



Think about the last time you learned something new--the computer, a new language, a handheld organizer, or a new job. What was important as you were learning? Check the boxes below that apply to you:

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I had a purpose. | <input type="checkbox"/> I was in a comfortable atmosphere. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I received continual help and affirmation. | <input type="checkbox"/> What I was learning was connected with what I already knew. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I began with the basics. | <input type="checkbox"/> I was able to laugh. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I was given examples that I could relate to. | <input type="checkbox"/> I knew that I was receiving good information. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I was shown helpful pictures and diagrams. | <input type="checkbox"/> I was included in the learning plan. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I was given a chance to ask questions. | <input type="checkbox"/> The materials were easy for me to read and understand. |

If you checked most of the list, you're probably an excellent candidate for volunteering in an ELL program. You already know what is important in the learning setting.

There is no one "best" way to teach English to adult learners. However, many educators maintain that adult education is most effective when it is related to learners' real needs and builds on their knowledge and experiences.

At the Whatcom Literacy Council we use this strategy, which is referred to as learner-centered tutoring. Using the learner's needs as a guide will help you as you make decisions about what strategies and materials to use to teach your learner to speak, read, write English. Ask the learner what they need to accomplish at home, work, school and incorporate language, vocabulary and forms that they will need into your plans for sessions. Your coordinator will assist you in this process.

Planning is the Key

As with any worthwhile endeavor, planning for ELL tutoring is necessary. Planning can take many forms. Regardless of whether it is a brief outline of topics to be covered or a detailed lesson plan, planning is the first step towards student success. The more detailed your plan is, the more likely your interaction with your ELL student will be dynamic and well thought out. Keep in mind that the students' needs and interests should dictate the content and flow of your instruction.



Goal Setting

Planning begins by finding out what learners need to learn and what their goals are. When you are matched with a learner you will be given a learner profile that describes the learner's background, interests and goals and also includes recommended resources and strategies to use with your learner.

One of the greatest strengths of one-to-one tutoring is that you will get to know your learner. In face-to-face training you will learn techniques for on-going goal setting. Over time by asking many questions and completing goal setting activities you will learn in great detail about the learner's goals and how you can assist them in working toward them.

You may find the following ideas helpful as you set goals and track what you and your learner are working on.

- **Checklists**—a list of skills the learner is currently working on or has mastered
- **Journals and Logs**—will usually include a list of goals and activities that you are working on in your sessions as well as personal reflections by the learner and tutor

What's in a Lesson Plan?

Some basic items which should be included in a lesson plan are:

- Lesson **topic or theme** – based on the learner’s goals, this will help you focus your instruction
- Lesson **objective**--what the students will be able to do at the end of the lesson
- Lesson **introduction**--a brief introduction will help the students understand what they will be discussing, reading and writing about
- Learning **activity**--what the students will do to learn, practice, and apply their newly acquired information
- Lesson **reflection**--will help you and the students assess what was learned
- Lesson **extension**--how the information/activity presented can be used outside the classroom in the learner’s life



Examples of Tutoring Activities

- **The Use of Pictures** – visuals are a crucial part of language teaching; use pictures from magazines, newspaper, ads, cartoons, etc. to provide visual support, generate conversations, stories, debates and vocabulary practice
- **Dialogue and Role Play** - gives the instructor/learner opportunity to model and practice using language in real life situations; can be developed by learner and/or instructor; usually the dialogue or role play will focus on use of specific vocabulary or task, such as scheduling a medical appointment or depositing a check at the bank; allows learner to practice speaking, listening and writing skills;
- Your coordinator will share more strategies for tutoring during face-to-face training



Tips to Keep in Mind

- Taking time to organize, acquire and preview appropriate materials can only enhance the value of your interaction with your ELL student.
- Start by learning something about the **culture and language** of the learners. You will find a link to some of this information in the learner profile provided by your coordinator. If possible, use your local library to find maps and pictures to help bring their prior world into the new one. This is a great way to engage the learner and find out more about their life and motivations for learning.
- Know that **books and workbooks** are available to use with your learner. They are written for several levels. Pick ones that are the appropriate level and interest for the learner you are teaching, i.e. Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced. Your coordinator can assist you with this.
- Remember that all learners, including learners from other cultures, learn in different ways and have **different learning styles**; use a variety of teaching methods and materials (for example discussion, texts, workbooks, videos, computers, pictures, cooperative crosswords, flash cards, tape recorders, television, etc.)
- Use the **learners' lives** to develop materials and activities (for example, learner-dictated stories, learner-directed projects, bring in cultural items and food). Ask learners to bring in materials from home and work that you can practice with together.
- Use topics in the local, national or world news that may be of interest to the learner as a focus for lessons. Incorporate online or print versions of news articles, photos etc. depending on your learner's level. For a beginner, that may mean labeling a photo, for an intermediate or advanced learner that may mean reading and discussing a simplified article or the full article.
- Use **supplemental materials** that reflect the "real world" for example signs, coupons, forms, menus, manuals.

