

EAL LITERACY



EAL literacy learners are viewed holistically to break down barriers to learning. They are identified and provided with enhanced support services. Ideally, they are placed in specialized classes designed to meet their needs and assigned instructors with specialized training and expertise.¹

¹ This theme is significantly informed by *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook* (Bow Valley College, 2009); *A Practical Guide to Teaching ESL Literacy* (Bow Valley College, 2018); *ESL for Adult Literacy Learners (ALL)* (CCLB, 2016); and *ESL for ALL Support Kit* (CCLB, 2017).

Statements of Best Practice

for EAL Literacy 

EAL literacy learners are found in a variety of educational contexts in Alberta:

- LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada)
- Provincially funded EAL classes
- Employment Skills training/specific occupation training
- Other literacy-focused programs: family literacy, digital literacy, financial literacy, workplace literacy, and more

In this document, EAL literacy learners refers to learners with a range of reading and writing skills, from adult newcomers who are learning to read and write for the first time in any language, and who are doing so in a language that is new to them, to adult language learners who have completed up to 8 years of formal education in their country of origin.

EAL literacy learners need to be viewed holistically to break down barriers to learning. They are identified and provided with enhanced support services. Ideally, they are placed in specialized classes designed to meet their needs and assigned instructors with specialized training and expertise.

64. EAL learners with literacy challenges are identified and placed in specialized classes designed to meet their needs.

- _ **EAL** learners with literacy challenges are identified through consideration of some of the following factors:
 - _ Conversations with individual learners about their experiences with formal schooling

- and their use of reading and writing in the L1
- _ Canadian Language Benchmarks Literacy Placement Test (CLB-LPT) from assessment centres, such as Calgary Language Assessment and Referral (CLARC) and the Language Assessment, Referral, & Counselling Centre (LARCC) in Edmonton
- _ Results of CLB literacy assessment tools
- _ 0–3 years of formal education or 4–8 years of formal education
- _ Difficulty in mainstream EAL classes (e.g., lack of familiarity with school-based tasks such as organizing a binder; a preference for doing assignments at home; lack of progress; and difficulty understanding and following directions)
- _ Significantly higher listening/speaking proficiency than reading/writing proficiency
- _ Pre- and post-test results that indicate a lack of progress over a term
- _ When possible, EAL literacy learners are placed in dedicated EAL literacy classes based on proficiency levels in reading and writing (along with consideration of level of education).
- _ Class size is limited.
- _ If possible, different levels of EAL literacy classes are available and are differentiated by small level increments. (Learners who are developing print literacy skills for the first time in any language will have different learning needs from learners who have developed basic reading and writing skills in the L1.)

65. The program hires instructors with the expertise and disposition necessary for effective instruction in the EAL literacy classroom, facilitates and encourages professional development, and provides instructors with the necessary support.

- _ EAL literacy instructors are supportive, flexible, and aware of the common barriers that learners face outside of class.
- _ Instructors value the contribution of adult EAL literacy learners while they are learning to navigate a new community and acquire a new language.
- _ Ongoing professional development opportunities address a selection of the following:
 - _ Orientation to key CLB-ESL literacy benchmarking documents and resources, including *ESL for Adult Literacy Learners (ALL)* (CCLB, 2016)
 - _ The educational needs and complex profiles of EAL literacy learners (including learners with learning disabilities, trauma, and other specific needs)
 - _ Strategies for using the learners' background, goals, and expectations to ensure that learning plans, materials, and learner assessments are relevant to their lives
 - _ Principles for teaching adults, including the role of motivation, experiential learning, problem solving, etc.
 - _ Strategies for teaching reading and writing skills, including the 5 components of

- reading instruction: phonemic awareness, word recognition/decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension
- Balanced literacy instruction (e.g., Whole-Part-Whole)
- Principles for selecting and designing materials that are authentic, at an appropriate reading level, and appropriate for adult learners
- Orientation to online tools and resources suitable for EAL literacy learners
- Training/support in **Universal Design for Learning** principles and practices to ensure that learning activities and materials (online or paper) appeal to a variety of ways of learning and are suitable for EAL literacy learners (See Best Practices for [Supporting Learners with Diverse Needs](#))
- Opportunities for networking, mentorship, and dialogue with other EAL literacy instructors (e.g., through conferences, professional development days)
- EAL literacy instructors are provided with time and resources for developing learning materials (i.e., the extra time is compensated, or instructors have a shortened teaching day).
- EAL literacy instructors have convenient access to adult literacy teaching/learning/assessment resources, materials, and computer resources, including the following:
 - Instructional aides and volunteers to ensure a lower learner/instructor ratio and to provide enhanced technical support when needed
 - EAL literacy curriculum, reading/writing materials, workbooks, and toolkits
 - A variety of technology (computers, tablets/iPads, smartphones)
 - Realia and manipulatives
 - Posters, wall pocket charts, etc.
 - An accessible and safe password-protected online learning environment
 - Apps and interactive online materials that are suitable for EAL literacy learners
- EAL literacy teachers are supported in the many roles they perform that interact with their primary role of teacher: settlement worker, adult learner expert, language instructor, and literacy instructor.

66. EAL literacy programs address barriers to learning, settlement, and integration with access to enhanced support services.

- It is recognized that many EAL literacy learners have experienced, and continue to experience, crises and circumstances that affect their ability to learn (e.g., trauma associated with fleeing their home country; income support being cut off; concern for family members in refugee camps; and difficulty adjusting to life in Canada, for themselves or family members).
- Enhanced support services are available to EAL literacy learners, for instance:

- _ Transportation assistance
- _ Childcare
- _ Support and/or settlement workers who are available to support learners to address the barriers they face and to connect learners to community supports such as:
 - _ Medical care
 - _ Subsidized dental/eye care
 - _ Food banks
 - _ Legal aid, immigration/family sponsorship
 - _ Places to access used/free necessities
 - _ Access to free laptops, desktops, phones
 - _ Counselling
- _ Additional academic supports are available to EAL literacy learners, for instance:
 - _ Academic counselling to support learners in setting both short- and long-term educational goals
 - _ Homework help/clubs
 - _ Tutoring
 - _ A place and materials to study outside of class hours
 - _ Flexibility for learners with interrupted class attendance due to multiple challenges/ barriers commonly faced by EAL literacy learners
- _ First language support is provided through some of the following:
 - _ The use of language-specific tutors who speak the language(s) of the learners
 - _ Regularly scheduled interpreters
 - _ Student mentorship programs
 - _ First language instruction
- _ EAL literacy learners receive enhanced technical support in courses with online components, such as:
 - _ Supported face-to-face orientations to online learning platforms
 - _ Flexibility to use online platforms with support in a face-to-face or virtual classroom
 - _ Teaching assistants, first language support, peer support, tutorials, etc.
 - _ Flexibility to use apps and tools that are familiar to the learners (e.g., using WhatsApp or messenger to communicate, rather than email)
 (See Best Practices for [Technology and Online Learning](#))
- _ The program seeks out funding to provide EAL literacy learners at the earliest stages with the same learning materials, binders, textbooks, highlighters, scissors, pencil grips, etc. (e.g., explicit instructions become easier and more systematic if everyone gets a blue Duo-Tang for their personalized picture dictionary, a green Duo-Tang for stories, and an orange notebook for writing practice)
- _ Learners receive specialized assistance in determining pathways and options when

transitioning out of an EAL literacy program. For example, depending on their needs and proficiency, EAL literacy learners are assisted in their transition into the following:

- _ Mainstream EAL
 - _ Adult basic education
 - _ Work-readiness programs
 - _ Adult upgrading and further education
 - _ Volunteering before employment
 - _ Occupation-specific training
 - _ Employment
- (See also Best Practices for [Learner Support](#) and [Supporting Learners with Diverse Learning Needs](#))

67. The EAL literacy class provides a learning environment that is encouraging, predictable, collaborative, connected to the real world, and supportive of life-long learning.

- _ The EAL literacy classroom is a welcoming, dedicated space with moveable seating and sufficient space for realia, manipulatives, posters, technology, movement games, and small group and one-on-one instruction.
- _ Classroom routines provide a sense of stability and help learners build organizational abilities and learning habits. Routines in an EAL literacy class may include, for example:
 - _ A morning meeting where learners greet each other and participate in setting plans for the day
 - _ A daily calendar/weather report
 - _ A daily vocabulary/flashcard drill
 - _ Regular time set aside during class for extensive reading (e.g., setting out the expectation that learners pick a book to read whenever they finish a task early; learners can read alone or with a peer)
 - _ A regular time set aside at the end of the lesson for organizing binders
- _ Outcomes for EAL literacy classes are informed by the learners' real-life needs. Instructors gather information on learner needs through some of the following:
 - _ CLB Can Do checklists, and/or Essential Skills/Skills for Success Can Do checklists
 - _ Observation of learners when doing learning tasks
 - _ Interviews with learners to understand their learning goals
- _ Classroom activities relate directly to learning outcomes and learner needs, as follows:
 - _ In beginning levels of EAL literacy, language and materials are personalized to the learners and related to their immediate needs.

- _ As literacy skills progress, materials may be less personalized, but continue to be meaningful, familiar, and relevant to the learners.
- _ Learning is connected to the real world through some of the following:
 - _ Field trips
 - _ Realia and manipulatives
 - _ Stories
 - _ Reading/writing tasks that reflect learners' real-life needs and interests
 - _ Listening/speaking along with reading/writing tasks
- _ Learners share the wealth of knowledge, skills, and experiences that they bring with them; they teach each other and collaborate, fostering a sense of belonging.
- _ Small and large successes are celebrated; learners receive continuous and encouraging feedback on their learning.

68. The EAL literacy class develops literacy skills through a print-rich environment, instruction in phonics, strategy training, and plenty of modelling, repetition, recycling, and practice.

- _ EAL literacy instruction draws from both second language acquisition principles and **principles for teaching EAL literacy learners**.
- _ Outcomes for EAL literacy classes are informed by *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners (ALL)*.
- _ Learners develop oral control over material, with an emphasis on vocabulary development, before reading and writing:
 - _ Oral skills build on strengths, and may include singing, chanting, drama, and storytelling.
 - _ Learner-generated texts (e.g., **language experience stories**) ensure that the language in a text is known to the learner.
- _ The classroom and instruction provide a print-rich environment that appeals to kinesthetic, sensory, and visual modes of learning (posters, pictures, pocket charts, picture dictionaries, flashcards, etc.).
- _ Instructors are aware of the importance of plain language, while still providing opportunities for exposure to a rich language environment.
- _ Learning materials are formatted appropriately for EAL literacy learners (see “Conditions for Learning” in *ESL for ALL* for specific guidance for each EAL literacy level):
 - _ Fonts are large, sans serif, and black, with limited use of style changes such as bolding and italics.
 - _ Text is sparse and uncluttered with lots of white space.
 - _ Continuous text is broken into smaller chunks with double or 1.5 spacing.

- _ Texts are supported by realistic images.
- _ Texts use simple sentences and concrete plain language.
- _ A balanced approach is taken to instruction, such as Whole-Part-Whole. For example a text may be approached as follows:
 - _ **Whole:** Learners first examine the whole text, for instance by doing the following:
 - _ Making predictions based on the title and images and eliciting relevant vocabulary
 - _ Brainstorming for what they know about the topic and text type
 - _ Examining the text and discussing the intended audience and purpose
 - _ Listening as a text is read aloud (and perhaps putting images in order)
 - _ Reading for general meaning
 - _ Recalling key ideas
 - _ **Part:** Learners do a few activities, contextualized in the text, to develop some of the following bottom-up literacy skills for **decoding** (reading) and **encoding** (writing):
 - _ Developing visual and motor skills needed to read and write (e.g., holding a writing implement; tracking left to right; turning pages right to left)
 - _ Recognizing and forming letters
 - _ Drawing connections between sounds and letters
 - _ Recognizing that words are made up of separate sounds
 - _ Recognizing and using inflections, prefixes, and suffixes
 - _ Recognizing and following basic conventions such as spaces between words, sentences beginning with capitals and ending with periods, sentences scrolling, paragraphs starting on a new line
 - _ Using basic spelling rules to decode and encode words
 - _ Drawing meaning from images, symbols, and text enhancements
 - _ Developing an increasing repertoire of high-frequency and familiar sight words and phrases
 - _ Developing an increasing repertoire of **high-frequency words** that they can spell by rote (with a focus on high-frequency **irregular words** that cannot be sounded out)
 - _ **Whole:** Learners then re-read for meaning, comprehension, and fluency development, for instance, by doing the following:
 - _ Reading for pleasure
 - _ Re-reading, then recalling and telling the story
 - _ Re-reading to find answers to comprehension questions, fill in a table, put images in order, etc.
 - _ Re-reading a number of times, with the goal of improving reading speed each time
 - _ Reconstructing a text using sentence strips (or H5P drag-and-drop if online)

- _ Completing a guided text based on the text they have read
 - _ Writing relevant captions for images
 - _ Making suggestions/predictions, agreeing/disagreeing, etc. based on the reading
- _ Unfamiliar academic tasks are contextualized in familiar and known language and content such that:¹
 - _ Learners see immediate relevance to their daily needs, interests and lives.
 - _ Learners move from shared/collaborative tasks towards individual responsibility for tasks.
 - _ Oral and written learning is connected to help learners develop the ability to gather meaning from print.
 - _ Learners develop critical thinking skills.
- _ Learners read and analyze models of written tasks that meet expectations.
- _ Repetition and recycling of strategies, materials, and concepts are built into the curriculum. For example, materials and activities are related thematically to ensure recycling of outcomes, vocabulary, and skills.
- _ Instruction provides sufficient in-class time for writing practice (whether face-to-face or **synchronous** online).
- _ Strategies for reading, writing, and language learning are modelled, explicitly taught, and spiralled throughout the curriculum.
- _ Instructors ensure that assessment tasks for EAL literacy learners are very similar in content and format to the learning tasks that they did in class.

69. In addition to second language and print literacy skills, EAL literacy learners develop the digital literacy and numeracy skills they need for life, work, and school tasks.

- _ Learners are exposed to and learn to use the technology they encounter in life, work, and school, such as the following:
 - _ Computers, laptops, tablets, iPads, and smartphones
 - _ Other technologies such as microwave ovens, ATMs, ticket dispensers, self-checkout counters, etc.
- _ Learners develop the digital literacy they need for life, work, and school tasks. For instance, learners develop the language, literacy, and digital skills to do the following:
 - _ Manage their finances, for instance, using ATMs, online banking, online financial transactions, self-checkout counters, etc.
 - _ Protect their devices, personal data, and privacy (e.g., as they create, use, and protect passwords)
 - _ Use tools and features on their digital devices (e.g., setting up voicemail, downloading

- the Quizlet app)
 - _ Use online learning platforms and environments
 - _ Type and use a mouse
 - _ Create Word documents
 - _ Search for jobs online
 - _ Write emails
 - _ Navigate a website
 - _ Use Google maps/location
 - _ Connect online with their children's school (e.g., through SchoolZone)
- _ Numeracy and financial literacy skills are integrated into classroom routines and language/literacy tasks as learners do the following:
 - _ Count and write numbers
 - _ Tell and write times
 - _ Locate days/dates on calendars
 - _ Talk about the weather
 - _ Measure, record, and compare measurements (weight, temperature, length/width/height, distance, etc.)
 - _ Identify and use coins and bills
 - _ Read, compare, and talk about budgets
 - _ Read and compare prices, bills, timesheets, pay stubs, bank/credit card statements, etc.
 - _ Learn and use vocabulary and symbols for expressing numerical concepts
 - _ Other
- _ If possible, numeracy and digital literacy is supported in the form of supplementary workshops or classes based on assessed skills.²
 (See Best Practices for [Technology and Online Learning](#), and [Skills and Language for Work](#))

70. Recognizing that EAL literacy students are often integrated into regular EAL classes, EAL instructors with both EAL learners and EAL literacy learners apply strategies for teaching multilevel classes.

- _ Instructors differentiate instruction to provide optimal level-appropriate education to both EAL literacy and mainstream EAL learners, for example:
 - _ EAL literacy learners are sometimes grouped together to provide opportunities for specialized instruction, tutoring, first language support, additional **scaffolding**, and taking on leadership roles.
 - _ EAL literacy learners read level-appropriate texts (with added visuals, shortened sentences and paragraphs, simpler vocabulary, increased font size, increased white

- space), while EAL learners read unadapted texts.
- _ EAL literacy learners receive extra scaffolding and support (e.g., vocabulary banks, permission to use a picture dictionary during a task, tutor support, first language support).
 - _ EAL literacy learners are allowed alternate ways to demonstrate comprehension (e.g., while EAL learners complete short written questions, EAL literacy learners answer orally, point, circle, or check off right answers).
 - _ EAL literacy learners are given additional time to work on tasks.
 - _ Beginning writers complete shorter and simpler tasks than more advanced writers (e.g., completing the personal information pieces of a medical form vs. completing the full form; making a list of items for a party vs. composing an email asking individuals to contribute items).
 - _ Beginning writers complete tasks with more familiar content (e.g., an email telling a friend what they do every day in class), while more advanced writers complete tasks that are cognitively more complex (e.g., an email comparing 2 different EAL programs and recommending one).
 - _ Instructors plan activities that allow learners at all levels to collaborate together and contribute in meaningful ways, for example:
 - _ Jigsaw activities, where EAL literacy learners are given the simpler/shorter portion of a text to read and then share, while EAL learners read the longer more complex portions of the text
 - _ Problem-solving activities, where EAL literacy learners take on tasks that have fewer literacy requirements (e.g., they watch a video or make a phone call to gather information, while EAL learners research or request information by email)
 - _ Group presentations, where EAL literacy learners contribute their oral skills and EAL learners contribute their research and writing skills
 - _ Pair work, where EAL literacy learners contribute according to their strengths (e.g., content knowledge, oral fluency), and EAL learners contribute according to their strengths (e.g., reading, writing, spelling, digital literacy)

¹ See the Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (MALP) (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010, 2015).

² That is, learners are placed in numeracy classes/workshops based on their numeracy skills. However, reading comprehension also needs to be taken into consideration to ensure that learners can read the word problems and fully understand questions.

Vignettes

for EAL Literacy 

This section includes descriptions of what the Best Practices might look like when applied in a variety of contexts.

Vignette 1: Emergent Readers

The learners in my class are emergent readers. They have between 1 and 3 years of prior education. They are eager but need the tools to maximize their potential to learn and develop their skills. I've found that classroom activities must help learners connect meaning with print; it's also crucial that literacy activities build on real-life experiences. Here are some of the tools in my toolbox of teaching strategies:

- _ Before starting class, I gather the resources I will need to create a print-rich environment that appeals to different ways of learning. I bring in materials that connect visual images with printed words, such as flashcards, pictures, and posters.
- _ As well, I prepare a small package of learning supplies for each student. Each pack contains crayons, glue, a pencil, an eraser, a pair of scissors, a highlighter, and cut-out card stock with no writing on it. These supplies create teachable moments as students identify the items and describe their use. We maximize the use of these items when learners cut out pictures and words, write letters and numbers on card stock, and use highlighters when identifying letter sounds.
- _ My students and I make extensive use of body language. If you visit my class, you'll see me using gestures, movement, facial expressions, and sound effects to demonstrate meaning. I encourage my students to make full use of body language to express the things they see, feel, hear, and wish to communicate. As they do so, I provide them with spoken language to express those ideas, and they gain confidence and start to communicate with words.
- _ I use themes related to my learners' everyday experiences, such as food, transportation, home activities, and hobbies. Examples of activities that we do in class include the

following:

- _ Using a picture dictionary to create a food vocabulary list
- _ Filling out a customized grocery list
- _ Examining realia, such as bus/train schedules, tickets, and passes
- _ Writing simple sentences to describe their activities at home
- _ Labelling pictures or objects related to their hobbies and interests
- _ When possible, we visit a museum or attend a festival in our location. During the trip, learners engage with artefacts, stories, and celebrations. As a follow-up, we may label pictures, write short sentences under pictures, or write language experience stories.

These activities aim to build opportunities for learners to connect the printed word with real-life, relevant meaning.

Vignette 2: Building Routines in an EAL Literacy Classroom

I teach ESL literacy learners who have just a few years of prior education. I find that I spend a lot of time gathering materials and planning a large number of activities to develop their language and literacy skills. Setting up a series of predictable routines helps me focus my efforts, keeps the class from feeling scattered, and provides a sense of stability for my learners:

- _ I have developed a warm-up routine related to pictures I post on the walls. I rotate the pictures depending on our class theme. As learners arrive in class, they roam around the classroom and look at the pictures they see on the walls and boards, identifying which pictures are new. We gather together, and I elicit words for the latest pictures they have found. I then hand out cut-out words that students use to label all of the images (both old and new). Every day I take the labels down and hand them out the following day for learners to re-label the room. This routine is motivating and helps learners connect print to meaning.
- _ Once most learners have arrived, we have a regular “morning meeting” where we check in with and greet each other. We then negotiate together the plans for the day. I write the plans on the board or flipchart paper, adding in suggestions from learners.
- _ As learners are introduced to and become familiar with the alphabet letters, I give them a set of cut-out letters to manipulate. They work in groups and help each other create simple words from the theme-related picture-word flashcards on their word rings. As they collaborate, they generate more terms and expand their vocabulary.
- _ I schedule a regular period during each lesson to develop the motor skills and muscles learners need for writing. They use pencil grips as they trace letters and numbers in free

downloadable worksheets from [Boggles World](#) and [Live Worksheets](#) (search “letters” or “numbers”).

- _ I schedule a predictable time for sustained silent reading every day. I have a collection of level-appropriate books designed for adults that learners can choose from. In addition, learners know that they are welcome to (and expected to) pull out their book and read if they finish an activity early.
- _ I also regularly schedule kinesthetic and tactile activities to promote motivation and teamwork. For instance, I might divide my class into teams and give each team a poster board and cut-out words, pictures, and glue. Prizes of school supplies (provided by my school) add to the fun. The learners’ excitement is palpable as they collaborate on meaningful tasks that combine learning and fun.

Vignette 3: A Balanced Literacy Approach

Over the years, as I’ve attended professional development workshops and read articles about teaching EAL literacy learners, I have learned about the benefits of a balanced literacy approach. Balanced literacy ensures that meaning-making and discreet skills (e.g., phonics) are contextualized within a broader lesson or theme. I generally follow the Whole-Part-Whole model (see this [video by Andrea Echelberger](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrahDasEdXE): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrahDasEdXE>) combined with a language experience approach.

Begin with the Whole

Together as a class, we choose a module or unit with a topic that is meaningful to learners.

- _ We draw on learners’ existing background knowledge and life experience as we work to develop both schema and oral language. We talk about the topic; watch videos; read stories together (e.g., CIWA’s Health Literacy Partnership resources); invite guest speakers (e.g., a community police officer, or a public health official); or go on field trips (e.g., to the local library, to learn how to use an ATM, to get to know the public transit system, to a festival).
- _ When learners are familiar with the topic, and have developed their oral language related to the topic, we then create a learner-generated text. That is, the learners generate the text using their own words, and I write down their words (e.g., in a projected document or on flipchart paper). For example, learners might re-tell what they saw in a video or heard in a story. Or I might project a series of pictures from the field trip in a Word document; learners tell me what happened, and I write down their words.
- _ We read the projected story together. I also print out the story they created so that they

each have their own copy, and we read that version together. The words are their own, so they are familiar with the words that they now see in print.

Move to the Parts

We then do a number of activities that develop some of the bottom-up (phonics) skills that learners need.

- _ I might pull out words from the text that have a similar spelling pattern. For instance, I might write on the board all the words with long vowels that end with an *-e*. We'll explore what the words would sound like without that final *-e*.
- _ I may project our story onto the whiteboard and have learners take turns coming up to circle all of the words with a particular initial sound. We practice sounding them out: onset (i.e., the first letter) and rime (i.e., the remaining letters in a single-syllable word).
- _ I may write all of the long multisyllabic words on the board, and we clap with each syllable as we sound out the syllables and words.
- _ I may pull certain words from the story, and put them in a worksheet with only the initial and final sounds included. Students consult their story to fill in the missing vowels.
- _ I may have students highlight all of the past tense verbs in their story. I'll write the present tense verbs on the board, and students consult their stories to tell me how to write the past tense verbs.
- _ Often, I project a Quizlet on the board and ask learners which words from the story they would like me to add. Together we create the Quizlet, and they help me select appropriate images. Learners then review the words on their own time using Quizlet flashcards, matching, and spell modes to connect meaning (images) with print. I will also flash the words on the screen quickly, asking them what the word is. My goal is to help learners increase their repertoire of sight words (words they can recognize on sight, without having to decode).

Go Back to the Whole

When learners have mastered targeted skills in the Parts, we move back to the Whole, focusing on increasing fluency and making meaning. I give learners lots of opportunity to read and re-read the story.

- _ Sometimes we do running dictations where learners work in teams. They take turns coming to the front, reading short sentences from the story, and then returning to their team to dictate the sentence. Their team members write down the sentences. They then compare their sentences to the printed story.
- _ I may give each group a set of sentence strips, and they put the strips in order to reconstruct the story.

- _ I might orally ask the class comprehension questions and have learners work with a partner to point out the place in the story that has the answer.
- _ I might create a cloze activity from the text, with the Quizlet words removed.
- _ I might create a guided writing activity based on the text. For instance, if we have written a story about what we all did during a field trip, I might write portions of an email telling a friend about the field trip, and students fill in the missing pieces.

Vignette 4: Moving Online in EAL Literacy (and MALP)

I teach a workplace-oriented ESL class. Most of my learners are ESL literacy learners with have 5–9 years of formal education. They are learning English while strengthening their literacy skills. They are also learning how to “do school.” I read an article by Andrea DeCapua about the Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (or MALP), which made sense to me, and I found this short [infosheet on MALP](#). Here is how I try to apply the MALP recommendations:

- _ First, I make sure that whatever we do is directly related to my learners’ immediate needs, and I help my learners make connections with each other. In 2020, when we had to transition to online learning, my learners’ most immediate need was to be able to use the online platform Zoom. They also needed to learn how to connect with each other in a way that was very different from anything they had encountered previously. During the first week of class, I focused on the Zoom features that would help my learners connect with me and with each other. They learned new words and phrases, like “audio,” “video,” “chat,” “participants,” “poll,” “share screen,” “reaction,” and “breakout room.” They muted and unmuted their audio and turned their video on and off. They developed the ability to use the thumbs up, clap, and heart icons to respond to their classmates. I showed them where to find the participant list so they could learn their classmates’ names, and I showed them how to use the gallery view to see each other’s faces in class. We made regular use of the breakout rooms. They even learned to use the share screen button to share pictures and websites that interested them.
- _ Second, I help my learners move from working collaboratively to working independently. For instance, in my customer service unit, I assigned one of the following topics to each of 3 groups: greeting/welcoming customers, making suggestions, and customer complaints. Each group worked together on a Google slide presentation, with one slide with a list of tips and a second slide with a list of useful language. Learners talked about how they would present the information. Then we re-grouped so that there was one “expert” on each topic in each new group. That is, groups were now composed of “experts” on different topics. Each expert worked independently to share their screen and present their tips and language to their new group. In this way, learners had both shared responsibility

to generate ideas and put those ideas in writing, and individual accountability to present those ideas using the slides.

- Third, I try to make sure that when students are working with unfamiliar language, they have a chance to use it in familiar contexts; similarly, I make sure that if they are working with unfamiliar concepts, they are using familiar language. For example, when I teach my learners how to use modals for making polite suggestions, they first use these suggestion forms to role-play very familiar interactions with family and friends. When they have some control over those modals, the learners then use this language in less familiar customer service role-plays.

References and PD Resources

for EAL Literacy 

This section includes references that informed the best practices, and resources (academic articles, websites, videos, tutorials, courses, etc.) for professional development and further learning on this topic.

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Resources for the Classroom

for EAL Literacy 

This section includes resources (lesson plans, curriculum, readings, videos, podcasts, etc.) to use in class.

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