activity C

### Characteristics and tutoring strategies

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

#### Use of handout, reflection, discussion

##### Materials and equipment

Handout 3.6: *Right Brain and Left Brain Learning*

Flip chart and markers

##### Preparation

Copy handout.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

---

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

Lori Herod in *Learning Styles and Strategies*

## Section 4

### Culture and Learning

optional  
section

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

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

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

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

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

#### Activity A

##### The meaning of culture

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

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

##### The nine universals of culture

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

The following components make up a person's culture:

*Arts* – literature, plays, recreation

*Material* – clothing, food, transportation

*Social organization* – families, relationships

*Communication* – written and verbal

*Social control* – justice system, government, laws

*Education* – both formal and informal

*Economic organization* – trade, labour, property, business

*World view* – religion, values, belief system

*Conflict and warfare* – conflict resolutions, defence practices

## Cultural awareness

An awareness of culture includes four aspects:

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

Example: “What is a *hamburger*?”

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

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

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

Example: Why are there so many fast-food restaurants?

What does “time is money” mean?

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

Example: How do I feel about fast-food restaurants?

Do I want to keep family sit-down meals as our normal family practice?

### Reflection, discussion

#### Materials and equipment

A variety of pictures

Flip chart and markers

#### Preparation

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

Locate pictures that may reflect culture. Cut out and mount the pictures. Place them randomly around the room. You can use the nine universals as a guide when selecting appropriate pictures.

#### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity B

### Cultural attitudes that may impact learning

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

#### Reflection, use of handout, discussion

##### Materials and equipment

Handout 3.7: *Cultural Attitudes*

Flip chart and markers

##### Preparation

Copy handout.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity C

### Cultural differences

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

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

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

## Option 1 Use of video and handouts, discussion

### Why choose this option?

Use this activity if you have access to the video.

### Materials and equipment

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – Cultural Differences*

TV and VCR

Handout 3.8: *Practical Tips*

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

### Preparation

Be sure equipment is in good working order.

Cue the video to the right spot.

Copy handouts.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Option 2 Use of handouts, discussion

### Why choose this option?

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

### Materials and equipment

Handout 3.8: *Practical Tips*

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

### Preparation

Copy handouts.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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

## Section 5

### Aboriginal Culture

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

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

#### Aboriginal culture and learning

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

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

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

Aboriginal education traditionally included

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

optional  
section

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

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

Two major educational techniques included

- storytelling
- observation and practice

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

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

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

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

## Activity A

### Aboriginal cultures

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

#### Reflection, use of handouts, discussion

##### Materials and equipment

Handout 3.10: *Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal*

Handout 3.11: *What's Confusing*

##### Preparation

Copy handouts.

Read through the background information for Section 5.

#### Facilitation tip

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

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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

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

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

## Section 6

### Aboriginal Education and Learning

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

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

#### Activity A

##### Learning

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

##### Discussion

###### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

###### Preparation

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

###### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity B

---

### School system

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

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

#### Group work, discussion

##### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity C

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### Effective learning

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

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

## Reflection, use of handout, discussion

### Materials and equipment

Handout 3.12: *Appropriate Instructional Approaches and Techniques*

Flip chart and markers

### Preparation

Review the handout.

Copy handout.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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

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

## Section 7

### Aboriginal Learning Styles

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

optional  
section

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

#### Activity A

##### Medicine Wheel

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

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

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

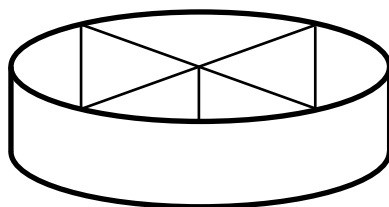
#### Reflection, group activity, discussion

##### Materials and equipment

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

##### Preparation

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



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

Write the following statements onto slips of paper or cards:

**Physical**

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

**Emotional**

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

**Mental**

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

**Spiritual**

Balance  
Harmony  
Culture  
Connection to inner self  
Cultural ceremonies

**STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS**

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

## Activity B

### Learning styles

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

#### Aboriginal learners and learning

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

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

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

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

#### Use of handout, reflection, discussion

##### Materials and equipment

Handout 3.13: *Aboriginal Learning Styles*

Flip chart and markers

##### Preparation

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

Copy handout.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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*Red Deer Adult Literacy Program tutor handbook*. (n.d.). Red Deer, Alberta: Red Deer Public Library.

*Saskatchewan level 2 learning how to learn*. (2001). Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan Literacy Network. Contact the Network at [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca) or 1-888-511-2111.

*Tutor tools*. (2003). Calgary, Alberta: Literacy Alberta.

# Barsch Learning Style Reference Form

*Developed by Ray Barsch*

The series of questions on the next two pages is designed to determine your relative learning style (visual, auditory or tactile). No style of learning is better than another. However, each style makes its own demands on the environment of the learner. What does a tutor perceive to be the learning style of his student? How can he help that student learn, given that particular style?

Place a check in the appropriate column after each statement. Follow the directions after the questionnaire to score your results.

|   | Often | Sometimes | Seldom |
|---|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1. Can remember more about a subject through listening than reading.                                    |       |           |        |
| 2. Follow written directions better than oral directions.   |       |           |        |
| 3. Like to write things down or take notes for visual review.   |       |           |        |
| 4. Press extremely hard with a pen or pencil when writing.  |       |           |        |
| 5. Require explanations of diagrams, graphs or visual directions.                                       |       |           |        |
| 6. Enjoy working with tools.  |       |           |        |
| 7. Am skillful at and enjoy developing and making graphs and charts.                                    |       |           |        |
| 8. Can tell if sounds match when presented with pairs of sounds.  |       |           |        |
| 9. Remember best by writing things down several times.  |       |           |        |
| 10. Can understand and follow directions using maps.  |       |           |        |
| 11. Do better at academic subjects by listening to lectures and tapes.                                  |       |           |        |
| 12. Play with coins and keys in pockets.  |       |           |        |
| 13. Learn to spell better by repeating the letters out loud than by writing the word on paper.          |       |           |        |
| 14. Can better understand a news story by reading about it in the paper than by listening to the radio. |       |           |        |
| 15. Chew gum, smoke or snack during studies.  |       |           |        |
| 16. Feel the best way to remember is to picture it in my head.  |       |           |        |

|  | Often | Sometimes | Seldom |
|--|-------|-----------|--------|
| 17. Learn spelling by “finger spelling” the words.   |       |           |        |
| 18. Would rather listen to a good lecture or speech than read about the same material in a textbook. |       |           |        |
| 19. Am good at solving jigsaw puzzles and mazes.   |       |           |        |
| 20. Grip objects in my hands during learning period.   |       |           |        |
| 21. Prefer listening to the news on the radio rather than reading about it in a newspaper.           |       |           |        |
| 22. Obtain information on an interesting subject by reading relevant materials.                      |       |           |        |
| 23. Feel very comfortable touching others, hugging, handshaking, and so on.                          |       |           |        |
| 24. Follow oral directions better than written ones.   |       |           |        |

### Scoring procedures:

Place the point value on the line next to its corresponding item number. Next, sum the values to arrive at your preference scores under each heading.

Often = 5 points, Sometimes = 3 points, Seldom = 1 point

| VISUAL   | AUDITORY | TACTILE  |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 2 _____  | 1 _____  | 4 _____  |
| 3 _____  | 5 _____  | 6 _____  |
| 7 _____  | 8 _____  | 9 _____  |
| 10 _____ | 11 _____ | 12 _____ |
| 14 _____ | 13 _____ | 15 _____ |
| 16 _____ | 18 _____ | 17 _____ |
| 19 _____ | 21 _____ | 20 _____ |
| 22 _____ | 24 _____ | 23 _____ |

VPS =  
Visual Preference Score

APS =  
Auditory Preference Score

TPS =  
Tactile Preference Score

*Creative student assessment: A guide to developing meaningful evaluation.* (1995). Winnipeg, Manitoba: Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, Adult Learning and Literacy. [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/creative\\_student\\_assessment\\_oct03.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/creative_student_assessment_oct03.pdf).  
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# Learning Channels Inventory

Place the number 1, 2, or 3 on the line after each statement that best indicates your preference. (3 - Often; 2 - Sometimes; 1 - Seldom)

1. I can remember something best if I say it aloud. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I prefer to follow written instructions rather than oral ones. \_\_\_\_\_
3. When studying, I like to chew gum, snack and/or play with something. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I remember things best when I see them written out. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I prefer to learn through simulations, games, and/or role-playing. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I enjoy learning by having someone explain things to me. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I learn best from pictures, diagrams and charts. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I enjoy working with my hands. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I enjoy reading and I read quickly. \_\_\_\_\_
10. I prefer to listen to the news on the radio rather than read it in the newspaper. \_\_\_\_\_
11. I enjoy being near others. (I enjoy hugs, handshakes and touches.) \_\_\_\_\_
12. I listen to the radio, tapes and recordings. \_\_\_\_\_
13. When asked to spell a word, I simply see the word in my mind's eye. \_\_\_\_\_
14. When learning new material, I find myself sketching, drawing and doodling. \_\_\_\_\_
15. When I read silently, I say every word to myself. \_\_\_\_\_

In order to get an indication of your learning preference, please add the numbers together for the following statements.

**Visual Preference Score:** 2 \_\_\_\_\_, 4 \_\_\_\_\_, 7 \_\_\_\_\_, 9 \_\_\_\_\_, 13 \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

**Auditory Preference Score:** 1 \_\_\_\_\_, 6 \_\_\_\_\_, 10 \_\_\_\_\_, 12 \_\_\_\_\_, 15 \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

**K/T (Kinesthetic/Tactual) Score:** 3 \_\_\_\_\_, 5 \_\_\_\_\_, 8 \_\_\_\_\_, 11 \_\_\_\_\_, 14 \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

The highest score indicates that my learning preference is \_\_\_\_\_.

Now that I know which is my dominant learning style, I can learn better by:

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*Creative student assessment: A guide to developing meaningful evaluation.* (1995). Winnipeg, Manitoba: Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, Adult Learning and Literacy. [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/creative\\_student\\_assessment\\_oct03.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/creative_student_assessment_oct03.pdf).  
Used with permission.

## Learning Styles Matching Activity

The following is a list of tutoring techniques that are most helpful with a particular learning style. Please check the box that best fits.

|   | Visual | Auditory | Kinesthetic |
|---|--------|----------|-------------|
| Watch a video.                                  |        |          |             |
| Discuss the story before reading.               |        |          |             |
| Have the learner write a story on the computer. |        |          |             |
| Make a collage about a story.                   |        |          |             |
| Teach phonics.                                  |        |          |             |
| Have the learner beat out the syllables.        |        |          |             |
| Give written directions.                        |        |          |             |
| Use diagrams and pictures.                      |        |          |             |
| Read out loud.                                  |        |          |             |
| Use Reader's Theatre.                           |        |          |             |
| Teach difficult words using flash cards.        |        |          |             |
| Record spelling words onto a tape.              |        |          |             |

# Learning Styles Characteristics and Tutoring Tips

## Auditory Learners

### Characteristics

- Enjoy talking
- Like to discuss things
- Prefer oral reading
- Like phonics
- Find sounds distracting
- Move lips when reading
- Like to make noise
- Easily distracted

### Learning strengths

- Remember what they hear and say
- Can recall information after hearing it a few times
- Can remember oral instructions well
- Understand information best when they HEAR it

### Tutoring tips

- Use tapes for reading
- Record spelling words on tape
- Give oral explanations and details
- Discuss concepts and ideas
- Use show and tell
- Use verbal games
- Do oral presentations and demonstrations
- Encourage learner to read out loud, spell out loud
- Teach phonics
- Do paired or duet reading
- Discuss the story/article before reading
- Use Reader's Theatre, choral reading, poems, music
- Use chanting or rhyming to remember things
- Repeat key points
- Indicate relationships verbally with words such as *therefore*, *in contrast*, *at the same time*, and so on.

# Learning Styles Characteristics and Tutoring Tips

## Visual Learners

### Characteristics

- Recall images they have seen
- Notice details
- Prefer things to be neat and organized
- Have good proofreading skills
- Like displays and presentations
- Would rather read than be read to
- Need visual aids
- Find making lists helpful
- Think before speaking or acting
- Memorize well
- Need to write things down

### Learning strengths

- Remember what they read and write
- Enjoy visual projects and presentations
- Can remember diagrams, charts and maps well
- Understand information best when they SEE it

### Tutoring tips

- Teach sight words
- Teach phonics
- Use the symbol and printed word with a picture
- Use pictures and diagrams
- Use written instructions
- Have learners visualize words for spelling
- Have learners memorize information in a logical sequence that can be visualized
- Use flash cards
- Use highlighters for important information
- Use matching games
- Use pictures, cartoons

# Learning Styles Characteristics and Tutoring Tips

## Tactile-Kinesthetic Learners

### Characteristics

- Need to move in order to process information
- Notice differences in the shapes and textures of things they touch
- Enjoy hands-on activities
- Like to take things apart and put them back together
- Have a short attention span
- May be good at sports, dance or playing an instrument
- Like to use their hands
- Learn by doing
- Recall words after writing or typing them a few times

### Learning strengths

- Enjoy using tools or lessons that involve active/practical participation
- Can remember how to do things after they've done them once (motor memory)
- Have good motor coordination
- Remember what they DO, what they experience with their hands or bodies through movement and touch

### Tutoring tips

#### *Tactile*

- Allow learners to feel what they have to do by manipulating objects
- Use modelling clay
- Use scrapbooks, colouring books and workbooks
- Allow for artistic creations
- Make dioramas, sculptures, mobiles
- Do needlework
- Make posters and task cards
- Use blackboard activities
- Use letters made out of sandpaper and felt
- Use games
- Use calculators
- Do puzzles
- Make collections, displays, collages

#### *Kinesthetic*

- Have learners use the computer to type answers
- Act out stories
- Tap out syllables
- Use role-playing, pantomimes, charades, plays
- Allow for frequent breaks
- Do surveys or demonstrations
- Create products
- Make collages, dioramas
- Use body games
- Use three-dimensional objects
- Take field trips
- Be specific when you give directions
- Make a video
- Use puzzles and games
- Let learner doodle or fiddle with an object when listening
- Allow learner to rock and read
- Vary activities

# Strategies for Learning

## Auditory Learners

- Study with a friend. That way you can talk about the information and HEAR it too.
- If you want to remember something, say it out loud several times.
- Ask your teacher or tutor if you can hand in some work as an oral presentation or on audiotape.
- Make your own tapes of what you want to remember. Listen to them over and over. This is especially useful when you study for tests.
- When you read, start by talking about the book. Look through it to see if you can decide what it is about. Talk about the pictures, chapter titles and other clues. Say out loud what you think this book could be about.
- Make flash cards for what you want to learn. Use them over and over. Read them out loud.
- Set a goal for your assignments. Say your goals out loud each time you begin work on that particular assignment.
- Read out loud when possible. You need to HEAR the words as you read them to understand them well.
- When doing math, use grid paper to help you set your sums out correctly and in their correct columns.
- Use different colours and pictures in your notes, exercise books and so on. This will help you remember them.

# Strategies for Learning

## Visual Learners

- Try to work in a quiet place. Wear earmuffs or earplugs if you need to.
- Some visual learners like soft music in the background.
- You might miss something your tutor or teacher says, or you might not understand it. If that happens, ask them to please repeat or explain it.
- Most visual learners learn best alone. If you prefer to work by yourself, then let your tutor or teacher know.
- When you are studying, take many notes and write down lots of details.
- When you are writing out notes to learn something, cover your notes and then rewrite them. Rewriting will help you remember better.
- Use colour to highlight main ideas.
- Before starting an assignment, set a goal and write it down. Even post it in front of you. Read it as you do your assignment.
- Before reading a chapter or a book, look it over first. Look at the pictures, headings and so on.
- When you are in a classroom, try to put your desk away from the door and windows. Try to sit close to the front of the class. That way you will not have as many distractions. It will help you pay attention.
- Write your own flash cards. Look at them often and write out the main points. Then check them again.
- Use visual aids to help you study and to present your work. For example, use charts, maps, posters, films, videos, computer software and overhead projectors.

# Strategies for Learning

## Tactile-Kinesthetic Learners

- To memorize something, walk around while you say it to yourself over and over. You can also use flash cards or notes while you are walking around.
- When you read a short story or chapter in a book, try a *whole-to-part* approach. This means you should look at the whole thing first. Then look at the smaller parts. Try to get a *feel* for the book.
  - First look through the pictures.
  - Then read the headings.
  - Then read the first and last paragraphs of the story or chapter.
  - You could also try skimming the chapter or short story backwards, paragraph by paragraph. Skimming means looking over something quickly.
- If you need to fidget, try not to disturb others. Try jiggling your legs or feet. You could do some hand and finger exercises. Or you could handle a koosh ball, tennis ball or something like that.
- You might not study best if you are sitting at a desk. Try lying on your stomach or back. Try studying while sitting in a comfortable chair or on cushions or a beanbag.
- Studying with music in the background might suit you. Try to use calm music, like classical music. Baroque music is often best. Music with a heavy rhythm will be more difficult.
- Use coloured construction paper to cover your desk or even decorate your area. Choose your favourite colour as this will help you focus. This is called *colour grounding*.
- Try reading through coloured transparencies to help focus your attention. Transparencies are clear plastic pages. They come in different colours. Try a variety of colours to see which colours work best for you.
- When you study, take many breaks but be sure to settle back down to work quickly. A reasonable schedule would be 15-25 minutes of study, 3-5 minutes of break time.
- When you memorize information, try closing your eyes and writing the information in the air or on something with your finger. Try to picture the words in your head as you are doing this. Try to hear the words in your head too.
- Later, when you try to remember this information, close your eyes and try to see it with your mind's eye and to hear it in your head.
- When you learn new information, it will help you to make something. For example, make task cards, flash cards, electro-boards, card games, floor games and so on. This will help you process the information.

# Right Brain and Left Brain Learning

## Characteristics

| Left brain / analytical                                   | Right brain / global                            |
|---|---|
| Is logical  | Is random                                       |
| Is sequential   | Is intuitive                                    |
| Analyses people and situations                            | Synthesizes information                         |
| Likes verbal instruction                                  | Likes instructions to be demonstrated           |
| Requires plan and structure                               | Is spontaneous and flexible                     |
| Likes to see the steps and details before the big picture | Likes to see the big picture then go to details |
| Focuses on facts and details                              | Likes summaries and overviews                   |
| Needs time for personal reflections                       | Likes working with others                       |
| Likes schedules and rules                                 | Is creative                                     |

## Tutoring tips

| Left brain / analytical                | Right brain / global                    |
|--|---|
| Use rules to teach spelling, phonics   | Use paired reading                      |
| Use outlines and lists                 | Create dioramas and other objects       |
| Study difficult words before reading   | Read first, then study words afterwards |
| Dictate sentences to encourage writing | Use free writing and journaling         |

# Cultural Attitudes

## Cultural attitudes towards education

There are

- different ideas on how much time, money and effort should be given to education (for example, is it a frill, an individual choice or a necessity?)
- different expectations of the tutor-learner relationship, from being distant, authoritative, and revered to being peers, personal, and helpful
- different expectations about behaviour, which may be either formal or informal
- different views about the role of the tutor, which may range from being a director to a facilitator
- different views about the role of the learner, which may range from being a passive learner to being an active learner

## Cultural attitudes towards language

There are

- different ways of thinking about who can talk to whom and in what manner, based on gender, age, occupation/class/social position, and so on.
- different rates of speaking, ranging from “rapid-fire” to slower with long pauses
- different boundaries when talking to others, ranging from it being okay to talk to peers but not okay to interrupt the teacher, to it being okay to talk to anyone, anytime.

## Cultural attitudes towards social interaction

There are

- different attitudes about time, ranging from doing things very quickly to very slowly
- different ideas about how children, parents and other family members should behave
- different attitudes towards interaction with other people, ranging from being very rigid and formal to more flexible and informal

## Individual differences

It should be noted here that while culture can affect learning, we should not assume that every person within a certain culture will learn in the same way. Perhaps more important are individual differences, such as

- attitudes about time, effort and money available for education (a frill, choice or necessity?)
- motivation, persistence and attention abilities
- cognitive and/or physical learning style
- affective factors (for example, chronic illness, stress) personal abilities (for example, physical, intellectual, emotional, interpersonal)

Herod, L. (2000). *Learning styles and strategies*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Adult Literacy and Continuing Education, Manitoba Education and Training. [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/learning\\_s\\_s\\_revised\\_2000.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/learning_s_s_revised_2000.pdf). Adapted with permission.

## Practical Tips

**Be aware that many peoples of the world are accustomed to offering and demonstrating great respect for those in a teaching role.**

Offer your learner a choice in addressing you by first name or surname. Accept the way that is most comfortable to her and do the same.

**Make a point to learn and pronounce your learner's name(s) correctly.** She has pride in her name(s) and identity, as you do. Recognize and respect this. Your effort will be appreciated.

**Be sensitive to current political situations when having discussions.**

**Be alert to cultural slurs.** Be open to using your learner's views of a discussion topic to give a personal slant. Take the time for clarification and examples when there seems to be evidence of prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping or simply a misunderstanding.

**Encourage individual questions and contributions relating to cultural background.** For example, after you explain a skill or metaphor, encourage your learner to offer you different skills and metaphors from her cultural context.

**Be aware of different language abilities in English and take care to speak clearly and distinctly.** Use examples whenever possible and encourage feedback to determine when further repetition or a better example may be required. Simply speaking more slowly can be of great help.

**Be critical of resource materials.** Do they represent varied points of view? Do they avoid offending minority groups? Are they accurate, well qualified and current?

**Be alert to different structures in daily life.** For example, when you greet, invite, praise or criticize the learner and she says "yes," it does not always mean that she understands; it may simply signify politeness. An invitation, however casually expressed, may be taken seriously. Laughter may indicate embarrassment rather than humour. There may be initial misunderstanding of punctuality and deadlines. Respect your learner's different holidays, eating restrictions or choice of clothing. Be aware of any specific time set aside to perform prayers and don't schedule your tutoring session then.

**Flexibility is important.** You are in a position to point out the similarities and differences in any situation and in this way increase your learner's involvement in your sessions as well as in the community.

**Replace mere tolerance with serious and continued efforts to understand and accept the reality of different values and perceptions.**

Herod, L. (2000). *Learning styles and strategies*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Adult Literacy and Continuing Education, Manitoba Education and Training. [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/learning\\_s\\_s\\_revised\\_2000.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/learning_s_s_revised_2000.pdf). Adapted with permission.

# Considerations for English as a Second Language Learners

Over the years, approaches to the instruction of ESL have changed to reflect studies on language acquisition as well as changes in the global environment.

We are moving from a focus on grammar and translation to task-based lessons as we realize students learn a language better by using it, not by analyzing and studying it. Language becomes part of long-term memory when it affects everyday life. Real language, interesting and purposeful for the student, is more easily retained. Theme-based units are very effective, especially if they are in a progression that is relevant to the learner's life in Canada.

We are also focusing on all the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing at the same time, recognizing that the whole language is the sum of its parts and all skills can contribute to its development. Listening and reading are called the receptive skills and are usually the first that are acquired. To effectively use a language, one must be able to move on to the productive skills of speaking and writing.

For maximum learning to take place, students must feel comfortable and confident that their efforts to use language will be valued. It is important to use positive reinforcement with learners to encourage them to participate meaningfully. This is especially important in getting them to move from the receptive skills of listening and reading to the productive skills of speaking and writing.

Language must be used in context and therefore, cultural issues are included as well as the words alone. There are appropriate ways to use language and this varies from country to country and depends on the situation.

These considerations are becoming part of instruction and are sometimes referred to as the socio-cultural or the socio-political context. This may include body language as well as verbal use.

The student's first language should be valued. Learning English should be viewed as adding a second language rather than replacing the first. The goal for the learner's pronunciation should be comprehensibility, not perfection. As long as non-standard speech sounds do not interfere with understanding, they are acceptable.

It is very important to recognize the student's individuality in background and needs. Their literacy level in their first language, alphabet, religion, gender, age, socio-economic and political background, goals, motivation and other responsibilities will all have an impact on the ability and rate at which they learn English. Instruction techniques may need to be adapted to reflect a wide range of student experiences. Programs themselves must be flexible to provide useful help to many learners.

ESL instruction today uses a wide variety of tools: class discussion, pair work, books, workbooks, audiotapes and videotapes, music, telephones, computers, role-playing and real-life situations. The list is as long and varied as the instructors' imaginations and the situation and time allows. The learners benefit most when they feel valued, involved, interested and motivated. The learning becomes effective and relevant.

*Saskatchewan level 2 learning how to learn.* (2001). Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan Literacy Network. Used with permission. Contact the Network at [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca) or 1-888-511-2111.

# Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal

This chart shows Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal approaches to life in general and learning specifically. Because these are generalizations, the ideas will not be true for each individual. Many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people may have traits from both lists. The individual's learning styles and traits are still the most important to the instructor/tutor and must be discovered by talking to and learning from the learner.

| Aboriginal                                   | Non-Aboriginal  |
|--|---|
| <b>World View</b>                            |   |
| Cyclical (oral tradition)                    | Linear (print tradition)                                |
| Tribe and extended family as social base     | Individual and nuclear family as social base            |
| Tolerance of individual differences          | Emphasis on compliance and conformity                   |
| Customs and situational ethics               | Rules and rigid morality                                |
| Less emphasis on materialism                 | Greater emphasis on material values                     |
| <b>Language</b>                              |   |
| More non-verbal communication                | More verbal communication                               |
| Observant (less talkative)                   | Participant (more talkative)                            |
| Often speaks non-standard English dialect    | Generally speaks standard English dialect               |
| More visually and orally oriented            | More print-oriented                                     |
| Rarely read to, few print materials          | Often read to; home may have variety of print materials |
| <b>Teaching Style</b>                        |   |
| Concrete demonstration by Elders and experts | Lecture and reading by certified professionals          |
| Integrated with family, community and life   | Separated from life and community                       |
| Learning takes place in natural setting      | Learning takes place in restricted (classroom) setting  |
| <b>Learning Style</b>                        |   |
| Exploratory                                  | Forced  |
| Peer and personal reward system (intrinsic)  | External rewards  |
| Process-oriented (doing), co-operative       | Product-oriented (achieving), competitive               |
| Independent and autonomous                   | Dependent and controlled                                |
| <b>Learning Routines</b>                     |   |
| Flexible and non-existent                    | Rigid, structured                                       |
| "Staying with a task" not emphasized         | "Staying with a task" emphasized                        |
| Time a minor factor                          | Time is a factor  |

*Saskatchewan level 2 learning how to learn.* (2001). Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan Literacy Network. Used with permission. Contact the Network at [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca) or 1-888-511-2111.

# What's Confusing

This chart illustrates how differences in the area of language can lead to stereotyping and may diminish learning. It also shows that a non-Aboriginal instructor/tutor who is not aware of such things as the need for allowing pauses between sentences is much less likely to be effective when working with Aboriginal learners.

| <i><b>What's confusing to English speakers<br/>about Athabaskans</b></i> | <i><b>What's confusing to Athabaskans<br/>about English speakers</b></i> |
|--|--|
| They do not speak.   | They talk too much.  |
| They keep silent.  | They always talk first.  |
| They avoid situations of talking.  | They talk to strangers or people they don't know.                        |
| They only want to talk to close acquaintances.                           | They think they can predict the future.                                  |
| They play down their own abilities.                                      | They brag about themselves.  |
| They act as if they expect things to be given to them.                   | They don't help people even when they can.                               |
| They deny planning.  | They always talk about what's going to happen later.                     |
| They avoid direct questions.   | They ask too many questions.   |
| They talk off topic.   | They always interrupt.   |
| They never say anything about themselves.                                | They only talk about what they are interested in.                        |
| They are slow to take a turn in talking.                                 | They don't give others a chance to talk.                                 |
| They ask questions in unusual places.                                    | They are always getting excited when they talk.                          |
| They talk with a flat tone of voice.                                     | They aren't careful when they talk about things or people.               |
| They are too indirect; they aren't explicit.                             |  |
| They don't make sense.   |  |
| They just leave without saying anything.                                 |  |

*Saskatchewan level 2 learning how to learn.* (2001). Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan Literacy Network. Used with permission. Contact the Network at [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca) or 1-888-511-2111.

# Appropriate Instructional Approaches and Techniques

## Build Aboriginal culture into curriculum

- Use poetry and other arts activities such as storytelling, dance, song and drama as a means of instruction.
- Include learning activities and projects that incorporate Native tradition, symbols, ways of life, history, etc.
- Involve members of the Aboriginal community in the learning as guest speakers, to give demonstrations, to give ideas for learning.

## Approach instruction of Aboriginal learners in a manner generally preferred within the culture

- Allow learners to privately rehearse a skill before demonstrating competency publicly.
- Avoid spot-lighting learners (i.e., singling out individuals for praise, criticism or responses).
- De-emphasize competition and emphasize cooperative and collaborative learning.
- Assist learners to use prior knowledge and experiences to help absorb new material.
- Use more global, holistic instructional approaches that emphasize the development of self-esteem, confidence and empowerment.
- Build life skills into the learning.
- Use warmer, more personal teaching styles and establish relationships with learners.
- Actively demand, while remaining personally warm.

- Be sensitive to non-verbal cues signalling the need for assistance or the desire to discuss an issue with the instructor.
- Accept silences and allow longer pauses after asking questions.

## Facilitate rather than direct learning

- Share classroom control and responsibility.
- Allow learners to have as much control as possible over their own learning.
- Avoid doing all the talking – listen as well as talk.
- Use small group work and discussion rather than lecturing.

## Use experiential learning techniques

- Use hands-on, active learning such as field trips, demonstrations.

## Use specific instructional techniques to develop literacy skills

- Emphasize a writing process approach rather than a grammar-based sub-skills method to instruction.
- Use a whole language, integrated approach that emphasizes the words and experiences of the students.

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# Aboriginal Learning Styles

## Global

- tends to understand best when overall concept is presented first
- learns best when overview or introduction is emphasized
- needs meaningful context
- sees relationships easily
- benefits from whole language approach

## Imaginal

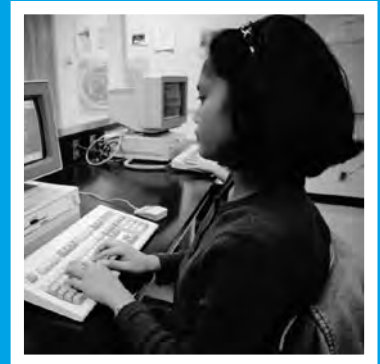
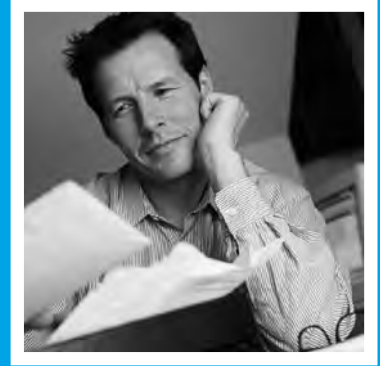
- learns best from images, both concrete and abstract (symbols, diagrams, similes, metaphors)
- codes information using images
- has difficulty verbalizing own images but can make them and use them for learning

## Concrete

- learns best with support from materials that can be seen (photographs), touched and heard
- “hands-on” approach is effective
- needs example

## Watch – Then Do (also Think – Then Do or Listen – Then Do)

- reflective
- needs time to think answer through



# Planning for Learning

UNIT  
**4**

## Unit 4: Planning for Learning

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

## UNIT 4

# Planning for Learning

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

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

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

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

---

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

Rose Gittins in *An Introduction to Literacy Teaching*



**Approx 3¾ hours**  
using core activities

### Concepts

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

### Builds on

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

## Useful Resources

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

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

## Section 1

---

### First Steps

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

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

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

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

---

*Use creativity and imagination to design lesson plans.*

## Activity A

### Getting to know your learner

Reflection, discussion, role-playing, use of handout

#### Materials and equipment

Handout 4.1: *Getting to Know Your Learner*

Samples of questionnaires from your program

Handout 4.2: *Sample Questionnaire* (4 pages)

#### Preparation

Copy handouts.

Gather samples of additional questionnaires if you'd like.

#### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity B

### First meeting

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

#### Tutoring tip

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

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

## Reflection, discussion, use of video

### Materials and equipment

TV and VCR

Video: *Creating Learning Partners – First Meeting*

### Preparation

Cue the video to the *First Meeting* segment.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

### Variation

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

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

Victoria Perry

## Section 2

### Learning Situations

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

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

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

### Activity A

#### Problem-solving skills

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

#### Reflection, use of handout, discussion

##### Materials and equipment

Handout 4.3: *How to Handle Concerns*

Flip chart and markers

##### Preparation

Copy handout.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity B

### Ways to handle difficult situations

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

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

#### Option 1 Reflection, use of handout, discussion

##### Why choose this option?

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

##### Materials and equipment

Handout 4.4: *Learning Situations*

Slips of paper

Box or container

##### Preparation

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

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

Put the cut-apart situations into the container.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

### Thought-provoking questions

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

### Variation

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

## Variation

One variation on role-playing, which may seem less intimidating because it does not require dialogue, is to create “frozen snapshots.” Using the situation pulled from the box, the players create three posed tableaux. In the first tableau, they show the situation (as if the viewer were looking at a photograph of it). In the second tableau, they show the impact of the situation on the learner. The third tableau shows a possible way to work through the situation. The players can give a title to each tableau. The full group can discuss what they observe, why they think the situation exists and how the learner can move from it to a solution that she can live with. Tutors can also discuss the role that they can play to support their learners without becoming overwhelmed or losing a sense of boundaries.

## Option 2 Use of handout, role-play

### Why choose this option?

You and your tutors may enjoy doing role-plays.

This works well in a larger group.

### Materials and equipment

Handout 4.4: *Learning Situations*

Slips of paper

Box or container

### Preparation

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

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

Put the cut-apart situations into the container.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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

### Option 3 Guest speaker – experienced tutor

#### Why choose this option?

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

#### Materials and equipment

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

#### Preparation

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

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

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

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

#### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

#### Variation

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

## Activity C

### Addressing tutors' concerns

#### Why choose this activity?

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

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

### Option 1 Brainwriting for a large group, use of handout

#### Why choose this option?

This works with a larger group and gathers concerns anonymously.

#### Materials and equipment

Sticky notes

Flip chart and markers

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

optional  
activity

## Variation

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

### Preparation

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

Copy handout.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Option 2 Brainwriting for a small group, use of handout

### Why choose this option?

For a smaller group, you could use this option.

### Materials and equipment

8½" x11" sheets of paper

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

### Preparation

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

Copy handout.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Section 3

### Developing a Learning Plan

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

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

#### Activity A

##### Why we use goals

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

##### Reflection, discussion, use of handout

###### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 4.6: *Setting Goals – An Overview*

###### Preparation

Copy handout.

###### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

##### Variation

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

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

## Activity B

### How to set goals

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

#### Reflection

##### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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

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*Goal setting is the beginning of the learning journey.*

*Saskatchewan Level 1 Tutor Training Kit  
Tutor Manual*

## Activity C

### Developing your own learning plan

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

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

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

#### Discussion, use of handouts and overheads

##### Materials and equipment

Overhead projector

Handout 4.7: *Learning Plan* (blank)

Handout 4.8: *Setting Goals* (blank)

Overhead 4.1: *Learning Plan – Sample for Tutors*

Overhead 4.2: *Learning Plan* (blank)

Overhead 4.3: *Setting Goals – Sample for Tutors*

Overhead 4.4: *Setting Goals* (blank)

##### Preparation

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

Copy handouts.

Prepare overheads.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

#### Facilitation tip

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

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

## Activity D

### Developing a learning plan for your learner

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

#### Video, discussion, use of handouts and overheads

##### Materials and equipment

TV and VCR

Overhead projector

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

Handout 4.7: *Learning Plan* (blank)

Handout 4.8: *Setting Goals* (blank)

Handout 4.9: *Learner Profiles* (4 pages)

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

Overhead 4.5: *Learning Plan – Sample for Learners*

Overhead 4.6: *Setting Goals – Sample for Learners*

##### Preparation

Cue video to learners' stories.

Copy handouts.

Prepare overheads.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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

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

## Section 4

### Lesson Planning

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

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

#### Activity A

##### Planning a lesson

#### Thought-provoking questions

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

#### Reflection, discussion

##### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Activity B

### Components of a lesson

#### Group activity, use of handouts

##### Materials and equipment

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

Handout 4.12: *Tips for Planning*

Handout 4.13: *Lesson Plans*

Envelopes for cut-apart sentences

Flip chart and markers

##### Preparation

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

Copy handouts.

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

#### Thought-provoking question

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

## Activity C

### Developing a lesson plan

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

## Discussion, use of handouts and overheads

### Materials and equipment

Overhead projector

Overhead lesson plan template of your choice

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

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

Handout 4.9: *Learner Profiles* (4 pages)

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

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

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

### Preparation

Copy handouts.

Prepare overheads.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

### Variation

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

## Activity D

### Assessing lesson plans

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

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

## Discussion, use of handouts

### Materials and equipment

Handout 4.15: *Assessing the Session*

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

Handout 4.17: *Lesson Comments*

### Preparation

Copy handouts.

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

### Coordinator tip

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

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

*- West Sussex Council Adult Literacy Scheme*

## Section 5

### Portfolio Development

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

#### Activity A

##### Developing a portfolio

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

#### Discussion, use of handouts

##### Materials and equipment

Handout 4.18: *Developing a Portfolio*

Handout 4.19: *Portfolio Assessment* (2 pages)

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

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

Flip chart and markers

##### Preparation

Copy handouts.

Write the following questions on the flip chart:

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

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

#### Facilitation tip

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

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

*Saskatchewan Level 2 Learning How to Learn*

## Getting to Know Your Learner

Ask your learner about her interests and hobbies. It may take a few sessions to get the whole picture, but it will come as you begin to build a relationship of trust. The purpose of your personal discussion is to guide instruction. It helps you to get to know your learner and the areas where you can help her. You also learn about her interests, which will help you decide what materials are relevant and meaningful in building her skills.

Use open-ended questions. When your learner shares important information with you, remember it. Be sure to tell the learner about yourself to help her feel safe and comfortable in this new relationship.

You may need to be careful when asking about family, especially if she may have unpleasant or traumatic family experiences.

Some things your learner tells you may be confidential. Be sensitive and respectful of the information she shares with you.

**Use your first meeting to begin the process of getting to know your learner.**

# Sample Questionnaire A

## Questions to ask a learner

1. Do you need reading to help you at your work?
2. Do you want to learn how to solve problems in your life?
3. Do you want to learn more about the world around you (such as information on history, geography and great literature)?
4. Do you want to learn more about yourself?
5. What are some of the things you are interested in?
6. Do you like working closely with just one person?
7. How do you feel about learning?
8. What have you found helps you in learning new things?
9. What do you think will make this a good learning experience for you?
10. Can you think of something that would make it difficult for you to meet with a tutor?
11. What are some school experiences you remember?
12. How do you feel about reading?
13. Do you believe a person can get better at reading?
14. Do you believe that learning the sounds of words will make you a good reader?
15. How do you feel about writing?
16. Do you believe that all good readers are also good writers?
17. Do you believe that if you were a good speller you would also be a good writer?
18. How do you remember a telephone number from the first time you hear it to the time you use it? (This will find out what learning strategy the learner uses.)
19. How would you remember where you parked your car in a large car park? (Again, this will find out what learning strategy the learner uses.)

# Sample Questionnaire B

## Interests, activities, hobbies

Engage the learner in a conversation about favourite recreation, sports and leisure activities. Talk about any organizations or groups that the learner belongs to. Talk about the kinds of things that he likes to learn, watch on TV or read about. Also, ask about the things that he would like to read and write about in class.

The following are sample questions that can be used to initiate this conversation.

1. What kinds of activities do you like to do the most?
2. What kinds of activities don't you like to do?
3. What would you do if you won the lottery?
4. What is the best holiday you have ever had?
5. If you could spend a whole day doing anything you wanted, what would you do?
6. Tell me about someone you really admire.

## Sample Questionnaire C

1. Where have you travelled?
2. What kinds of movies or television programs do you like the best? Why?
3. What stories or kinds of books do you enjoy the most? Why are these your favourites?
4. If you had spare time, what would you like to do?
5. Do you like sports, outdoor activities, cooking or sewing?
6. Do you like to read? Why or why not?
7. How much time and effort do you think you can give to learning?
8. Have you ever had any of the following physical problems:
  - poor eyesight
  - hearing loss
  - speech difficulties

### Questions to ask ESL learners

1. What is your first language?
2. How old were you when you learned to speak English?
3. When did you come to Canada?
4. Did you have a chance to go to school in your native country?
5. If so, for how many years?
6. Do you read and write in your own language?
7. What language do you speak at home?

# Sample Questionnaire D

## Acquired skills

A discussion about work experience and literacy tasks that the learner is currently performing will provide information about skills and strategies that the learner can build on. It will also help the learner recognize his strengths and competencies.

## Work

1. Do you have a job now?
2. If so, what kind of work do you do?
3. If not, what kind of jobs have you had?
4. Do you need to use reading and writing at work?
5. What reading and writing do you do at work?
6. How are you coping with these tasks?

## Home

1. Do you do any reading on your own now?
2. What kinds of things do you read at home, in stores, on the street (for example, TV schedule, mail, newspapers, stories to children, labels, street signs)?
3. Do you do any writing on your own?
4. What kinds of things do you write (for example, shopping lists, cheques, notes, letters)?
5. How do you feel about your spelling?
6. How would improved reading, writing and spelling skills help you at home and at work?

*Creative student assessment: A guide to developing meaningful evaluation.* (1995). Winnipeg, Manitoba: Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, Adult Learning and Literacy. [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/acl/all/publications/creative\\_student\\_assessment\\_oct03.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/acl/all/publications/creative_student_assessment_oct03.pdf). Used with permission.

## How to Handle Concerns

Make time at the beginning or end of each session for your learner to discuss any challenges or concerns he might be experiencing. Allowing time at the beginning of your session for your learner to talk about his concerns will help clear his mind for learning. Always take time to be an empathetic listener.

Your role as a tutor is not to be a social worker, but to help your learner develop problem-solving skills. If you share some of your own concerns, you will show yourself as a regular human being who has challenges like everyone else. You might want to share how you resolved a concern or challenge as a model for your learner.

You can link your learner's concerns or challenges to literacy activities. For instance, you might help him find out about a particular issue by researching it using the computer, library, newspapers and other resources. Depending on the concern, you may want to help him draft letters or decide what to say in either face-to-face meetings or telephone conversations. You may want to role-play the conversations. You can help him determine which agencies or other organizations could offer help. Then you could work with your learner to find the contact information for those agencies. Where possible, you and your learner could research together how he could find others dealing with similar challenges. For example, you could help your learner link up with people dealing with addictions, family violence, parenting issues and/or depression. This can give your learner a sense of being connected and could help him gain some power and hope.

Remember that the learner needs to “own” his challenges and concerns as well as any changes he wants to make. You cannot be the one to solve your learner's concerns.

You could use some form of art or journal writing in your sessions. This may provide a way for your learner to express some of the issues that are bothering him.

If you are concerned about the information your learner shares with you about a particular problem or concern, talk to your coordinator.

# Learning Situations

Your learner works a lot and has very little time for learning. She says it is too noisy at home “so I can’t study or do homework.” Therefore, whatever happens in your tutoring session is the only learning that occurs.

Your learner tells you that she has lost or broken her glasses and is not able to get new ones for a variety of reasons. There’s not much learning that can be done until she finds a way to get new glasses.

Your learner reveals that he is often short of money and has a family to feed. He needs to get food somewhere. The family is Asian and they don’t like the usual kinds of foods that are in a basket from the food bank.

Your learner reveals that she is in an abusive situation and is very fearful. She misses a lot of meetings and when she comes, most of the time is taken up with listening to her story about the situation and her fears. She indicates that she does not know where to turn for a resolution to her situation.

Your learner talks about past bad treatment he has experienced because “everyone said I was stupid. But I really want to learn. I know I can learn.” But in every meeting, time is taken up as your learner repeats this story about his past.

Your learner comes to a session looking sad. After a bit of small talk, she says, “I was working on my writing. My husband saw me and said, ‘Why are you doing that? You’re wasting your time.’”

Your learner is a new immigrant who was initially very keen on the sessions. Five months later, he can hardly drag himself into the sessions. He is exhausted all the time and often feels sick.

Your learner has trouble remembering. She sometimes forgets things that you think she learned well and she has to relearn them. One of the things that she forgets is to come to sessions, even when you phone the day before.

Your learner feels that he is a long way from reaching his goal. He says, “I’m so slow.” As his tutor, you know that he has made good progress.

Your learner has accomplished all her goals, but she doesn’t seem to want to end the sessions.

# Questions Tutors Commonly Ask

## How long does it take to learn to read and write?

A good question, but impossible to answer. There are many contributing factors that impinge on a learner's ability to learn to read and write, such as motivation, ability, other commitments and health. When you have been working with your learner for a while, you will begin to have a clearer picture of how long it is going to take.

## What is it like to have problems reading and writing?

Some learners have compared it to being blind. As they learn to read, new windows on the world open for them. They have often lived with poor esteem and feelings of failure. They may have hidden their weak reading from friends, co-workers and even their families with excuses ("I forgot my glasses"). On the other hand, many compensate by developing keen listening, observation and memory skills.

If adults admit their reading and writing problems because they want access to the printed word, then the people who act as their eyes have access to much of their personal information – information that they might want to keep confidential. They are living part of their lives through someone else. This can be demoralizing and a burden to others, especially when it is a parent relying on a child.

## Is there a typical learner?

There is no typical learner! They range in age from late teens to seniors. Some are employed and some are not. Some have completed only elementary school but many have completed Grade 12, especially in high schools that emphasized vocational training. Many learners who have a Grade 12 education function at a much lower level. Some deaf learners have been to residential schools; others may not have had formal schooling. Some learners have learning disabilities but did not get the help they needed when they were young.

All learners will be used to communicating orally in English, with the exception of some deaf and deaf/blind people. Of course, there are varying degrees of fluency. Many learners will continue to refine their English language skills as they learn to read and write.

Because learners enter programs voluntarily, they are often highly motivated to make changes in their lives. They know that their weak literacy skills are holding them back from reaching their goals.

## What do I need to consider when I am working with someone whose first language is not English?

- Ask how your learner wants to be addressed.
- Make sure you can spell and pronounce her name.
- Ask her to tell you about her culture, compare differences and similarities.
- Encourage independence.
- Focus on pronunciation only if errors result in misunderstandings.
- Watch facial expressions and body language.
- Speak clearly and use plain English.
- Avoid idioms and jargon – be as direct as possible.
- Use the active voice rather than the passive voice.
- Use visual clues.

## How do I help to build my learner's self-confidence?

People are usually frightened of change. Your learner is about to start something that will make a big impact on her life and on the lives of those around her. Relationships based on dependency will change as she discovers her increased independence. She needs to take an active part in deciding how to make and deal with those changes.

Recognize the fear that confronts people when they contemplate change. Work together to reduce and overcome that fear. Give your learner the opportunity to write about her feelings. She will probably feel vulnerable and lack confidence. As a tutor, you should accept that these feelings exist. Trust and open communication will help pave the way for change. You are in a position to provide support and encouragement. Believe in your learner.

Past failures often result in poor self-image, sensitivity to criticism and fear of error. This often has the effect of discouraging learners from wanting to use their initiative. One of the ways you can help is to discuss and list the things your learner has already successfully accomplished in her everyday life. The best way to boost confidence is to document progress and acknowledge success. Make the steps small so that there is lots of success. Encourage her to keep past work in a portfolio so that she can refer back to it and use it to measure progress.

Learners do not always absorb new information as quickly as you would expect. The ability to learn does not deteriorate much with age, but the rate of learning might

be slower. Be patient. Use a variety of methods to teach and review. This helps to eliminate boredom for your learner and helps to improve self-esteem.

Your learner will practise a new skill with you, and when she feels sufficiently confident, she will go out and use it in a real-life situation. Each time she uses a new skill successfully, her confidence will grow, and with it her self-esteem and the feeling that she has control of her life.

### **Am I expected to take on a social worker role if my learner needs advice on personal problems?**

You may want to deal with personal problems that involve looking for information or writing letters, but situations where you lack the necessary experience or issues that revolve around personal safety are best referred to staff.

Sometimes you might want to tell your learner that you feel the issue is important and ask if she would like to talk to a staff person. She may want to write about the situation as a way to help her decide what action to take.

### **My learner is very passive. How do I encourage more active learning?**

A passive person rarely plays any role in her own education, but feels comfortable following whatever the instructor or volunteer decides is best. She often lacks confidence to be assertive, ask questions or work independently. She may meet with you regularly, but develop few new concepts and make few decisions. You need to introduce her to the idea of goal setting and making choices. You also need to encourage active participation in lessons.

Here are some suggestions for doing that:

- Guide and facilitate, don't direct.
- Give her choices about activities, order of activities and break time.
- Let her take responsibility for determining learning styles.
- Ask lots of open-ended questions.
- Ask for feedback.
- Ask her to bring in her own materials.
- Let her help plan the next session.

If you are working in a group setting, encourage lots of work in pairs and problem solving in groups.

Believe in your learner. A learner often arrives with poor self-esteem and fears yet more failure. Let her know that she has taken an important first step in coming to the program. Explain that it takes a lot of motivation and perseverance to set aside that fear and settle down to learn. Discuss what she has already accomplished. Build on what she can already do. As her self-esteem begins

to grow, she will gradually come to believe her ideas are worthwhile. She will become more willing to trust others and to share ideas. Building trust is a very important part of helping a learner become more active.

Let your learner know that you are not perfect. If you make mistakes and admit when you don't know things, then it will be easier for her to do the same.

### **What comments can I use to motivate my learner?**

You need to be sincere when you comment on your learner's work. Don't gush. Give praise only when it is due. Be specific. Then your learner will know exactly what she has achieved.

### **How can I help my learner to remember information?**

Your learner will have a lot of new information to remember. Thinking about and recording useful information is an important skill in itself. She may need to develop strategies for doing this. She may also want to keep copies of useful personal information.

Here are a few suggestions for her to follow:

- Keep learning materials in a binder.
- Organize the binder – have dividers to separate work.
- Keep useful word lists.
- Keep examples of personal details in the binder, for reference.
- Keep examples of completed forms in the binder.
- Keep a copy of her resume in the binder.
- Keep a list of books she has read.

Here are a few suggestions for you and your learner to follow:

- Consider her preferred learning style.
- Highlight key words.
- Make flash cards for key words.
- Have a word bank or have her create her own word book.
- Have lists of survival words and a personal vocabulary list.
- Use colour coding.
- Use rhymes or nonsense phrases (mnemonics).
- Look for word patterns and keep lists.
- Use word associations.
- Make connections.
- Practise and review.
- Look back and reread language experience stories on a regular basis.

### **I have found an article that my learner would be interested in, but the English is too hard. What should I do?**

You may choose to rewrite the information using plain/clear English. You can do this while still respecting the reader's level of understanding. To do this, you will need to think of the person you are writing for and why you are writing. Be a reporter. State the *who, what, when, where* and *why*. Organize your ideas; put the important ideas first. Keep the writing simple and use the active voice. Limit the length of sentences to around 10 familiar words and write the way you talk. Use a simple sentence structure: subject, verb, object. Avoid jargon and use active verbs.

If reading material is at a difficult level, such as citizenship material or drivers' information, read it aloud with your learner and then discuss the material.

### **What do I do if I run out of teaching ideas?**

This can happen to anyone. It is a good time to talk to staff in the program. They have lots of valuable experience to share with you and can point you to some useful resources. Network with other tutors; ask staff to organize "Tutor Nights." It may be time to go out into the community and let your learner practise some of the skills she has learned with you. Going to the bank, mall, grocery store or library may be just what you need to get you out of the rut.

### **I don't feel as if we are getting anywhere. What do I do next?**

If you feel your learner is not making progress, then try to find other ways to present the material to her. She may be more comfortable using a computer than pen and paper. She may need to take a break and come back to this topic. Whatever happens, talk to her. It is her decision. Keep the feedback flowing. Do not say, "You don't seem to be making progress." Instead, put the responsibility on yourself: "I don't seem to have found the right way to teach this yet. Do you have any suggestions?" This is another time when it is good to get the support of staff.

### **How do I work with a multi-level group?**

In a group situation, it will usually be the instructor who is facilitating the group. Nevertheless, you may wish to think about this subject, as the instructor may invite you to work with the group as you become more experienced.

When learners are at different levels, it can be a challenge to develop activities that will meet the needs of all the learners in the group. Here are some suggestions:

- Provide a variety of materials at different levels.
- Use thematic units or project work.
- Pair beginning readers with more advanced readers.
- Rewrite important information in clear language.
- Use non-reading activities (e.g., discussions).
- Use newspaper articles – give different assignments.
- Encourage learners to work things out or solve problems in small groups.
- Get learners to plan activities (e.g., field trips or speakers).
- Read aloud to your group.
- Brainstorm.
- Use activities that involve various literacy skills, such as creating a newsletter or recipe book.
- Gear writing activities to the level of each learner – beginning readers can dictate sentences or write captions for photographs; more advanced readers can write articles.
- Use process writing techniques.

When learners are comfortable in a group setting, learning takes place. The lessons learned in group interaction are an important part of personal growth. Employers are looking for people with critical thinking skills, good communication skills, positive attitudes and the ability to work well in groups. These skills can be developed in a small group setting. Learners have an opportunity to share opinions and explanations. They learn to listen to others, value each other's contributions, consider other points of view and achieve agreement. They also learn how to resolve group conflict. There is interdependence and shared responsibility.

### **What if the learner and I clash?**

Hopefully you will not find yourself in this position; if you do, don't panic. In a classroom setting the instructor will help you to handle the situation. Consult with a staff person if you are working one-on-one with a learner and you feel you need help.

Misunderstandings may occur between individuals or in a group. Reasons vary. It may be because one of you is often late or forgets to show up, or because of certain views relating to culture or religion. Some learners may expect you to be the "boss" and see it as a sign of weakness if you are not. Some learners may find it hard to accept women in authority roles. There may be other gender or cultural issues or problems that relate to personal space or making eye contact.

Whatever the reason, disagreement and conflict will always be a part of our lives. In itself, conflict is neither good nor bad. However, it is important to deal with situations as they arise. They can be a learning experience for you and your learner. Use them as a teaching opportunity. How you handle disagreements can

encourage your learner to adopt some of your strategies. This may help with some life skills issues. Here are some suggestions for resolving disagreements:

- State the problem from your perspective.
- Focus on the issue or behaviour, not the person.
- Use “I” statements: “I’m not happy when you...”
- Ask how the other people involved see the problem.
- Acknowledge the significance of the other person’s comments.
- Maintain the self-confidence of the others involved.
- Separate fact from opinion.

### What are some of the other issues that I might encounter?

The table below describes some difficult issues you might encounter as you work with your learner. It offers reasons for her behaviour and suggestions for dealing with the issues.

It is important to keep staff informed if your learner loses motivation or misses a few sessions. Do not let this become a problem.

| Issues  | Reasons and suggestions   |
|---|---|
| Prefers not to write things down                | Offer to do the writing or get her to write a few words over a period of time.  |
| Forgets things very easily                      | She may have a poor short-term memory – needs to practise between classes. May be affected by other personal problems.  |
| Often grasps ideas more slowly than you thought | Build on her past experience. Present concepts in a variety of ways.  |
| Never finishes a story                          | Use materials that can be covered in one lesson.  |
| Knows more about some topics than you           | Learn from her experience.  |
| Is quiet and does not want to communicate much  | May have had bad experiences with instructors in the past. Gain her trust.  |
| Chats non-stop                                  | May be nervous and want to postpone learning. Use her experience in lessons.  |
| Has difficulty starting new habits              | It is hard to unlearn mistakes. Be patient.   |
| Is too nervous to concentrate for long          | Helping to cope with learning is as important as teaching her to read and write. Keep materials short. Have plenty of variety.  |
| Is depressed                                    | She may have pressures at home. Put prepared lessons aside if she needs to talk. Encourage journal writing. Make the learning environment comfortable. Give opportunities for success. Consult staff. |
| Does not like another member of the group       | She may feel other learners are taking up too much of your time. There may be cultural differences. Discuss with the instructor.  |
| Does not like you                               | You may remind her of someone else. She may feel you are not interested. Talk to program staff if you cannot resolve the issue or you would like advice.  |
| Is tired  | Learning should be in short chunks and varied. Perhaps you could arrange a different meeting time.  |
| Stops coming                                    | You or the instructor will need to contact her and find out what is happening. Sometimes, all it takes is a call to show you care. Some programs will have a policy regarding attendance.             |

Harwood, C. (2001). *Handbook for literacy tutors*. Ottawa, Ontario: Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy. ISBN 1-894593-10-3. Used with permission.

# Setting Goals – An Overview

## Elements of the goal-setting process

- Identify short- and long-term goals.
- Break goals into smaller pieces and be as specific as possible.
- Determine steps to achieve each goal.
- Determine which goals are most important to work on first.
- Record the goals in a learning plan.
- Develop a timetable for accomplishing each goal.
- Determine how you will know when you have reached a goal.
- Every time you reach a goal, celebrate in a way that is meaningful for the learner.
- Review the learning plan regularly and revise it as necessary.

## Some tips for setting goals

- Include your learner in the planning process.
- Ask your learner what he hopes to accomplish.
- Establish realistic time frames for achieving the goal.
- Use one of the questionnaires to help determine the learners' goals.
- Find your learners' strengths.
  - Idea: You could ask your learner to name three things he is good at.
- Beginning learners have difficulty stating goals. You may need to find out
  - more about your learner
  - what is happening in his life
  - if the learner knows what a goal is
- The first goal could even be to focus on learning how to learn.

**Review the goals often because they can change.**

## Remember that the reason to set goals is to

- help your learner to realize he is making progress
- help you determine what progress he has made
- help you and your learner know what to work on

Learning Plan

| Learning Plan          |                                |           |            |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Name                   |                                |           |            |
| Objective              |                                |           |            |
| Skills I need to learn | I will know I can do this when | Resources | Strategies |
|                        |                                |           |            |
|                        |                                |           |            |
|                        |                                |           |            |
|                        |                                |           |            |
|                        |                                |           |            |
|                        |                                |           |            |
|                        |                                |           |            |
|                        |                                |           |            |
|                        |                                |           |            |
|                        |                                |           |            |
|                        |                                |           |            |

Norton, M. (1997). *Progress profile: Measuring progress in literacy development*. Calgary, Alberta: Literacy Coordinators of Alberta. ISBN 0-9680235-4-1. Used with permission.

## Setting Goals

| Goal | Learning objectives | Criteria for evaluation |
|------|---------------------|-------------------------|
|      |                     |                         |
|      |                     |                         |
|      |                     |                         |

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# Learner Profile A

## Alvina

Although Alvina's brothers and sisters went to school, she was kept home to help with the household chores. Now that her children are grown, she would like to learn to read and write.

Alvina is a mother and a grandmother. She left her rural home when she was about 18 and worked as a live-in housekeeper for a city family. Since marrying, she has helped manage family-run businesses. She has four children and five grandchildren. The youngest, a two-year-old girl, is the apple of her eye. They spend a lot of time together.

Alvina didn't have specific reasons for learning to read and write, except that she wanted to be like everyone else. During lessons, Alvina said that she wanted to be able to write her own story someday.

At the start of tutoring, Alvina recognized most alphabet letters and knew some of the sounds. She recognized some words on sight. She could use consonant letters to spell words when they were dictated and could sign her name. She knew the order of the alphabet; she had used alphabetical order to keep track of files in the family business.

## Learner Profile B

### Raymond

Raymond was 15 when he left school, but he hadn't been going regularly. His parents' separation around that time was difficult for him.

Raymond worked in construction until he had a disabling accident on the job. He wants to learn to read and write so he can upgrade his education and get a sit-down job.

When his tutor writes down a story that Raymond dictates, he can read it back with little trouble. It is harder for him to read other stories, but he can manage if the topic is familiar. He uses the context to predict words, but he has difficulty using the letter cues. Often he can predict words in passages, but not recognize them by themselves. At first he was nervous about writing or spelling, but with encouragement, he started to spell words the way they sounded, and then to spell them from memory of how they looked.

Raymond is sociable and is interested in the news. He likes the outdoors and animals.

# Learner Profile C

## Helen

Helen attended a vocational high school. She's working as a cook's helper in a fast-food restaurant. Her work is quite routine, so she doesn't have to read new information at work very often. However, she would like to improve her reading and writing so she can take some courses and advance in her work.

Helen can read the menu from work and can read familiar recipes. Since starting tutoring, she has enjoyed reading stories that her tutor has helped her pick out.

Helen sounds out words she doesn't recognize, but sometimes the words she comes up with don't make sense. Sometimes she can read a passage and recognize almost all of the words, but not understand what she has read.

Helen has very neat handwriting and can spell many words correctly. She is reluctant to write about her own ideas.

Helen lives at home and sometimes babysits for her older sister. She enjoys bowling.

# Learner Profile D

## Carl

Carl was suspended for the last two weeks of school when he was about 13. He found a job up north and has been working ever since. He's worked in mining and construction and has run his own businesses. Most recently, he fixed and sold used appliances.

Carl says he can read just about anything he has to, if he can take his time. He uses his background knowledge to figure out what something is about, even if he can't get all of the words. He can often figure out a word from context, but he doesn't know other strategies for identifying words that he can't figure out that way. Even when Carl has trouble with the words, he can read something and remember most of what it is about.

Carl says that spelling is his real problem. When asked to spell a word, he tries to remember what it looks like – you can see him try to see the word in his head. If he can't remember the word, he doesn't try to spell it. When encouraged to spell words the way they sound, Carl could do so. However, he had a hard time telling the difference between sounds. Because of his difficulty with spelling, Carl avoids writing.

Carl tells a good story and is happy to share tips about fixing washing machines. He likes to keep up on the news – he watches it on T.V. and looks through the newspaper most days.

# Task List for Setting Goals

| Tasks                          | Can do | Work on now | Work on later | Not interested |
|--------------------------------|--------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>AT HOME</b>                 |        |             |               |                |
| Read labels                    |        |             |               |                |
| Read mail                      |        |             |               |                |
| Look up phone numbers          |        |             |               |                |
| Follow directions for assembly |        |             |               |                |
| Write shopping list            |        |             |               |                |
| Read bills                     |        |             |               |                |
| Read/write letters, notes      |        |             |               |                |
| Read newspaper                 |        |             |               |                |
| Read magazines                 |        |             |               |                |
| Read stories to children       |        |             |               |                |
| Help with homework             |        |             |               |                |
| Read medicine directions       |        |             |               |                |
| Read a lease                   |        |             |               |                |
| Fill out applications          |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
| <b>BANKING</b>                 |        |             |               |                |
| Open account                   |        |             |               |                |
| Fill out bank forms            |        |             |               |                |
| Write cheques                  |        |             |               |                |
| Keep bank book                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |

| Tasks                           | Can do | Work on now | Work on later | Not interested |
|---------------------------------|--------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>SHOPPING</b>                 |        |             |               |                |
| Read signs and labels           |        |             |               |                |
| Compare prices                  |        |             |               |                |
| Count money                     |        |             |               |                |
| Make change                     |        |             |               |                |
| Order something by mail         |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |
| <b>WORK</b>                     |        |             |               |                |
| Read information about training |        |             |               |                |
| Fill out job applications       |        |             |               |                |
| Prepare resume                  |        |             |               |                |
| Write cover letters             |        |             |               |                |
| Read/write telephone messages   |        |             |               |                |
| Read/write memos                |        |             |               |                |
| Read paycheque                  |        |             |               |                |
| Read work orders                |        |             |               |                |
| Read safety information         |        |             |               |                |
| Take telephone messages         |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                 |        |             |               |                |

| Tasks                          | Can do | Work on now | Work on later | Not interested |
|--------------------------------|--------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>GETTING AROUND</b>          |        |             |               |                |
| Use telephone book             |        |             |               |                |
| Read street names              |        |             |               |                |
| Read a map                     |        |             |               |                |
| Write down directions          |        |             |               |                |
| Read bus schedule              |        |             |               |                |
| Read a menu                    |        |             |               |                |
| Take driver's test             |        |             |               |                |
| Read in church                 |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
| <b>GENERAL</b>                 |        |             |               |                |
| Read short stories             |        |             |               |                |
| Write stories                  |        |             |               |                |
| Read stories to my children    |        |             |               |                |
| Keep a diary                   |        |             |               |                |
| Write letters to the newspaper |        |             |               |                |
| Practise cursive writing       |        |             |               |                |
| Spell better                   |        |             |               |                |
| Learn to add/subtract          |        |             |               |                |
| Learn fractions                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |
|                                |        |             |               |                |

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## What Makes a Good Lesson Plan?

It comes from the learner's goals.

It is flexible.

It is organized.

It includes a break.

It connects the learner and everyday life.

It goes from the known to the unknown.

It is in tune with what the learner needs.

It gives variety and practice.

It provides the tutor, at a glance, with the topics to be discussed and the resources to use.

## Tips for Planning

- Review the work you did at the last session.
- Plan more than necessary in case you decide to drop an activity and do something else.
- Make the session enjoyable.
- Ask yourself if you would be happy with the proposed lesson if you were the learner.
- Go from the known to the unknown.
- Remain flexible.
- At the end of each lesson, plan the next one while you have ideas in your mind.
- Tune into what your learner needs.
- Give variety and lots of practice in the session.

### Remember to ask yourself

- Did new goals arise?
- Is material related to your learner's goals and objectives?
- Why are you using particular activities?
- What role does your learner play in planning sessions and selecting materials?

### Homework helps your learner to

- practise
- try things on her own
- share her work with others
- maintain continuity between sessions

Although you cannot force your learner to do homework, you can stress that progress is more rapid with practice and review.

# Lesson Plans

## Two techniques you can use to help plan a lesson

### 1. A good lesson plan follows ROPES:

**R**eview of the last session

**O**verview of the material to cover in this session

**P**resentation of the new material

**E**xercise - practice of the new material

**S**ummary of what you taught

### 2. Ask these questions:

- What do I hope to accomplish?
- What will my learner do?
- What will I do?
- What materials will we need?
- How will we know if we made progress?

It does not matter which of the many lesson formats/templates you choose for your lesson; just be sure

- your lesson plan is organized
- you can tell at a glance the topic to discuss and materials to use

# Lesson Plan Template A

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What do we hope to accomplish during this session?  
(These are the goals of the session.)

2. What will the learner do?

3. What will I do?

4. What resource material do we need?

5. How will we know if we have made progress?

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# Lesson Plan Template B

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Goals: \_\_\_\_\_

| Learning objectives | Teaching strategies | Materials | Ongoing evaluation |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|
|                     |                     |           |                    |

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# Lesson Plan Template C

| Goals      | Activities | Comments |
|------------|------------|----------|
| Warmup     |            |          |
| Review     |            |          |
| New lesson |            |          |
| Part one   |            |          |
| Part two   |            |          |
| Conclusion |            |          |
| Materials  |            |          |

# Lesson Plan Template D

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**What will my learner do?**

**How will I present this information to my learner?**

**What resources will I use?**

**How did it go?**

# Lesson Plan Template E

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson: \_\_\_\_\_

| What will the learner do? | What will I do? | Resources | How did it go? |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|
|                           |                 |           |                |

# Assessing the Session

Sessions also have to be assessed to see if they are meeting the needs of the learner. Talk about the following together at the end of the lesson:

## Learner-related concerns

- Was the session at the right pace for the learner?
- Did the learner participate in planning and evaluating the lesson?
- Was the learner active more often than the tutor?
- Did the learner feel good about what happened, more confident about her ability to learn or to read or write?

## Content-related concerns

- Was the new information useful and related to the goals?
- Did the lesson include enough or too many explanations, demonstrations, and practice activities?
- Were the activities interesting and varied?
- Did the session include reading, writing, listening and speaking activities?
- Were the tasks “real”? Were they presented in real situations? Did they involve real people?

## Materials-related concerns

- Were they
  - “real”?
  - for adults?
  - related to the goal?
  - varied?
  - at a suitable level?

## Other concerns

- Was a goal reached?
- Did the goal change during the session?
- Was a new goal set at the end of the session?
- Were praise and feedback provided?
- Did both the learner and tutor stay on track?

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## How Well Am I Doing as a Tutor?

1. Do I respect my learner as an adult and meet on equal terms?
2. Do I create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere?
3. Is my learner aware of the purpose of the activities? Do I state the purpose in a way the learner understands?
4. Are my learner's needs being met?
5. Does my learner know when he has reached his stated goal?
6. Am I flexible in my tutoring?
7. Do I take into account my learner's preferred learning style and use a variety of activities?
8. Do I allow my learner to share his experiences and knowledge?
9. Do I explain clearly how to complete an activity?
10. Have I helped my learner feel motivated and be an active learner?
11. Does my learner look forward to next week?
12. Do I remember my learner is important and I need to meet his needs?
13. Do I enjoy what I am doing?

# Lesson Comments

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did it go?

2. What worked? What didn't work?

3. What will the student(s) do at home before the next session?

4. What will I do at home before the next session?

5. What will we do during the next session?

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# Developing a Portfolio

## Why would I use a portfolio with my learner?

- It is a way of evaluating my learner's progress.
- It is a sample file of my learner's work over a period of time.
- I can use it to help empower my learner.

## What should be included in a portfolio?

A portfolio may include the following items:

- a title page
- your learner's goals and the progress made on those goals
- learning plans
- dated samples of work, including drafts and final versions of your learner's writing
- attitudes and beliefs about reading and writing
- a summary sheet

## Before developing a portfolio

- Explain to your learner what a portfolio is.
- Ask if he would be interested in developing one.
- If he is not interested, then do not use it.

# Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio assessment is a way of evaluating a student's progress by keeping samples of the work he has accomplished in one place. It is, in fact, a form of a resume. The student keeps ongoing work in folders and from time to time selects and transfers his best work to another folder – the portfolio. The concept of a portfolio is very similar to the graphic art portfolio where the artist keeps samples of his best work to show prospective clients. The thoughtful portfolio provides a snapshot of a student's capabilities and achievements at a given time.

## How to put together a portfolio

1. Introduce the idea of a portfolio to your student, explaining why you think it is a good idea to use this type of assessment. If your student agrees, go ahead. If not, don't press the issue.
2. Once you and your student have decided to try putting together a portfolio, plan for it. Working together, decide on the following:
  - What will you collect for the portfolio? The materials you collect should reflect the student's learning goals and interests.
  - How often are you going to select materials for the portfolio?
  - What criteria are you going to use to determine what is to be selected? Remember the portfolio is both a process and a product.
  - Where will the portfolio be kept?

## How to organize the materials

The material collected for the portfolio should be organized to fit the needs and interests of your student. Here are some ideas on how to organize the material:

1. Chronological order

The sample contains work organized from the earliest to the most recent. This can prompt a good discussion on what progress has been made by the student and how best to display this progress.

2. Level of complexity

Start with work of less complexity and add work of greater complexity as the student progresses. For example, for a beginning literacy student, you may begin to collect examples of first attempts at writing sentences. As your student progresses, you can include samples of more complex sentences, paragraphs, stories, etc.

### 3. Talents, skills or areas of knowledge

These samples can be related to activities or accomplishments at work, at home, as part of a hobby or a volunteer activity in the community. For example, if your student likes fly fishing, include instructions of how to tie flies, examples of flies that the student has tied, journal entries about fly fishing etc.

### 4. Theme

Samples of work can be collected for such themes as personal growth, risk taking, career development, etc.

## **Examples of materials that can be kept in a portfolio**

- writing samples of various types
- notes on the student's strengths and needs
- lists of student's short-term goals
- career plan charts
- lists of books, magazines, and articles the student has read
- attendance sheets
- student self-evaluations
- highlights of journal entries
- awards
- test results
- photographs
- artwork
- various certificates
- letters of reference or commendation

Keeping a portfolio is an effective way of providing a literacy or ESL student with a means of critical self-evaluation of what progress he is making. It is a tool for empowering students and tutors to think about student evaluation as a process as well as a product.

# Components of a Portfolio

## Sample

### PORTFOLIO SUMMARY AND REVIEW SHEET

| <b>Learning objectives</b><br>In this portfolio, there are/is            | <b>Reviewer's input</b><br>Questions, positive comments, suggestions |
|--|--|
| 1. Samples of writing that show complete sentences                       |  |
| 2. Samples of writing that show a variety of sentence types              |  |
| 3. Samples of writing that show a clear main idea and supporting details |  |
| 4. Evidence of writing for different purposes                            |  |
| 5. Evidence of reflective thinking about his or her writing              |  |
| 6. Evidence of self-monitoring and self-correcting strategies            |  |

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# Components of a Portfolio

## PORTFOLIO SUMMARY AND REVIEW SHEET

| <b>Learning objectives</b><br>In this portfolio, there are/is | <b>Reviewer's input</b><br>Questions, positive comments, suggestions |
|---|--|
|   |  |
|   |  |
|   |  |
|   |  |
|   |  |
|   |  |

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# Components of a Portfolio

## Questions for Thinking About a Reading Selection

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of reading: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why did you decide to read this?
2. What was important to you when you were reading this?
3. Before you read this, what did you do to understand it better?
4. What problem did you have as you were reading this?
5. How did you solve this problem?
6. What did you think about this reading?
7. How do the ideas, situations and characters match your own experiences?
8. What kind of article or book would you like to read next?

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# Components of a Portfolio

## Reading Self-evaluation

### Thinking about yourself as a reader

1. What kinds of reading have you done in the past?
2. What kinds of things do you like to read the most?
3. What kinds of things do you like to read the least?
4. How do you decide what you will read?
5. What do you think one has to do to be a good reader?
6. What are some things you wish you could do better as a reader?
7. What are your strengths as a reader?
8. What has helped you the most with your reading?
9. What have you learned to do as a reader that you couldn't do before?
10. What are your future goals as a reader?

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# Components of a Portfolio

## Reading Progress

What I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This was especially important to me when I read this:

This is what I did before I started to read:

I had these problems when I read this:

This is how I solved these problems:

Next, I would like to read:

## Components of a Portfolio

## Questions for Thinking About a Piece of Writing

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of work: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why did you choose this writing?
2. Why did you write this?
3. What was important to you when you were writing?
4. What problems did you have?
5. How did you solve them?

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# Components of a Portfolio

## Writing Progress

What I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I chose this writing to put in my portfolio because:

I decided to write this because:

I like this piece of writing because:

I had these problems when I was writing this:

This is how I solved these problems:

Next, I would like to write:

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# Components of a Portfolio

## Writing Self-evaluation

### Thinking about yourself as a writer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What kinds of writing have you done in the past?
2. In general, how do you feel about what you write?
3. What kinds of things do you like to write most? Why?
4. What do you think one has to do to be a good writer?
5. What are the three most important things you are able to do as a writer?
6. What are three things you wish you could do better as a writer?
7. In what areas of writing have you noticed improvement?
8. What has helped you the most with your writing?
9. What is the best piece of writing you've ever done? What makes it so good?
10. What were your writing goals at the beginning of the term? How well do you feel you accomplished these goals? What new writing goals have you made?

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# Learning Plan

## Sample for Tutors

**Learning plan:** Lesson Plans

**Name:**

**Objective:** Develop a lesson plan

| Skills I need to learn          | I will know I can do this when                   | Resources                   | Strategies   |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Reasons for using a lesson plan | I can name three reasons for lesson plans        | Tutor training workshop     | Write down the reasons when they are presented at the workshop           |
| Components of a lesson plan     | I can name five components of a lesson           | Tutor training workshop     | Participate in the workshop and make notes                               |
| Where to get lesson plan ideas  | I get ideas for lessons for my learner           | Learner goals and interests | Find out my learner's goals and interests and write them down            |
| Create a practice lesson plan   | I can develop my own lesson plans for my learner | Sample lesson plans         | Use a learner profile or my own learner and fill in a sample lesson plan |
|                                 |  |                             |  |
|                                 |  |                             |  |
|                                 |  |                             |  |

This template is based on Norton, M. (1997). *Progress profile: Measuring progress in literacy development*. Calgary, Alberta: Literacy Coordinators of Alberta. ISBN 0-9680235-4-1. Used with permission.

# Learning Plan

**Learning plan:**

**Name:**

**Objective:**

| <b>Skills I need to learn</b> | <b>I will know I can do this when</b> | <b>Resources</b> | <b>Strategies</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                               |                                       |                  |                   |
|                               |                                       |                  |                   |
|                               |                                       |                  |                   |
|                               |                                       |                  |                   |
|                               |                                       |                  |                   |
|                               |                                       |                  |                   |

Norton, M. (1997). *Progress profile: Measuring progress in literacy development*. Calgary, Alberta: Literacy Coordinators of Alberta. ISBN 0-9680235-4-1. Used with permission.

# Setting Goals

## Sample for Tutors

| Goal                  | Learning objectives  | Criteria for evaluation                           |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Develop a lesson plan | State reason for lesson plans<br>List the components of a lesson plan<br>List where to get lesson plan ideas<br>Create a lesson plan | Can develop effective lesson plans for my learner |
|                       |  |   |
|                       |  |   |
|                       |  |   |

Template based on *Creative student assessment: A guide to developing meaningful evaluation*. (1995). Winnipeg, Manitoba: Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, Adult Learning and Literacy. [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/acl/all/publications/creative\\_student\\_assessment\\_oct03.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/acl/all/publications/creative_student_assessment_oct03.pdf). Used with permission.

# Setting Goals

| Goal | Learning objectives | Criteria for evaluation |
|------|---------------------|-------------------------|
|      |                     |                         |
|      |                     |                         |
|      |                     |                         |

*Creative student assessment: A guide to developing meaningful evaluation.* (1995). Winnipeg, Manitoba: Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, Adult Learning and Literacy. [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/creative\\_student\\_assessment\\_oct03.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/creative_student_assessment_oct03.pdf). Used with permission.

# Learning Plan

## Sample for Learners

**Learning plan:** Pronunciation

**Name:**

**Objective:** Learn the sound of the letter L

| Skills I need to learn                    | I will know I can do this when         | Resources   | Strategies   |
|---|--|---|--|
| How to move my mouth to form the letter L | I can move my mouth to form the letter | Mirror  | Watch my tutor's mouth form the letter and listen to the sound made<br>Watch my mouth in the mirror<br>Practise moving my mouth and forming the sound                                    |
| Say the letter in words                   | I can say the words correctly          | Words with the letter L<br>Tape recorder<br>Pronunciation pairs<br>Computer program | Repeat the words my tutor says to me<br>Read words with the letter<br>Record my words into a tape recorder and then listen to how I sound<br>Practise saying the words into the computer |
| Say words with the letter in sentences    | I can speak a sentence correctly       | Sentences with words using the letter L<br>Pronunciation pairs<br>Clear speech      | Read sentences from the resources<br>See how fast I can read the sentence correctly  |
|   |  |   |  |
|   |  |   |  |
|   |  |   |  |

This template is based on Norton, M. (1997). *Progress profile: Measuring progress in literacy development*. Calgary, Alberta: Literacy Coordinators of Alberta. ISBN 0-9680235-4-1. Used with permission.

# Setting Goals

## Sample for Learners

| Goal                                  | Learning objectives  | Criteria for evaluation  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Say words with the letter L correctly | Learn how to move mouth<br>Learn the sounds to make<br>Say words with letter L<br>Say sentences with words with letter L | Can move mouth correctly<br><br>Can speak in a conversation and use the letter correctly |
|                                       |  |  |
|                                       |  |  |
|                                       |  |  |

Template based on *Creative student assessment: A guide to developing meaningful evaluation*. (1995). Winnipeg, Manitoba: Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, Adult Learning and Literacy. [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/creative\\_student\\_assessment\\_oct03.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/creative_student_assessment_oct03.pdf). Used with permission.

# Lesson Plan Example A

## Lesson Plan

**Name:** Rochelle      **Date:** April 26      **Lesson:** Money

1. What do we hope to accomplish during this session?  
(These are the goals of the session.)
  - How to name Canadian money and use money to go shopping
2. What will the learner do?
  - Name the different coins and dollars on pages 115-117, *Canadian Concepts One*.
  - Name the money in their pocket or wallet or name the money I have brought.
  - Count the money in their pocket.
  - Look over a flyer for specials and make a shopping list, then add up approximately how much it will cost.
3. What will I do?
  - Ask how Rochelle's week has gone.
  - Discuss anything with which she needs immediate help.
  - Show the coins and dollars on page 115 and discuss how our money system works.

- Discuss the names of our coins and the amount of each.
- Discuss different combinations of money (for example, 10 pennies are the same as 10 cents, 4 quarters equal one dollar).
- Point to different coins and dollars on page 117 and ask her to name them.
- Show actual money and ask Rochelle to name the money and its amount.
- Tell Rochelle she is going to plan a shopping trip.
- Discuss what she might want to buy.
- Help her find the products in the flyers and make note of the cost of the items.

#### 4. What resource material do we need?

- *Canadian Concepts One*, pages 115-117
- Canadian money
- IGA and Co-op flyers

#### 5. How will we know if we have made progress?

- Rochelle will be able to name money and its amount when randomly shown money.

# Lesson Plan Example B

| Goals             | Activities  | Comments |
|-------------------|---|----------|
| <b>Warm up</b>    | Discuss how the week has gone   |          |
| <b>Review</b>     | Work orders and how to find what needs to be done   |          |
| <b>New lesson</b> | <p><b>Part one</b></p> <p>Discuss what Gerry thinks it means to be healthy.</p> <p>Look over the Healthy You section in <i>English Express</i>.</p> <p>Ask Gerry what he does to be active.</p> <p>Does he know what health benefits come from being active?</p> <p>Have Gerry read the Be Active article.</p> <p>Help him with words he doesn't know and discuss their meaning.</p> <p>Ask him what he learned about staying active.</p> <p><b>Part two</b></p> <p>Use language experience to write down what he will do this week to stay active.</p> <p>Read this goal together a few times, then have Gerry read it by himself.</p> <p>Look for words that could be added to his word families bank.</p> <p>Work on his word families and have him sort the cards into their correct piles.</p> <p>Add new words from today's lesson.</p> <p>Read a book of his choice using Paired Reading*.</p> |          |

\*Paired Reading: *Positive Reading Practice*, Anne Brailsford Ph.D., Northern Alberta Reading Specialists' Council, 1991

## **Conclusion**

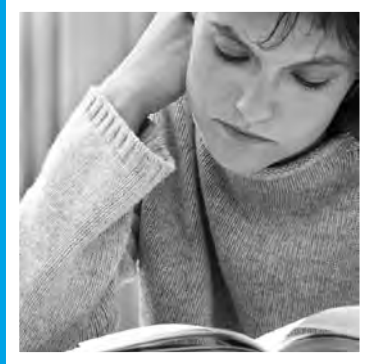
Remind Gerry of his goal for staying active. Ask him to draw a picture when he has completed his goal and bring it to next week's lesson.

## **Materials**

*English Express*

Word family cards

Gerry's writing book



# About Literacy

UNIT  
**5**

## Unit 5: About Literacy

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

## UNIT 5

# About Literacy

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

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

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

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

Alberta Advanced Education and Technology in  
*A Learning Alberta*



**Approx. 1½ hours**  
using core activities

### *Concepts*

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

### *Builds on*

- **Adults as Learners**

## Useful Resources

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

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

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

Canadian Council on Learning in  
*State of Learning in Canada*

## Section 1

### What Does Literacy Mean?

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

#### Activity A

#### Literacy in our daily lives

Reflection, discussion, drawing

##### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Blank paper

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

#### Variation

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

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

## Activity B

### Learning about literacy

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

#### Video, discussion, reflection

##### Materials and equipment

Flip chart and markers

Handout 5.1: *Keep Literacy in Your Life*

Other fact sheets from Literacy Alberta

TV, VCR and the video you choose to show

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

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

##### Preparation

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

Watch the video of your choice.

Select and cue video.

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

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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

## Facilitation tip

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

## Activity C

### Reasons for low literacy

Reflection, work in pairs, use of overhead, story

#### Materials and equipment

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

Overhead projector

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

Flip chart paper and markers

#### Preparation

Read the book *Jeremiah Learns to Read*.

Prepare overhead.

#### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Section 2

### Defining Your Philosophy of Literacy

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

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

#### Activity A

##### My beliefs about literacy learning

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

#### Variation

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

#### Reflection, discussion

##### Materials and equipment

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

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

##### Preparation

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

##### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

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

## Activity B

### Literacy perspectives and tutoring

Use of handout, reflection, discussion

#### Materials and equipment

Handout 5.3: *Defining Your Philosophy of Literacy*

#### Preparation

Copy handout.

#### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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

## Bibliography

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



**Literacy**  
Alberta

## Keep Literacy In Your Life

- Your brain is a muscle that needs exercise. Use it or lose it! Read something every day.
- Reading can happen anywhere — at the bus stop, hockey game, and doctor's office — even the bathroom!
- Let your child help you cook and have him or her read out the ingredients from the recipe. Doubling the recipe builds great math skills.
- Support your local library by becoming a member. Take one book out at least once a month. Libraries are a great place to spend a rainy day!
- Literacy is a gift that doesn't come easily to many people. Share your gift by volunteering at a local literacy program.
- Here's a game to play in the car for younger children: write out the alphabet on a piece of paper. Ask your children to watch the letters on the licence plates of passing cars. The first child to cross off all the letters is the winner.
- Keep in touch with family and friends by sending birthday greetings, anniversary cards, notes and e-mails. Remember to use correct grammar and punctuation to keep your language skills strong.
- Start a family photo album with your child. Below each picture, help your child write a story describing it. Future generations will thank you for it!

*Reading opens the door to a world of fairy tales, fantasy, adventure,  
drama, suspense, knowledge and wonder*

**Literacy is the key to unlocking it!**

For more information, contact:

Literacy Alberta  
302, 1300 - 8 St. SW  
Calgary AB T2R 1B2  
Phone: 403-410-6990  
Fax: 403-410-9024  
Email: [office@literacyalberta.ca](mailto:office@literacyalberta.ca)  
Web: [www.literacyalberta.ca](http://www.literacyalberta.ca)  
**Toll Free Literacy Help Line: 1-800-767-3231**

*Keep literacy in your life.* (n.d.). Calgary, Alberta: Literacy Alberta. [www.literacyalberta.ca/literacy.htm#b](http://www.literacyalberta.ca/literacy.htm#b).

## Word Strips

**You can use these words and phrases or some of your own.**

Learn how to use the bank machine

The learner decides what to learn (learner-centred instruction)

Job-related reading skills

Developing literacy skills to perform daily tasks

Helping a learner to make changes in his life

The tutor is the guide and resource

Phonics

Learning about the world around us

Learners question and analyze systems around them

## Defining Your Philosophy of Literacy

What do you think is the main reason someone would come for help with literacy?

Read each of the following questions to help you come to a decision. The question that best identifies your belief is your philosophy of literacy.

1. Should adult literacy be mainly to help learners acquire knowledge?

If you answer, “Yes, acquiring knowledge is valuable in itself and is basically why I am involved in adult literacy,” then you will focus on teaching skills for the workplace, or focus on great literature, history and other subjects.

2. Should adult literacy be mainly for solving problems in society?

If you answer, “Yes, I am here mainly to help learners identify and solve their own problems, enhance their problem-solving ability and empower them to bring about social change where necessary,” then you will focus on helping the learner to solve problems in his personal life.

3. Should adult literacy be mainly for self-esteem building and self-actualization?

If you answer, “Yes, my main purpose is to help literacy learners feel better about themselves, learn more about themselves, and develop their abilities and their potential,” then you will focus on using materials and resources that can help the learner to feel better about himself.

Based on Quigley, A. (1996). *Rethinking literacy education: The critical need for practice-based change*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass. ISBN 978-0-7879-0287-2.

# Reasons for Poor Literacy

## **Learning problems**

- learning disability
- physical disability
- other learning difficulties

## **Second language issues**

- need to learn English as a Second Language
- never acquired literacy skills in their first language

## **Lack of opportunity**

- left school early to join workforce
- left school to care for family
- poverty
- no access to school with higher grade level

## **Home environment**

- reading not part of the home
- family moved around a lot
- victim of abuse
- traumatic situation in the home

## **Problems at school**

- large classes
- behavioural problems
- passed to next learning level before mastering all the needed skills
- lost interest in school and dropped out
- alcohol and other substance abuse

## **Physical problems**

- chronic illness interfered with schooling
- suffered a head injury
- suffered a stroke
- natural aging – getting older
- poor vision/hearing problems

## **Mental problems**

- birth defects
- mental illness
- medication or treatment for mental illness

## **Lack of practice**

- if you don't use it you will lose it