



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**  
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# Low Literacy Adult ESOL Instruction What, How, and When

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## **“We all swim in an Ocean of Print.”**

*“Our visual world is an ocean of print, most of it in front of our eyes and in a literate society, we literally swim in an ocean of print.” (Bausch, 2003, in Bryant, 2005)*

*If this statement is true, then what happens to those individuals within our society who have not yet learned to swim in this ocean of literacy? How are they staying afloat? (Bryant, 2005)*



*What are your thoughts on these statements?*

## Objectives

- **Examine “What”** – The FDOE Curriculum Framework Literacy Skills for Adult ESOL
- **Think about “How”** – Ways we can teach students who may be pre-literate, non-literate or semi-literate
- **Explore “When” & “Where”** – Plan classes and programs for these students

## First, Let's Check Our Understanding

- **Pre-literate** – Learners from \_\_\_\_\_
- **Non-literate** – Learners from \_\_\_\_\_
- **Semi-literate** – Learners who \_\_\_\_\_
- **Non-Alphabet literate** – Learners who \_\_\_\_\_
- **Non-Roman Alphabet literate** – Learners who \_\_\_\_\_

*Have you known students from any of these groups?*

## Definitions (2003, Center for Applied Linguistics)

- **Pre-literate** - Learners from a culture where the language is not written.
- **Non-literate** – Learners from a culture where the language is written but they never learned to read or write
- **Semi-literate** – Learners who had some schooling and can read or write a little in their first (or another) language
- **Non-Roman alphabet and Non-Alphabet literate** – Learners who are literate in languages that don't use our alphabet

## Definitions (cont.)

Literacy	Explanation	Special Considerations
<i>Preiterate</i>	No written language	Need exposure to the purposes and uses of literacy
<i>Nonliterate</i>	No access to instruction	May feel stigmatized
<i>Semiliterate</i>	Limited access to instruction.	May have had past negative experiences with literacy learning
<i>Nonalphabet literate</i>	Fully literate in a language written in a nonalphabetic script	Need instruction in reading an alphabetic script and in the sound-syllable correspondences in English.
<i>Non-Roman alphabet literate</i>	Literate in a language written in a non-Roman alphabet	Need instruction in the Roman alphabet in order to transfer their L1 literacy skills to English.

# The FDOE Curriculum Framework

- FDOE provides a framework for creating a curriculum
- The framework gives instructors a structure for placing the pieces that go into the curriculum
- The curriculum includes
  - *Lesson Plans*
  - *Handouts*
  - *Artifacts*
  - *Other*
  - *Textbooks*
  - *Realia*
  - *Signs and Letters*

What have you used in your curriculum?

## The FDOE Frameworks have Three Levels

- Literacy A – First steps
  - *Hold a writing tool appropriately*
- Literacy B – Intermediate steps
  - *Copy lowercase letters with tails: g, j, p, q, y*
- Literacy C – Final steps
  - *Write names of classroom objects*



## The Frameworks Include

1. Basic Literacy Skills
2. Communication Competencies
3. Employment Competencies
4. Consumer and Community Education Competencies
5. Health and Nutrition Competencies
6. Transportation and Travel Competencies

# 1. Basic Literacy Skills

- **Sound Discrimination**

- *Level A – Identify familiar sounds (fine/mine, see/say)*
- *Level B – Isolate and identify familiar sounds in words*
- *Level C – Isolate and identify most vowel sounds in words*

- **Reading**

- *A - Use Environmental Print (signs/symbols in public areas)*
- *B – Identify common life skills documents (total on receipt)*
- *C – Use a simple picture dictionary*

- **Writing**

- *A – Copy letters with vertical/horizontal lines (A, K, L)*
- *B – Copy short sentences, use spaces between words*
- *C – Use periods and question marks to end sentences*

## 2. Communication Competencies

- Personal Information
  - *A – State first and last name*
  - *B – State and orally spell first and last name*
  - *C – Print full name (first, middle, last) in a variety of formats*
- Social and Classroom Language
  - *A – Thank someone and acknowledge someone*
  - *B – Introduce someone using first and last name*
  - *C – Tell about daily events (I pick up my son at 3:00 p.m.)*
- Time
  - *A – Tell time to the hour and half-hour*
  - *B – Tell time using digital and analog clocks*
  - *C – Write times in response to oral cues in number form*

### 3. Employment Competencies

- Six Competencies each in Levels B and C only
- *B – Read Words for common occupations*
- *C – Read and write words for common occupations and workplaces*
- *B – Read signs (NOW HIRING) (HELP WANTED)*
- *C – Read a simple work schedule*

## 4. Consumer and Community Education

- *Seven competencies*
- *A – Ask for the price of an item*
- *B – Read prices*
- *C – Write dollar amounts up to \$99.99*

## 5. Health and Nutrition Competencies

- *Eight competencies*
- *A – Identify common foods (dairy, meat, produce)*
- *B – Read food names*
- *C – Write food names*

## 6. Transportation and Travel Competencies

- *Six competencies*
- *A – Identify types of transportation (walk, bus, car)*
- *B – Read pedestrian signs (Bus Stop)*
- *C – Read basic traffic signs (ONE WAY, NO LEFT TURN)*

# How do we teach?

## 2008 Miami-Dade County Public Schools Research

- Meaningful **ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT** is important
- *“People learn best when learning starts with what they already know.” (Auerbach, 1997)*
- Ask students about their **experience**; talk about **what they know**
- Build lessons on themes that **connect to their lives**

## How do we teach? (cont.)

- Use Language Experience Approach (LEA)
  - *Ask questions of the students*
  - *Write the words they say (not your own)*
  - *Read their words **to** and **with** them as a story*
  - *Prompt them to read their words **to** others as a story*
  - *Next, they copy and write their stories*

**Students' Stories:** *Picture stories, Journal entries, Photo books, Class posters, Stories overheard (Egan, 2008)*

*What are some stories from your students?*



## Ladder of Learning (Egan, 2008)

- Start at the top of the ladder (Meaning)
  - Move down the ladder (Text)
  - Go back up the ladder (Meaning)

### Whole

Vocabulary from Thematic Unit on Shopping for Clothes

### Whole

Read a story about shopping for clothes

### Part

Practice “sh” sounds

*Decoding, Phonemics*

## How do we teach? (cont.)

### *Moving Hands Open the Way to Learning*

- Develop Fine Motor skills by making circles and curved lines
- Wrists, Hands, Fingers and are needed to
  - *Form letters*
  - *Write on lines and in boxes*
  - *Draw geometric figures*
- Older hand and arm muscles need time to adjust and become familiar with these actions

## How do we teach? (cont.)

- Use drama to set up real-life scenarios
- Exaggerate the sounds of English
- Magnify the rhythm of the language
- Create a safe space for ErOroRs !!!
- Laughter, Music, and Movement = Enhanced Memory



## When and Where Do We Teach?

- Avoid mixing classes of literates and low-level literacy students – Both groups will feel high levels of frustration
- They are still trying to visualize letters and understand that “*lines*” have meaning
- Often they cannot explain how they know something
- They are adept at thinking critically, but they simply are not accustomed to using print
- They can read their world, but not the words they find in their world

## In Closing ...

*“Adult English language learners bring their diverse and inspiring backgrounds to the literacy classroom, which must not be ignored by the instructor. This is not to say that instruction is easy and straightforward. Each learner is distinct and requires instruction that differs from mainstream ESL classes.”*

*- Bryant, 2008*

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