

Study Circle Guide ***For Teachers of Low-literacy*** ***Adult ESL Students***

ATLAS
ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System
Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota

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Study Circle Guide

For Teachers of Low-literacy Adult ESL Students

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Background

The field of adult ESL is extremely diverse. Programs and classrooms in differing contexts vary immensely in terms of learners, schedules, curricular choices, staffing practices, and more. A statewide survey of Adult Basic Education (ABE) professionals in Minnesota in 2009 revealed a great deal about programs, learners, strengths and challenges, and professional development needs of teachers and administrators (Johnson, Liden, & Marchwick, 2010). One of the key findings of this survey was a need for professional development in the area of teaching low-literate learners. These are adult learners who are not literate in any language; they must learn English and acculturate to the United States while at the same time acquiring literacy for the first time. While many adult ESL instructors are experienced, licensed teachers and many hold Master's degrees in ESOL or related fields, there is a serious lack of training available in working specifically with low-literate adult ESL students (Vinogradov & Liden, 2008, Vinogradov, 2012a).

In Minnesota, adult ESL administrators have responded to this professional development (PD) need in a number of ways. Over the past several years, sessions at conferences and workshops at in-service trainings have focused on this specific population of learners. In 2010, ABE administrators at the Minnesota Department of Education and ATLAS/Hamline contracted the development and implementation of two new workshops for low-literacy instructors, one focusing on lesson planning and the other on the building blocks of reading. While workshops are one way to reach practitioners, research in teacher preparation and PD tells us that one-shot workshops are insufficient, and that a key element of effective PD is *duration* (Desimone, 2009; see further explanation under "Description" below). Teachers need time and the opportunity to interact with colleagues and to reflect on their classrooms and research findings (Burt, Peyton, Schaetzel, 2008; Vinogradov, 2012b). In order to provide such a PD opportunity for low-literacy instructors, ABE administrators chose to create this study circle.

What exactly is a study circle? Study circles are small learning groups of practitioners, usually 8 to 12 teachers, who meet to discuss issues of relevance to their classroom practice. They are organized around a specific topic. The groups generally meet for three to five sessions and are guided by a facilitator who has experience with the topic of study. NCSALL (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy) names three key elements to study circles: professional wisdom, research, and their application to practice (NSCALL, 2006, p.11). Prior to each session, participants read a selection of relevant research on the study circle topic, and they may have written or classroom-based reflection tasks to complete as well. During meetings, study circle participants actively discuss the readings and tasks and explore together how research can inform their classroom practice. NCSALL outlines four objectives for participants of a study circle:

1. Read research articles presenting findings from adult education studies
2. Discuss the relevance of the findings for the students with whom they work
3. Discuss strategies for applying the findings in their classrooms and programs
4. Make plans for trying strategies or changing their practice (NSCALL, 2006, p. 1-2)

This particular study circle focuses on a specific group of learners: low-literate adult ESL students. According to Vinogradov & Liden (2008), ten main areas are critical to the knowledge base of effective low-literacy instructors. These areas include:

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1. The refugee experience
 2. Types of literacy-level learners
 3. Literacy in childhood vs. adulthood
 4. Emergent readers
 5. Second language acquisition
 6. Key research
 7. Components of reading
 8. Balanced literacy
 9. Approaches to teaching literacy
 10. Connections between first and second language literacies
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This study circle allows teachers to come together to ‘unpack’ these issues thoughtfully with the guidance of a facilitator. Given the timeframe (9 hours total) of the study circle, participants are not able to explore all 10 issues in great depth. The focus of this study circle is on literacy instruction, and readings and discussion delve mostly into items 6-9 from the above chart. These areas constitute what Vinogradov refers to as the ‘outer layer’ of the LESLLA teacher knowledge base, that layer of early literacy instruction that impacts every part of this work (2013). With this emphasis in mind, this Study Circle Guide outlines in detail how the facilitator can make the most of meeting time to investigate these key areas as thoroughly as possible. Participants are asked to read a reasonable amount of relevant research on their own time, to experiment with new ideas, to report back to the group, and to observe a fellow teacher. Above all, participants are expected to participate actively with questions and comments.

Together, study circle participants can try new strategies informed by the research and constantly reflect on their learners and classrooms. The collective nature of a study circle allows for networking, resource sharing, and observing each others’ classes. A study circle such as this one is a logical ‘next step’ to a workshop or conference session on working with low-literacy adults. Participation in such a focused professional learning activity has been shown to increase access and use of research (Smith, Bingman, Hofer, Medina & Practitioner Leaders, 2002, p. 76), to reduce the isolation that many adult ESL professionals sense, and ultimately, to enhance participants’ effectiveness for the learners’ benefit (Hord, 1997; Vinogradov, 2012b; Young, 2009).

Best wishes as you begin this professional learning endeavor!

References:

Burt, M., Peyton, J. K., & Schaetzel, K. (2008). *Working with adult English language learners with limited literacy: Research, practice and professional development*. CAELA Network Brief. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics . Available: http://www.cal.org/caelanetwork/pd_resources/literacy.html.

Desimone, L.M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers’ professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher* 38(3), 181-199.

Hord, S. (1997). *Professional learning communities: Communities of continuous inquiry and improvement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

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- Young, S. (2009). *Supporting and supervising teachers working with adults learning English*. CAELA Network Brief. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

General Overview

Description: This study circle is a professional learning activity for teachers of low-literate adult ESL students, those learners with little or no first-language literacy. With a special focus on reading development for these learners, teachers explore relevant research and its implications for best practices in the classroom. The study circle participants engage in both at-home reading and reflective classroom tasks that inform and deepen discussions and allow for maximum professional growth.

Timeframe: 3 meetings of 3 hours each over the course of 6-8 weeks. 9 hours total.

Clear objectives are identified for each topic, but the overall objectives of this Study Circle include the following.

The participants will:

1. Become familiar with relevant research in literacy and language development in low-literacy adults.
2. Articulate connections between relevant research and effective classroom practices with low-literacy adults.
3. Identify useful resources (for both students and teachers) that can enhance teaching and learning.
4. Receive and provide support and ideas in this group setting, thereby creating more effective, more engaging, and more satisfying teaching and learning experiences in low-literacy adult ESL classrooms.

How does this Study Circle exemplify the core features of effective professional development (Desimone, 2009)?

- *Content Focus:* This professional development activity is extremely focused. The target audience is teachers of low-literacy adult ESL, and this study circle will specifically focus on reading instruction for these learners.
- *Active Learning:* This professional development activity will involve a series of meetings for a small cohort of practitioners. Each meeting will involve discussion and sharing to identify innovative, evidence-based solutions to classroom concerns about learners and their literacy development. Each meeting will be preceded and followed up by at-home reading and reflective classroom-based tasks that will generate richer and deeper discussions during the study circle meeting.
- *Coherence:* This professional development activity is organized in a logical progression to explore in depth several key issues in teaching this specific population of learners. Coherence is achieved by building on what teachers already know, exploring teacher beliefs on each topic and encouraging communication and openness to learning, and aligning improvements with state and program policies. The study circle will move in a circular fashion, first looking to relevant research on a specific topic, providing time and tasks to

assure comprehension. Then, taking this new knowledge into account, study circle participants examine connections from that research to their own classrooms and experience. Finally, specific tasks and subsequent reflection provide an opportunity to experiment with teaching techniques and approaches to literacy instruction that change and improve teachers' practice and subsequently student learning.

- *Duration:* This professional development activity meets over a course of 6-8 weeks, roughly once every two weeks. The study circle meetings themselves will require 9 hours of contact time with activities, reflections and observations between meetings.
- *Collective Participation:* This professional development activity is a group endeavor, bringing together practitioners from various sites and programs who share the common experience of working with low-literate ESL learners. The participants' various contexts allow for unique sharing and networking during and beyond the study circle.

Expectations of the facilitator:

The facilitator is expected to come prepared for each meeting and to provide all the materials, readings, and support needed for the study circle to be a success. He/she is expected to facilitate thoughtful, respectful, reflective discussion on the various topics and, when appropriate, to re-direct participants to the research and its connections to the classroom.

The facilitator acts as a resource, a sounding board, and a helpful guide during this professional learning activity.

Expectations of participants:

Participants are required to attend all three meetings. Prior to each meeting, participants are expected to have carefully read the assigned articles and to have completed tasks, including responding to discussion questions or doing a classroom observation.

During meetings, participants are expected to engage actively in the discussions and to be respectful of each other at all times. Participants are expected to enter this professional learning activity with an open mind to new ideas and a willingness to share their experiences with the group.

Tables of topics, required readings, and outside tasks by meeting

Meeting One:

1. Topics	Readings	Additional Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characteristics of emergent adult ESL readers Research Findings: What do we know for sure? Orality and Literacy 	<p>Florez, M.C., & Terrill, L. (2003). <i>Working with literacy-level adult English language learners</i>. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, CAELA Brief. Available: www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/litQA.html</p> <p>Vinogradov, P. (2008). "Maestra! The letters speak." <i>Adult ESL students learning to read for the first time. MinneWITESOL Journal</i>, 25. Available: http://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/109951</p> <p>Vinogradov, P., & Bigelow, M. (2010). <i>Using oral language skills to build on the emerging literacy of adult English learners</i>. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Available: http://www.cal.org/caelanetwork/resources/using-oral-language-skills.html</p> <p>Wrigley, H.S. (2003). What works for adult ESL students. <i>Focus on Basics</i>, 6(C), 14-17. Available: http://www.ncsall.net/index.html?id=189.html</p>	<p>Please write out brief responses to the questions on the handout <i>Discussion Questions 1</i> and bring to our meeting.</p> <p>ONLINE FORUM TASKS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce yourself to the group 2. Submit a 'burning question' about teaching low-literacy adult learners

Meeting Two:

2. Topics	Readings	Additional Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unraveling Reading: Components of emergent reading development <p>Emergent reading instruction, Part I: What can we learn from early childhood instructors? Classroom practices to create literacy-rich environments and meaningful literacy</p>	<p>Condelli, L. & Wrigley, H.S. (2006). Instruction, language, and literacy: What works study for adult ESL literacy. <i>Proceedings from the Inaugural LESLLA Symposium, Tilburg, Netherlands, 2005</i>. Available: http://lotos.library.uu.nl/index.html [Read excerpt ONLY, pages 126-130, Summary and Discussion of Main Findings]</p> <p>Curtis, M.E. & Kruidenier, J.R. (2005). <i>Teaching adults to read: A summary of scientifically based research principles</i>. National Institute for Literacy. Available: http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/teach_adults.pdf</p> <p>Vinogradov, P. (2010). Balancing top and bottom: learner-generated texts for teaching phonics. <i>Proceedings from the 5th LESLLA Symposium - Low-Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition</i>. Banff, Canada, September 2009. Available:</p>	<p>Please write out brief responses to the questions on the handouts <i>Building Literacy with Emergent Readers Video Discussion Questions</i> and also <i>Discussion Questions 2</i> and bring these to our meeting.</p> <p>Choose a classroom task based on insights from our readings to try out with your learners. Be prepared to report back to the group!</p>

<p>experiences for learners.</p>	<p>http://www.leslla.org/files/resources/Conference_Proceedings_FINAL_Aug12.pdf</p> <p><i>Also, please watch the following 30-minute video before our next meeting:</i></p> <p>New American Horizons. (2010). <i>Building literacy with emergent readers</i>. Available: www.newamericanhorizons.org</p>	<p>ONLINE FORUM TASK: 1. Share your reflection about your Classroom Task, once completed.</p>
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Meeting Three:

3. Topics	Readings	Additional Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergent reading instruction, Part II: further reporting on our classroom-tasks, using authentic materials, extensive reading, etc. Planning for progress in a 0-1 class: lesson planning, managing multiple levels and mismatched oral and literacy skills, assessment Resources, Next Steps 	<p>Take some time to explore the www.leslla.org site. This is an international organization called Low-Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition that is dedicated to the learners we are focusing on in this study circle. This site has a number of conference PowerPoint presentations, workshop handouts, and other resources here.</p> <p>Also, take some time to explore the www.esl-literacy.com website. This website was developed by Bow Valley College in Calgary, Alberta, and has a large collection of resources for teachers of this level.</p> <p><i>Choose 2-4 items from the websites to read more carefully and be prepared to report back to the group with your summary and response.</i></p> <p>Note: Additional website to explore, if time allows: www.multilingualminnesota.org, click on "For Teachers of Low-literate Adult ESL."</p>	<p>Prepare brief written responses on the <i>Discussion Questions 3</i> handout in response to your online exploration.</p> <p>Between Meetings 2 & 3, observe one of your colleagues and be prepared to report back on the experience. Fill out the <i>Peer Observation Guide</i> as a tool to guide this experience and sharing.</p> <p>Also, please bring 3-4 resources that you have found especially useful with your learners. These can be textbooks, reference books, games, activity ideas, websites, pictures, anything that you would like to share. We'll spend time with a "resource show and tell" during Meeting Three.</p> <p>ONLINE FORUM TASKS: 1. After spending time on the assigned websites, list 3-5 of your favorite findings for others to see. 2. Following your peer observation, share your thoughts on how we can best serve our learners</p>

		in mixed-literacy-level classes.
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Preparation for first meeting

Participants should be sent information about the study circle via email 3-4 weeks in advance of the first meeting in order to plan their schedules, spend time reflecting on the Meeting One readings, prepare written responses to the discussion questions, and post to the online forum (if applicable).

The Meeting One readings should be read carefully in advance of the first meeting. This will ensure a richer and more productive exchange of ideas during the meeting. The readings are all available online, and a sample email to participants follows the list of articles. The email should contain links to all readings and should attach the *Discussion Questions 1* handout (in Appendix).

This initial communication should include instructions for using an online forum. The online forum allows participants to continue to interact between meetings and provides another layer of reflection and sharing throughout the study circle. References to online forum tasks are made throughout this study circle guide.

Florez, M.C., & Terrill, L. (2003). *Working with literacy-level adult English language learners*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, CAELA Brief. Available: www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/litQA.html

Vinogradov, P. (2008). "Maestra! The letters speak." Adult ESL students learning to read for the first time. *MinneWITESOL Journal*, 25. Available: www.minnewitesoljournal.org
(NOTE: to find this one, click on the link and then along the left margin, click on Journal 2008)

Vinogradov, P., & Bigelow, M. (2010). *Using oral language skills to build on the emerging literacy of adult English learners*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Available: <http://www.cal.org/caelanetwork/resources/using-oral-language-skills.html>

Wrigley, H.S. (2003). What works for adult ESL students. *Focus on Basics*, 6(C), 14-17. Available: <http://www.ncsall.net/?id=189>

Dear Study Circle Participant,

Hello, and welcome to the Study Circle for teachers of adult low-literacy ESL. I am so excited to see you all at **LOCATION** on **DATE and TIME** to delve into our topics! This study circle is designed to bring together ESL professionals working with low-literacy adults, those with little or no literacy in their first languages. We will read together, discuss, reflect, try out new strategies, and grow as both practitioners and scholars.

Low-literate learners are a unique group of learners, as you know! Research and resources to help guide instruction is growing, but limited. Some of the best advice and insights come from reflecting and sharing with fellow instructors (I call this professional wisdom) and integrating those experiences with relevant research. *This study circle was created to give professional wisdom and research a meeting place, and to provide a forum for discussion, inquiry, and problem solving.*

This is a study circle that will consist of 3 meetings: **DATES** from **TIME**.

Meetings will be held at **LOCATION**

INCLUDE DIRECTIONS, ROOM NUMBER, PARKING INFORMATION.

Please jot down my phone number in case you have any trouble finding us: **PHONE NUMBER.**

If you haven't participated in one before, you may be wondering just what a "study circle" is and what's expected! This is a professional learning group, and for each meeting you will read ahead and come prepared to discuss what you've read and how it relates to your work. I've attached a document that explains the background and rationale of study circles. Please take a few minutes to read through it.

Good news! We'll be integrating an **online forum** component for this study circle. This is housed by **INFO AS APPROPRIATE**, and I'll be facilitating. This gives us another layer of communication and interaction throughout our time together, as well as a way to stay connected when our face-to-face meetings have completed. More information about this new component is found below.

In order to kick start our study circle, please complete the following tasks before our first meeting:

1. **Read** the following four articles (listed below, with links).
2. You'll find attached a set of discussion questions (**Discussion Questions 1**). Please jot down some thoughts on each question and bring to the first meeting. This will ensure a fruitful and interesting exchange right from the start. If you have any trouble locating or viewing these articles, do let me know. While you don't need to print and bring them, you may find it helpful

to have them handy as we're discussing. We are "going green" for this study circle, and we won't be providing print-outs of the articles for you.

Florez, M.C., & Terrill, L. (2003). *Working with literacy-level adult English language learners*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, CAELA Brief. Available:

www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/litQA.html

Vinogradov, P. (2008). "Maestra! The letters speak." Adult ESL students learning to read for the first time. *MinneWITESOL Journal*, 25. Available: www.minnewitesoljournal.org

(NOTE: To find this one, you'll click on the link and then along the left, click on Journal 2008)

Vinogradov, P., & Bigelow, M. (2010). *Using oral language skills to build on the emerging literacy of adult English learners*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Available:

<http://www.cal.org/caelanetwork/resources/using-oral-language-skills.html>

Wrigley, H.S. (2003). What works for adult ESL students. *Focus on Basics*, 6(C), 14-17. Available: <http://www.ncsall.net/?id=189>

3. Also before our first meeting, please log in and register for our **online forum**. You will find there two discussion prompts, one asking you to introduce yourself and the other to submit a 'burning question' about teaching low-literacy adult learners (more detail just below). Please complete these prompts and read others' responses before we meet for Meeting One. You're welcome to respond to others' posts anytime. Let the sharing begin! 😊

To join the online forum, please complete the following steps:

1. First, you need to:
PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS FOR BECOMING PART OF ONLINE FORUM
2. You'll see two 'topics' already there. One is titled "Introduce Yourself!" and the other is titled "Our Burning Questions." Open each one, read what's already posted, and hit "reply" to add your post.

Re-visit often to see what others have posted. If you have any trouble registering or have other questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at **EMAIL**, or again my phone number is **PHONE**.

This study circle is sure to be both challenging and enjoyable! I look forward to meeting you. If you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me.

See you soon,

FACILITATOR NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Meeting One

Objectives for Meeting One:

The study circle participants will:

1. Get to know the other participants and learn about their students and programs.
2. Articulate characteristics unique to low-literacy adults regarding their acquisition of English and learning needs/preferences.
3. Articulate 3-4 research findings from the readings and name an instructional implication of each. Choose one classroom task to try out with students based on the readings.
4. Discuss the roles of 'orality' and 'literacy' in their learners' lives, both as community members and as emergent readers of English.
5. Plan for the remainder of the study circle, including outside tasks, observations, and selected readings.

Topics to be covered:

- Characteristics of emergent adult ESL readers
- Research Findings: What do we know for sure?
- Orality and Literacy

Preparation for Meeting One:

- Confirm the number and names of participants
- Re-read the articles and familiarize yourself with the discussion questions and the agenda
- Prepare online forum (if applicable) with two prompts for meeting one: one for participants to introduce themselves, and one for them to share their 'burning questions' about teaching low-literacy adult ESL learners.

Materials Required for Meeting One:

- Bring nametags, writing utensils, notepads, etc.
- If there is no chalk board or white board in the meeting space, plan to bring an easel with large paper and markers.
- Depending on the time of day of your meetings, consider bringing water and refreshments.

AGENDA for Meeting One & notes to facilitator

Meeting Time: 3 hours

<p>Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping</p> <p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Introductions, names and teaching settings. Circulate sheet to collect names, contact information, and teaching schedule for distribution to the group. <i>This will be helpful as participants arrange their peer observations between Meetings 2 & 3.</i></p> <p>Briefly introduce yourself- just name and school site for the moment.</p> <p>Just to get us thinking about our learners, think about a moment in your class that made you smile. What was this moment? Think about it, and I'll have you stand up and mingle for a few minutes and chat with 2-3 other people about their "smiley moments."</p> <p>Thank you for posting your burning questions online – I've printed those out for us. Let's take a look -- What brings us to this group? What else would you add?</p> <p>Go over the plan for the study circle and this meeting (distribute table from this guide with breakdown of meetings, topics, readings, & outside tasks). Go over objectives for this meeting.</p> <p><i>Mention information about breaks, bathrooms in the building, vending, parking concerns, and any other housekeeping details.</i></p>
<p>Characteristics of Emergent Readers</p> <p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Set up large pieces of paper around the room for the "Characteristics of Emergent Readers" brainstorming session. Label the papers with the following prompts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Emergent readers' conversational skills are</i> _____. 2. <i>Emergent readers struggle with</i> _____. 3. <i>Emergent readers do</i> _____ <i>easily.</i> 4. <i>Emergent readers need to be able to</i> _____. 5. <i>Emergent readers are interested in</i> _____. 6. <i>Emergent readers learn by</i> _____. <p>In pairs, send participants to take notes on large paper scattered around the room. Each of the papers should have a prompt (see above, described during "break") to respond to. After a minute or two, rotate, so that each group has a chance to take notes on each paper.</p> <p><i>Whole group:</i> Bring the group back together and review the brainstorm. Anything else missing? Anything to add or clarify?</p>

	<p>If you were asked to advise a new teacher of this level, what are 3 things (from these sheets) that you would be sure to tell her/him about? Think individually for a moment, then share with a neighbor.</p>
<p>Reflecting on the readings</p> <p>45 minutes</p>	<p><i>You read 4 (!) readings for today (that's the heaviest reading load for the study circle, I promise 😊). We'll discuss 'orality and literacy' in more depth later, for the moment let's concentrate on questions <u>1-3 (Florez & Terrill, Vinogradov, and Wrigley articles)</u>.</i></p> <p><i>Before we get into the discussion questions you prepared, any general reactions? Specific articles or parts of articles ring particularly true for you, or anything you found confusing that you'd like to talk about?</i></p> <p>Depending on number of participants, conduct as large group or possibly break into groups of 3-4 and give participants time to discuss and share their responses. <i>Allow at least 25 minutes for small group discussion, and remaining time for whole group sharing.</i></p> <p>**As they discuss, <u>participants should be thinking about and taking notes on:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible classroom tasks that they can pull from the readings to try out with their learners. 2. Additional "Burning Questions" they have about teaching English and literacy to low-literate adult learners. <p>On a white board, easel, or laptop/tablet, have someone from each group write down:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. their group's possible classroom tasks to try out with learners, and 2. their growing list of burning questions about these learners. <p>While participants don't need to choose a task to try out just yet, they should be considering options.</p> <p><i>Note to facilitator:</i> type up or otherwise compile and save these lists for future reference. We will re-visit these burning questions in Meeting Three.</p>
<p>BREAK</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	
<p>Orality and Literacy</p> <p>40 minutes</p>	<p>We set aside discussion question/s 4-7 before. Let's think about those now, in light of what we've already discussed during this meeting.</p> <p>Form new groups (or conduct as whole group) to discuss (to allow participants to chat with new folks). <i>Allow at least 20-25 minutes for small group discussion.</i></p> <p>Bring the group back together. Common observations, things to share? What are the roles of 'orality' and 'literacy' in our learners'</p>

	lives, both as community members and as emergent readers of English? Impact on instruction?
<p>Evaluation, Wrap Up, Planning for next time</p> <p>20 minutes</p>	<p>Reflection: Revisit the Meeting One objectives. Take a moment to mark a \checkmark, \checkmark^-, or \checkmark^+ next to each. How'd we do? Chat with a partner for a moment. Then whole group should discuss which objectives, if any, they don't feel were met. What can we do to meet those objectives? Anything we should re-visit next time?</p> <p>Brief reflection (hand out, give them a few minutes to complete):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify 2 key things that you have learned today. 2. What is 1 thing that you would like to try in your classroom? 3. Identify one question that you have related to the topic. <p><i>Classroom Tasks: On the 2-sided handout titled "Classroom Task for Meeting Two," please jot down which classroom task based on the readings that you'd like to try out. On the back are some questions about your reactions and suggestions after you've tried this with your learners. *Before next time, please share your reflections online with us in our online forum. Prompts will be posted.</i></p> <p><i>Observations: Between Meetings 2 & 3, each of you will observe another class of emergent readers. It can be another teacher in this study circle, or elsewhere if that's not convenient. We can learn so much from watching each other! Please take a moment to consider when and where you can make this happen and to get it on your calendars.</i></p> <p>Review what to do for the next meeting, final questions or comments?</p>

Note to facilitator: After each meeting, write up summary notes about the discussions and key ideas, anything of particular importance, and share those notes with the group electronically. Bring a few paper copies of the notes to each subsequent meeting, as they will serve as a way to jog participants' memories and re-enter the topics.

Facilitator: Distribute and also email the reminder letter on the following page (to have links readily available) to participants at the end of Meeting One.

Also, provide paper copies of these 3 items at the end of Meeting One:

1. Building Literacy with Emergent Readers Video Discussion Questions
2. Discussion Questions 2

3. Classroom Task for Meeting Two

To: Study Circle Participant:

RE: Before next time, preparing for Meeting Two *(date & time)*

1. Before our next meeting, please **read the 3 readings** below and **take notes on the handout** "Discussion Questions 2."
2. Also, please watch the following **30-minute video** (available free online). While or soon after you watch, please take **notes on the handout** "Building Literacy with Emergent Readers Video Discussion Questions (and summary of lesson)."
3. Don't forget to try out your **classroom task** that you selected based on the readings for today's meeting. Conduct this task and consider the questions on both sides of the "Classroom Task for Meeting Two" sheet. You'll use these to complete the online post listed next.
4. In our **online forum**, you'll find a discussion thread where you can post your thoughts on your chosen Classroom Task. After you have tried out your classroom task and have taken time to reflect on how it went, please post your thoughts here for the group, as prompted. Be prepared to field questions from the group when we meet next!

See you soon,
NAME OF FACILITATOR

1. Condelli, L. & Wrigley, H.S. (2006). Instruction, language, and literacy: What works study for adult ESL literacy. *Proceedings from the Inaugural LESLLA Symposium*, Tilburg, Netherlands, 2005. Available: <http://www.leslla.org/files/resources/CompleteproceedingsLESLLA2005.pdf>

[The article is on pages 111-133 of the proceedings.]

2. Curtis, M.E. & Kruidenier, J.R. (2005). *Teaching adults to read: A summary of scientifically based research principles*. National Institute for Literacy. Available: http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/teach_adults.pdf
3. Vinogradov, P. (2010). Balancing top and bottom: learner-generated texts for teaching phonics. *Proceedings from the 5th LESLLA Symposium - Low-Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition*. Banff, Canada, September 2009. Available: http://www.leslla.org/files/resources/Conference_Proceedings_FINAL_Aug12.pdf

[Note: this link pulls up the *entire* proceedings volume, but you only need to read the *first* article for our group]

4. Here is the link to the 30-minute video to watch before our next meeting, and you have a handout to read and use for notetaking.

New American Horizons. (2010). Building literacy with adult emergent readers. Available: <http://www.newamericanhorizons.org/training-videos>

Meeting Two

Objectives for Meeting Two:

The study circle participants will:

- Articulate key components of reading and how they play out in the classroom: alphabets, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension.
- Articulate the six components of early literacy and how they relate to low-literate adults.
- Report back on classroom tasks they attempted with their learners since the last meeting.
- Identify several more classroom activities for building literacy skills to try out with their students.
- Confirm a day and time to observe a fellow low-literacy instructor.

Topics to be covered:

- Unraveling Reading: Components of emergent reading development
- Emergent reading instruction, Part I: What can we learn from early childhood instructors? Classroom practices to create literacy-rich environments and meaningful literacy experiences for learners.

Materials Needed for Meeting Two:

- Print and cut up the Matching Terms for the matching exercise.
- Literacy Terms handout, video discussion questions, and Discussion Questions 2.
- Copies of summary notes from Meeting One.

AGENDA for Meeting Two & notes to facilitator:

Meeting Time: 3 hours

<p>Welcome, Re-cap</p> <p>20 minutes</p>	<p>Brief re-introductions as needed, housekeeping items, agenda for this meeting, other announcements.</p> <p>Take 5 minutes to look over the notes I typed up after our last meeting. Any comments?</p>
<p>Components of Reading</p> <p>25 minutes</p>	<p>Facilitator: Take a moment to read aloud the various terms (from Literacy Terms handout) so that participants can hear them once and mentally prepare for the matching task.</p> <p>Matching exercise of terms/definitions to review these key concepts. Cut the master (see appendix) up into definitions and terms, and have participants find the match.</p> <p>As participants find a match, have them brainstorm 1-2 classroom tasks that put this idea into practice (can be something from the readings, from their own experience, or just something they would like to try).</p> <p>Come back together as a large group. Hand out these terms as a handout (“Literacy Terms,” in appendix) and share ideas, questions on how these components of reading play out in the classroom. Direct participants to their responses to <i>Discussion Questions 2, #1</i>.</p> <p><i>Optional for the facilitator:</i> If possible, bring a few items from an adult ESL classroom that illustrate each of these components to enhance and expand this sharing time.</p>
<p>Early Childhood: Early Literacy Components</p> <p>20 minutes</p>	<p>Facilitator: Present the six components of early childhood literacy (hand out “Six Components of Early Literacy,” and see appendix) to the group.</p> <p><i>How do these play out in an adult ESL classroom? Which do you think are priorities for your learners? What do you already do that illustrates them? What more could we do?</i> Allow time to respond, discuss.</p>
<p>What Works findings</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>In elementary school, literacy specialists talk about a “literacy diet” that should be balanced. What do you think this means? What does it mean for us as LESLLA teachers?</p> <p>Balanced literacy in practice—revisit the Condelli & Wrigley article (main findings and discussion only). How do their findings fit into a</p>

	balanced literacy curriculum? Direct participants to their responses to <i>Discussion Questions 2, #2</i> .
Break! 15 minutes	
Unpacking Balanced Literacy 35 minutes	Video follow up- look at handout with description of video lesson. Go through to jog memories, then discuss how this lesson represents 'balanced literacy.' Break into small groups of 3-4 to discuss Balanced Literacy, using the <i>Discussion Questions 2, #3-5</i> as a guide. Debrief as a large group.
Classroom tasks: Reporting back 35 minutes	Report back on classroom tasks: what did you do, what research/reading was it based on, and how did it go? How would you change/improve it? <i>Option:</i> This can take place in a large group, or you can share first with small group, then any highlights with large group.
Evaluation, Wrap Up 20 minutes	Reflection: Revisit the Meeting Two objectives. Take a moment to mark a \checkmark , \checkmark^- , or \checkmark^+ next to each. How'd we do? Chat with a partner for a moment. Then whole group should discuss which objectives, if any, they don't feel were met. What can we do to meet those objectives? Anything we should re-visit next time? Brief evaluation (5 min; paper and pencil): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify 2 key things that you have learned today. 2. What is 1 thing that you would like to try in your classroom? 3. Identify one question that you have related to the topic. <i>Observations: Between Meetings 2 & 3, each of you will observe another class of emergent readers. It can be another teacher in this study circle, or elsewhere if that's not convenient. We can learn so much from watching each other! Please take a moment to consider when and where you can make this happen and to get it on your calendars.</i> Go over the <i>Peer Observation Guide</i> together. Questions, comments, changes to this guide? Review what to do for the next meeting, final questions or comments? <i>Tip for Facilitator:</i> The websites that participants are reviewing for Meeting Three, particularly the LESLLA website, can be difficult to navigate. If time allows, consider bringing a laptop and spending a few minutes showing participants how these websites are laid out and direct them to specific areas of the websites you recommend. They are quite comprehensive and can be overwhelming, so taking

	time now will avoid frustration when they are exploring independently.
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FOR NEXT TIME: Meeting Three

Facilitator: Distribute and also email this reminder (to have link readily available) to participants at the end of Meeting Two.

Provide copies of these 3 handouts (or point them out in their binders if previously copied) at the end of Meeting Two:

1. Discussion Questions 3
2. Peer Observation Guide

To: Study Circle Participant:

RE: Before next time, preparing for Meeting Three

Before our next meeting, please choose 2-3 items from the www.leslla.org, www.esl-literacy.com, and/or the www.multilingualminnesota.org websites to read and report back to us on. Use *Discussion Questions 3* as a guide, and please prepare brief written responses to the questions and post to the **online forum**, responding to the prompt you'll find there.

Also, please bring 3-4 resources that you have found especially useful with your learners. These can be textbooks, reference books, games, activity ideas, websites, pictures, anything that you would like to share. Especially useful may be examples of books for extensive reading and authentic materials you've used with your learners. We'll spend time with a "resource show and tell" during Meeting Three.

Don't forget to complete the Peer Observation Guide following your observation of a fellow teacher. We'll share our experiences observing our colleagues next time. Please pay particular attention to how your colleague manages multiple levels and also to the types of materials used in the lesson (authentic, published, teacher-generated, learner-generated). On the **online forum**, you'll find a prompt regarding multi-level instruction. Please add your thoughts to how we can best serve our learners in mixed-literacy-level classes.

See you soon!

Meeting Three

Objectives for Meeting Three:

The study circle participants will:

- Become familiar with the LESLLA symposia and website (www.leslla.org), the Bow Valley College resource site (www.esl-literacy.com) and resources available at www.multilingualminnesota.org. Articulate 1-2 useful items from these sites.
- Make note of LESLLA and other professional organizations that serve low-literacy learners and their instructors.
- Reflect on peer observations and specifically identify lesson planning and classroom management strategies for effectively teaching multi-level groups.
- Share and learn about materials and resources available for teachers and students to enhance learning.
- Evaluate this study circle and identify 1-2 ways that this conversation can be extended.

Topics to be covered:

- Emergent reading instruction, Part II: further reporting on our classroom-tasks, using authentic materials, extensive reading, etc.
- Planning for progress in a 0-1 class: lesson planning, managing multiple levels and mismatched oral and literacy skills, assessment
- Resources, Next Steps

Materials Needed for Meeting Three:

- A large table or two to spread out the resources that participants bring to share
- Copies of the evaluation form
- Copies of summary notes from Meeting Two
- Feedback Questions

AGENDA for Meeting Three & notes to facilitator

Meeting Time: 3 hours

<p>Welcome, 10 minutes</p>	<p>Brief re-introductions as needed, housekeeping items, agenda for this meeting. <i>Much to do- we'll jump right in today!</i></p>
<p>Online Explorations! (LESLLA, ESL-Literacy, and Multilingual Minnesota Websites) 20 minutes</p>	<p>Create groups of 2-3. Have participants talk about what they learned from their time exploring the websites. Direct participants to use <i>Discussion Questions 3</i> (in appendix) as a guide.</p> <p>Highlights from this discussion? Recommendations we should all take a look at?</p>
<p>Peer Observations 40 minutes</p>	<p>Talk about your peer observations in general. <i>What did you find particularly interesting? What would you like to share about this experience?</i></p> <p>Use the <i>Peer Observation Guide</i> as a tool for discussion.</p> <p><i>Tip for Facilitator:</i> After a brief think-pair-share, continue the discussion in the large group so that all participants benefit from hearing everyone's observation highlights.</p>
<p>Lesson Planning, Managing Multiple Levels 20 minutes</p>	<p>Inevitably in low-literacy classes, there is a startling range of abilities and educational experiences. How do you cope with this? How do you plan lessons for multiple levels, and how do you differentiate instruction as needed?</p> <p>Each participant takes 2-4 minutes to jot down some ideas about what they do. <i>Consider ideas from your <u>Peer Observations!</u></i></p> <p>Share with a small group, and bring highlights to the large group.</p> <p><i>*Facilitator, as able, should plan to share his/her own classroom examples of differentiating instruction and managing multiple levels as well.</i></p>
<p>Break! 15 minutes</p>	
<p>Resource Sharing 45 minutes</p>	<p>Resources- what are some treasures we should all know about? Each participant brought 3-4 resources to share today. Have them stretch a bit, stand up and bring their resources to the front.</p> <p><i>Tip for Facilitator:</i> Depending on the size of the group, participants can simply browse the table of resources, or do this "show and tell"</p>

	<p>style, giving each participant a couple of minutes to describe his/her resources. Participants will benefit from noting everyone's resources, so consider your room and space and the number of participants and adjust the set up and time allotted accordingly .</p> <p>Facilitator: Write notes about these resources to later email to the group. This may be a good time to take photographs for potential future marketing.</p> <p><i>Option:</i> Bring some books for extensive reading with this level. If participants have not used extensive reading with their low-literacy learners, open a discussion about its value and possible procedures for implementation.</p>
<p>Re-visiting Burning Questions</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Facilitator: show on screen or hand out copies of the burning questions from Meeting One.</p> <p>Re-visit the burning questions from Meeting One; how'd we do? What questions do you still have unanswered?</p>
<p>Evaluation, Wrap Up</p> <p>20 minutes</p>	<p>Reflection: Revisit the Meeting Three objectives. Take a moment to mark a \checkmark, $\checkmark-$, or $\checkmark+$ next to each. How'd we do? Chat with a partner for a moment. Then whole group should discuss which objectives, if any, they don't feel were met. What can we do to meet those objectives?</p> <p>Next steps: <i>How can we continue this conversation? How will you continue your exploration of low-literacy ESL instruction?</i></p> <p>Now it's time to evaluate the study circle as a whole. Your feedback is important to us! Please fill out the "Feedback Questions" thoroughly (found in appendix).</p> <p><i>*Note: This evaluation can be done online via an online survey and sent out to participants the following day as well.</i></p> <p>As time allows, discuss general feedback to the study circle and also ideas for future study circles.</p>

Appendix

Complete List of Readings

- Condelli, L. & Wrigley, H.S. (2006). Instruction, language, and literacy: What works study for adult ESL literacy. *Proceedings from the Inaugural LESLLA Symposium, Tilburg, Netherlands, 2005*. Available: <http://lotos.library.uu.nl/index.html>
[Read excerpt ONLY, pages 126-130, Summary and Discussion of Main Findings]
- Curtis, M.E. & Kruidenier, J.R. (2005). *Teaching adults to read: A summary of scientifically based research principles*. National Institute for Literacy. Available: http://www.nifl.gov/publications/pdf/teach_adults.pdf
- Florez, M.C., & Terrill, L. (2003). *Working with literacy-level adult English language learners*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, CAELA Brief. Available: www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/litQA.html
- New American Horizons. (2010). *Building literacy with emergent readers*. Available: www.newamericanhorizons.org
- Vinogradov, P. (2008). "Maestra! The letters speak." Adult ESL students learning to read for the first time. *MinneWITESOL Journal*, 25. Available: www.minnewitesoljournal.org
- Vinogradov, P. (2010). Balancing top and bottom: learner-generated texts for teaching phonics. *Proceedings from the 5th LESLLA Symposium - Low-Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition*. Banff, Canada, September 2009.
- Vinogradov, P., & Bigelow, M. (2010). *Using oral language skills to build on the emerging literacy of adult English learners*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Available: www.cal.org/caelanetwork/resources/using-oral-language-skills.html
- Wrigley, H.S. (2003). What works for adult ESL students. *Focus on Basics*, 6(C), 14-17. Available: <http://www.ncsall.net/?id=189>

Additional Readings and Resources

- Bigelow, M. (2010). *Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bigelow, M., & Schwarz, R. (2010). *Adult English language learners with limited literacy*. National Institute for Literacy.
Available: nifl.gov/publications/pdf/ELLpaper2010.pdf
- Birch, B. (2007). *English L2 reading: Getting to the bottom*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Brod, S. (1999). What non-readers or beginning readers need to know: Performance-based ESL adult literacy, p. 16. Denver, CO: Spring Institute for International Studies.
- Burt, M., Peyton, J. K., & Schaetzel, K. (2008). *Working with adult English language learners with limited literacy: Research, practice and professional development*. Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. Available:
http://www.cal.org/caelanetwork/pd_resources/literacy.html
- Burt, M., Peyton, J. K., & Adams, R. (2003). *Reading and adult English language learners: The role of the first language*. Washington: DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Available:
http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/reading.html
- Cloud, N., Genesee, F., & Hamayan, E. (2009). *Literacy instruction for English language learners*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Condelli, L., Wrigley, H., & Yoon, K. S. (2009). "What works" for adult literacy students of English as a second language. In S. Reder & J. Bynner (Eds.), *Tracking adult literacy and numeracy skills: Findings from longitudinal research* (pp. 132-159). New York and London: Routledge.
- Crandall, J.A., & Peyton, J.K.(Eds). (1993). *Approaches to adult ESL literacy instruction*. Baltimore: Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems.
- Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (retrieved 2010). **Literacy and beginning-level texts** for adult English language learners. Available:
http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/littext.html
- Croydan, A. (2005). *Making it Real*. Available: www.literacynow.info/Page.aspx?nid=6
- DeCapua, A. & Marshall, H. W. (2011). *Breaking new ground: Teaching English learners with limited or interrupted formal education in secondary schools*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Decapua, A. & Marshall, H. (2010). *ELLs with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education: Six Criteria for Success*. Presentation at TESOL Convention 2010. Boston, MA. Available:
<http://www.slideshare.net/lainemarsh/ells-with-limited-or-interrupted-formal-education-six-criteria-for-success>

- Decapua, A., Smathers, W., and Tang, L. (2009). Meeting the needs of students with limited or interrupted schooling: A guide for educators. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- ESL Literacy Network website. www.esl-literacy.com. Bow Valley College, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.
- Holt, G. M. (1995). Teaching low-level adult ESL learners. Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education.
- Kruidenier, J. (2002). *Research-based principles for adult basic education reading instruction*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy. Retrieved from www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/html/adult_ed/index.html.
- Low-educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition website: www.leslla.org
- McShane, S. (2005). Applying research in reading instruction for adults: First steps for teachers. National Institute for Literacy: Partnership for Reading. Available: <http://www.nifl.gov/publications/pdf/applyingresearch.pdf>
- Multilingual Minnesota website: www.multilingualminnesota.org
- Reimer, J. (2008). Learning strategies and low-literacy Hmong adult students. *Minne/WITESOL Journal*, 25 <http://www.minnewitesol.org>.
- Tarone, E., Bigelow, M. & Hansen, K. (2009). Literacy and oracy in second language acquisition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Trupke-Bastidas, J., & Poulos, A. (2008). Improving literacy of L1-non-literate and L1-literate adult English as a second language learners. *Minne/WITESOL Journal*, 25. Retrieved from <http://www.minnewitesoljournal.org>.
- Wrigley, H.S. & Guth, G.J.A. (1992). Bringing literacy to life: Issues and options in adult ESL literacy. San Mateo, CA: Aguirre International. (EDRS No. ED 348 896).
- Wrigely, H. & Condelli, L. (2004). Identifying Promising Literacy Interventions for Adult ESL Literacy Students: A Review of the Literature. Available: http://literacywork.com/Literacywork/Resources_files/Identifying%20Promising%20Literacy%20Interventions%20%28draft%29.pdf
- Young-Scholten, M., & Strom, N. (2006). First-time L2 readers: Is there a critical period? In I. Van de Craats, J. Kurvers & M. Young-Scholten (Eds.), *Low-educated adult second language and literacy acquisition: Proceedings of the inaugural symposium* (pp. 45-68). Utrecht, The Netherlands: LOT.

Discussion Questions 1

Study Circle for Teachers of Low-literacy Adult ESL Students

- Florez, M.C., & Terrill, L. (2003). *Working with literacy-level adult English language learners*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, CAELA Brief. Available: www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/litQA.html
- Vinogradov, P. (2008). "Maestra! The letters speak." Adult ESL students learning to read for the first time. *MinneWITESOL Journal*, 25. Available: www.minnewitesoljournal.org
- Vinogradov, P., & Bigelow, M. (2010). *Using oral language skills to build on the emerging literacy of adult English learners*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Available: <http://www.cal.org/caelanetwork/resources/using-oral-language-skills.html>
- Wrigley, H.S. (2003). What works for adult ESL students. *Focus on Basics*, 6(C), 14-17. Available: <http://www.ncsall.net/?id=189>

1. The Florez & Terrill article describes general characteristics of literacy level learners. What characteristics from their list hold true for your students? Anything you'd change or add?

2. What are the five "guiding principles" that have emerged from research that Vinogradov claims should be adhered to when teaching low-literacy adults?

What is your response to Vinogradov's list of five principles for low-literacy ESL instruction? Is there anything you'd add or change? And which 1-2 principles do you think are particularly important? Why? Name an example from your experience.

3. Wrigley names several main findings from the *What Works* study. What are they?

What's your response to the primary findings from the *What Works* study? Name examples from your teaching experience that you've tried or that you would like to try that illustrate these research findings.

4. In the Vinogradov & Bigelow article, the authors mention that low-literate adults often have oral skills and literacy skills that are 'mismatched.' What does this mean to you? Have you noticed this 'mismatch'? If so, how do you explain it?

5. Vinogradov & Bigelow outline research findings regarding orality and literacy. What do we know about orality and literacy? Have you noticed these research findings in action in the classroom? How?

6. What are some ways that Vinogradov & Bigelow suggest that teachers can capitalize on students' oral abilities? Have you tried any of these, and if so, with what result?

7. After reading these articles, is there anything that's particularly fuzzy or particularly interesting that you'd like to talk about more when we meet in person?

Reflection on Meeting One

Revisit the Meeting One objectives below. Take a moment to mark a \checkmark , \checkmark^- , or \checkmark^+ next to each.

Objectives:

- Get to know the other participants and learn about their students and programs.
 - Articulate characteristics unique to low-literacy adults regarding their acquisition of English and learning needs/preferences.
 - Articulate 3-4 research findings from the readings and name an instructional implication of each. Choose one classroom task to try out with students based on the readings.
 - Discuss the roles of 'orality' and 'literacy' in their learners' lives, both as community members and as emergent readers of English.
 - Plan for the remainder of the study circle, including outside tasks, observations, and selected readings.
-

Identify 2 key things that you have learned today.

What is 1 thing that you would like to try in your classroom?

Identify one question that you have related to the topic.

Discussion: *How'd we do?* Chat with a partner for a moment.

What can we do to meet those objectives?
Anything we should re-visit next time?

Building Literacy with Emergent Readers Video Discussion Questions

- 2-hour Low-literacy adult ESL class
- Instructor: Andrea Echelberger
- Site: Minnesota Literacy Council, Arlington Hills
- Video (free, online) available from New American Horizons:
<http://www.newamericanhorizons.org>

What are the lesson objectives, do you think?

How does the teacher know that these objectives are being met?

How are the components of reading addressed in this lesson?

How does this lesson illustrate balanced literacy instruction?

Other comments, observations, questions?

Lesson:

Morning Routine (10 minutes)

- Go over daily schedule and upcoming events
- Learner leads calendar reading
- Read through weekly learner story

Review sight words and retell story with picture prompts (20 minutes)

- **Retell story:** Teacher holds up pictures from this week's story. It was generated following a field trip to the local hardware store. The current theme is "Problems in the House," and learners were shopping for products to help them get rid of pests. Learners retell the story first as a large group, then at tables.
- **Silent reading:** Learners take out story and read silently at tables for 2-3 minutes. Teacher reads the story aloud, and learners follow along with fingers or pencils. Teacher leads choral reading.
- **Go over sight words** from story with pocket chart, teacher helps students notice similar sounds.

On Friday we go to the hardware store. The hardware store is on the corner of Payne Avenue and Maryland Avenue. We ask questions. The cashier helps us. We find the mouse traps. We find the bedbug spray. We find cockroach powder. We will kill the pests. We find the stove cleaner, the wall cleaner, the dish soap, and washing machine soap and snow brush. We find a rake. We pay money to the cashier. He gives us a bag and change. We say thank you. We are happy.

Sentence forming and fluency practice (20 minutes)

- **Distribute words and read aloud:** Teacher passes out words from pocket chart, then each learner takes turns standing up and reading their word aloud
- **Sentence forming and fluency:** Teacher reads sentence aloud. Learners with the matching word cards form a line on the front right side. Each learner with a word in the sentence reads it aloud, the teacher reads the sentence with natural stress, clapping on the emphasized words, then the class repeats together. Teacher moves to the front of the room to guide fluency practice- says a sentence naturally and the learners decide which words are emphasized. Entire class stands up on the emphasized words. Teacher then says the sentence at normal speed, and either the entire class or volunteers repeat the sentence. Learners in the line sit down, and teacher reads the next sentence, etc.

Flyswatter game (10 minutes)

- **Set up game:** Teacher and learners come up to the front of the room and tape the word cards randomly on the two white boards. Two chairs are set side by side, facing the board.
- **Review directions**
- **Play game:** Two learners come up and sit in the chairs in the front of the room. The teacher (sometimes learners) calls out a word and the two learners try to hit the word with their flyswatter first. The rest of the class calls out directions and spells the words to help them.

Break (15 minutes)

Reading (10 minutes)

- **Silent reading:** Learners take out their stories for the week, read silently at tables. Teacher assists groups as needed.
- **Story leader reading:** One learner at each table reads the story aloud while everyone else follows along, teacher moves between tables to assist as needed. When finished, teacher checks in with class. If necessary, class does a choral reading.

Phonics Work (25 minutes)

- **Elicit sounds:** Teacher has learners look for words with specific sounds, writes the sounds on board.
- **Form pairs:** Teacher pairs up learners and passes out letter tile sets to each pair.
- **Form words:** Teacher calls out word, learner pairs move letter tiles to form the word. Learners spell word and teacher or a learner writes on board, read together, break words apart by phonemes then put them back together.
- **Sort words by sound/letter:** Teacher erases words, then passes out word cards from the list on the board. Learners come up and place them in the correct column. Teacher leads reading each column.

Question mingle (20 minutes)

- **Review questions:** Teacher writes questions on board, class practices together.
- **Question mingle:** Learners count off, then half the class gathers on the right side to receive question charts. Learners sitting at the tables answer the questions. Learners asking the questions move around the room until their chart is filled in. When most learners have completed their charts, the groups switch roles and the second group moves to the right of the room for charts and then mingle asking questions.

Wrap Up, Close.

Discussion Questions 2

Study Circle for Teachers of Low-literacy Adult ESL Students

Following these readings:

Condelli, L. & Wrigley, H.S. (2006). Instruction, language, and literacy: What works study for adult ESL literacy. *Proceedings from the Inaugural LESLLA Symposium, Tilburg, Netherlands, 2005*. Available: <http://lotos.library.uu.nl/index.html> [Read excerpt ONLY, pages 126-130, Summary and Discussion of Main Findings]

Curtis, M.E. & Kruidenier, J.R. (2005). *Teaching adults to read: A summary of scientifically based research principles*. National Institute for Literacy. Available: http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/teach_adults.pdf

Vinogradov, P. (2010). Balancing top and bottom: learner-generated texts for teaching phonics. *Proceedings from the 5th LESLLA Symposium - Low-Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition*. Banff, Canada, September 2009. Available: http://www.leslla.org/files/resources/Conference_Proceedings_FINAL_Aug12.pdf

1. In your own words, briefly define the following terms:

alphabetics

fluency

vocabulary

comprehension

Which of these areas do your students struggle with the most? What's something you've tried that seems to work well to address this challenge?

2. In the excerpt from the Condelli & Wrigley article, the authors describe in more depth the implications for instruction from the *What Works* study. What are these key findings?

In your opinion, what are 2-3 ways we can implement this research into improved classroom instruction?

3. Vinogradov contends that effective reading instruction for low-literacy adults must be both contextualized and explicit. What do 'contextualized' and 'explicit' mean to you? And what's an example or two from your classroom that illustrate these concepts?

4. What is Whole-Part-Whole instruction? Have you tried it? Your response?

5. Have you tried using the Language Experience Approach (LEA) in class? Which what result? What do you like about it, and what drawbacks do you see to using this approach?



Classroom Task for Meeting Two: Part I

1. Please jot down a classroom task based on the readings that you'd like to try out with your learners.

2. Why did you choose this task or activity?

3. What impact or outcomes are you hoping to see?

4. What contextual factors (e.g., class size, student levels, content focus [e.g., reading/writing or listening/speaking; general ESL or workplace]) will you have to take into account as you plan your classroom task?

5. What signs will you look for to know if the activity or strategy is having an impact on your students?



Part II: After you've tried out this classroom activity, complete the following.

Be prepared to share with the group next time.

1. Describe the task you implemented. What happened? What did you observe?
2. What struck you as interesting about what happened? How did it compare to what you expected?
3. What impact did you see on the students and/or learning?
4. If you were to try this activity again, what might you do differently?
5. What did you learn about the research, theory, or strategy you were testing?

Matching Exercise for whole group (literacy terms)

Note to Facilitator: this large-print set is for the whole group matching task during Meeting Two. Cut the definitions and terms apart for the matching activity.

The next document in is a handout (smaller font) of the same terms to be handed out after the matching task.

1. Alphabeticity	Refers to analyzing words and knowing them by sight. An umbrella term, it includes Phonological Sensitivity, Phonics, Word Analysis, and Sight Words.
2. Automaticity	Fast, accurate and effortless word identification at the single word level. The speed and accuracy at which single words are identified is a very strong predictor of comprehension.
3. Balanced literacy	An instructional approach that combines the meaning-rich activities associated with whole language with explicit teaching of skills as needed. Combining both “top down” and “bottom up” approaches to teaching reading.
4. Comprehension	Understanding what you read. We need this to learn new information, to communicate with others, and to read for pleasure.
5. Fluency	This involves not only automatic word identification but also the application of

	appropriate prosodic features (rhythm, intonation, and phrasing) at the phrase, sentence, and text levels. Some experts emphasize that it also involves anticipation of what will come next, and anticipation facilitates reaction time and is particularly important for comprehension.
6. Language Experience Approach	An approach to teaching literacy that capitalizes on students' oral skills by recording in their own words an experience or story, and then using that text as the basis for reading lessons.
7. Narrative Skills	An ability to describe things and events orally, to tell stories, and to describe sequences of actions.
8. Onset and Rime	Describe phonological units of a spoken syllable. A syllable can normally be divided into two parts: the <u>onset</u> , which consists of the initial consonant or consonant blend, and the <u>rime</u> which consists of the vowel and any final consonants.
9. Phonemic awareness	The ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes in spoken words. For example, if I say "mat" and ask you to change the /m/ to /b/, you are able to produce "bat."

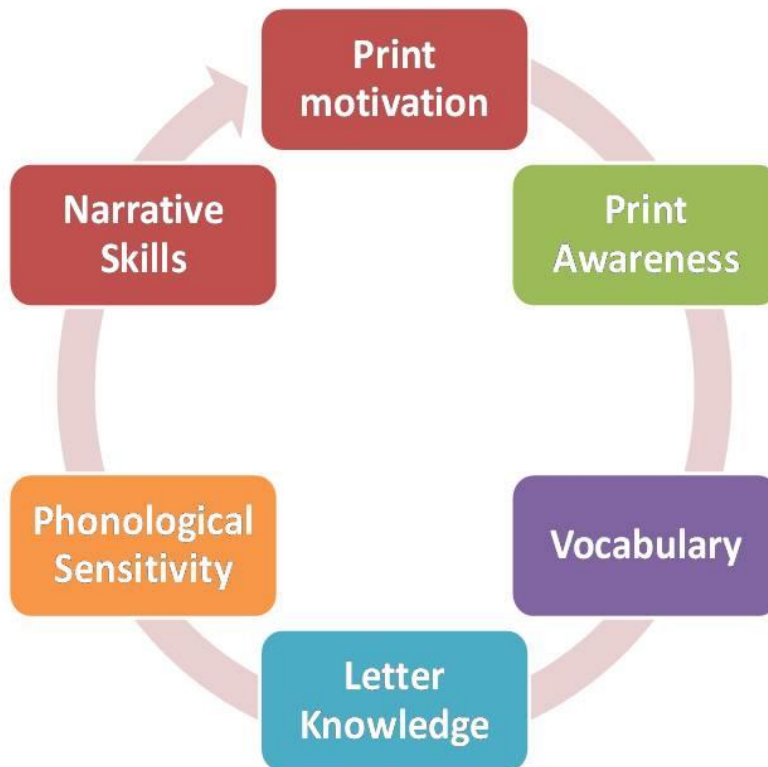
10. Phonics	Teaching reading by emphasizing the relationships between letters and sounds. Instruction that focuses on sound-symbol correspondence.
11. Print awareness	Understanding that the squiggly lines on a page represent spoken language. More specifically, understanding that print has different functions depending on the context– for example, menus list food choices, a book tells a story, a sign can announce a favorite shop or warn of danger. Understanding that print is organized in a particular way – for example, that it is read from left to right and top to bottom. It is knowing that words consist of letters and that spaces appear between words.
12. Print Motivation	A learner’s interest in and enjoyment of reading.
13. Whole-Part-Whole instruction	Method of teaching reading that starts with a whole text then pulls out specific parts to analyze for phonics/phonemic awareness skills, then goes back to the text to practice in context.

Literacy Terms handout

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SIX COMPONENTS OF EARLY LITERACY



How do these translate to our work with ESL adult emergent readers?

Components of Reading

(visual from the National Institute for Literacy, NIFL)

The Components of Reading

Print-Based Components

Alphabetic:

Phonemic Awareness

Word Analysis

(decoding,
word recognition;
structural analysis)

Fluency

Meaning-Based Components

Vocabulary

Comprehension

**Skilled
Reading**

Fluent execution and
coordination of word
recognition and text
comprehension.

Reflection on Meeting Two

Revisit the Meeting Two objectives below. Take a moment to mark a \checkmark , \checkmark^- , or \checkmark^+ next to each.

The study circle participants will:

- Articulate key components of reading and how they play out in the classroom: alphabets, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension.
- Articulate the six components of early literacy and how they relate to low-literate adults.
- Report back on classroom tasks they attempted with their learners since the last meeting.
- Identify several more classroom activities for building literacy skills to try out with their students.
- Confirm a day and time to observe a fellow low-literacy instructor.

Identify 2 key things that you have learned today.

What is 1 thing that you would like to try in your classroom?

Identify one question that you have related to the topic.

Discussion: *How'd we do?* Chat with a partner for a moment.

What can we do to meet those objectives?
Anything we should re-visit next time?

Peer Observation Guide

Where and when are you observing a fellow teacher of low-literacy adult ESL?

Describe the class setting (learners, room, program).

What did you observe?



Comment on how the teacher addressed multiple levels in this class. How was instruction differentiated? *(Please post your response to the online form as well).*

Comment on the materials used in this lesson. Published? Authentic? Learner-generated? Teacher-generated? Your response?

What questions do you have for the instructor?

What idea(s) would you like to take back and try in your own classroom?

Think about and come prepared to discuss the connections you can make between our study circle readings and discussions and what you've observed in this class today.



Study Circle for Teachers of Low-literate Adult ESL Students



Discussion Questions 3

LESLLA: Low-educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition (for Adults)

First for this assignment, please read the description of LESLLA found here: <http://www.leslla.org/about.htm>. There are a number of conference and workshop PowerPoint presentations, proceedings articles, resources, etc. on this site. This entire site is dedicated to the research and application of research being done with low-literacy adult second language learners.

Then, take some time to browse www.esl-literacy.com, an extensive online resource center from Bow Valley College in Calgary, Alberta. Also, take a few minutes to browse the resources posted here: www.multilingualminnesota.org (click on "For Teachers of Adult Pre-literate ESL").



After browsing, choose 2-3 items from the websites (activity ideas, Power Points, handouts, articles, etc.) that you will read and report back on. Write the names of these 2 items here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What did you find or learn that you'd like to share with the group at our next meeting? *In our online forum, you'll find a prompt; please post your response there as well.*

Reflection on Meeting Three

Revisit the Meeting Three objectives below. Take a moment to mark a \checkmark , \checkmark^- , or \checkmark^+ next to each.

The study circle participants will:

6. Become familiar with the LESLLA symposia and website (www.leslla.org), the Bow Valley College resource site (www.esl-literacy.com) and resources available at www.multilingualminnesota.org. Articulate 1-2 useful items from these sites.
7. Make note of LESLLA and other professional organizations that serve low-literacy learners and their instructors.
8. Reflect on peer observations and specifically identify lesson planning and classroom management strategies for effectively teaching multi-level groups.
9. Share and learn about materials and resources available for teachers and students to enhance learning.
10. Evaluate this study circle and identify 1-2 ways that this conversation can be extended.

Identify 2 key things that you have learned today.

What is 1 thing that you would like to try in your classroom?

Identify one question that you have related to the topic.

Discussion: *How'd we do?* Chat with a partner for a moment.

What can we do to meet those objectives and continue our conversations and learning, even though our face to face meetings are coming to an end?

Online Forum: Information for Moderator

The Forum Moderator will:

- start new topics
- approve suggested topics and/or posts
- address inappropriate topics/posts
- encourage participants
- clarify questions
- ensure appropriate used

To start new topics:

1. Go to www.atlasabe.org
2. Click “ATLAS Forums” under “News” headline
3. Click “2. Low-Lit Forum”
4. Log In (INSERT NAME_PASSWORD)
5. Click “New Topic”
6. Enter New Topic Title and Initial Post
7. Click Submit

To approve suggested topics and/or posts:

The moderator(s) will receive an email notification when new topics and/or posts have been added.

The email will display the topic and/or the post. Once you’ve read the suggestions, you have two options: “View this post” or “Approve this topic and/or post”

If the topics and/or posts are acceptable, simply click “Approve this topic and/or post”. The “View this post” option can be totally disregarded.

If the topics and/or posts violate the participant guidelines, click on the name of the poster within the body of the email. Clicking on the name will allow you to compose and send an email clarifying why this post does not fit within guidelines.

In case the above approval process has issues, you can go through Admin to approve. This process is as follows:

Approve Suggested New Topics in Admin:

1. Go to ATLAS admin page: www.atlasabe.org/admin
2. Log In (INSERT NAME_PASSWORD)
3. Click “Modules”
4. Click “Forums”
5. Click “Low-Lit”
6. Click “Topics and Posts”

7. Select Unapproved Topic
8. Check “Approved” Box
9. Click “Save topic”

Approve New Posts in Admin:

1. Go to ATLAS admin page: www.atlasabe.org/admin
2. Log In (INSERT NAME_PASSWORD)
3. Click “Modules”
4. Click “Forums”
5. Click “Low-Lit”
6. Click “Topics and Posts”
7. Select Topic to see all posts under that topic
8. Click “Edit” next to unapproved posts
9. Under post, select “Yes” from “Approved?” dropdown box
10. Click “Save”

Online Forum: Basic Information for Participants

Moderator: This information is to be shared with participants when you first contact them about the first meeting.

In order to fully participate in the Low-Literacy Study Circle, participants will:

- register to low-lit forum
- post to forums in alignment with study circle expectations
- suggest topics that will further collaborative efforts
- respond to colleagues' posts
- read and be mindful of participant guidelines (listed below)

To Register:

Go to www.altasABE.org – News – ATLAS Forums – Login/Register – Complete Registration - Submit

To Post:

News – ATLAS Forums – Low-Lit Forum – Select Topic – New Post – Ensure the “Subscribe me to this topic” box is checked – Submit

To Suggest a Topic:

News – ATLAS Forums – Low-Lit Forum – New Topic – Name Topic – Ensure the “Subscribe me to this topic” box is checked – Submit

To Respond to a Prior Post:

News – ATLAS Forums – Low-lit Form – Select Topic - New Post – Ensure the “Subscribe me to this topic” box is checked – Submit

Online Forum: Guidelines for Participation

Moderator: Please share these guidelines with participants when you first contact them about Meeting One.

General:

- We have found that learning is promoted by dialogue in a spirit of inquiry, curiosity, and mutual respect. Please conduct your discussions in that spirit within the Low-Literacy Study Circle Forum.
- Messages typed in all capitals are considered shouting and in discussion forums are considered rude, so please be considerate. For emphasis use bold, italics, or underline instead of all capitals.
- Comments made in jest may not always appear that way to other readers. Sarcasm rarely works on the internet and is often misunderstood. Please take care in using humor.
- By subscribing to the forum and/or specific topics, you will ensure that you get notification when posts are published to the website so you may follow colleagues' posts.
- If something about a post is deemed inappropriate by a moderator, you will receive notification from the moderator that the post will not be published.

Posts:

- Please introduce yourself to other group members when posting to the group for the first time, as requested for Meeting One.
- Link to articles you reference whenever possible. This makes for more efficient use by those who read your ideas and enhances the knowledge base of the field.
- Be concise. Shorter, to the point messages move the discussion along at a lively pace.
- You will receive notice that your post will need to be approved before being displayed. Your facilitator will review posts daily and approve all post that meet guideline requirements.

Replies to Posts:

- Before you reply to a post, consider whether your response is to everyone in the group, or just to one specific person. If response is to a particular person, indicate by typing @NAME before the post.

- It helps participants if you quote the part of the message (usually not the whole message) to which you are replying. Participants will then respond to your message in the proper context.

- If you are responding to a post, but want to change the topic of a discussion thread, start a new topic and quote the part of the message (usually not the whole message) from which you are starting the new topic.

Topics:

- Give each new topic a clear and specific title with words people can find through search. “Adult education” is too broad a title as every post using the term “education” will pull up in a search. “Math lesson plans” is more specific and your message will return on searches made by those seeking lesson plans.

- Do not duplicate topics. Before starting a new topic, use the search function to see if a discussion on that topic already exists and contribute to that discussion if applicable.

Study Circle Feedback Questions

The following questions assist us in evaluating and improving this study circle. Thank you for sharing your insights!

1. Please comment on the readings you did for this study circle. Please comment both on the *amount* of reading you did (too much? OK? too little?) and also the *usefulness* of the readings to you in your work.

2. What did you enjoy about the study circle meetings? Please explain.

3. What would you change about the meetings?

4. Please comment on the Classroom Task assignment (when you implemented a classroom task based on the readings and then reported back to the group in Meeting Two). How useful was this activity for you? Other comments?

5. Please comment on the Observation assignment (when you observed a fellow teacher and reported back in Meeting Three). How useful was this activity for you? Other comments?

6. The Study Circle had four main objectives for participants. Please comment on how well these objectives were met and offer any feedback you'd like to share.

The participants will:

a. Become familiar with relevant research in literacy and language development in low-literacy adults.

b. Articulate connections between relevant research and effective classroom practices with low-literacy adults.

c. Identify useful resources (for students and teachers) that can enhance teaching and learning.

d. Receive and provide support and ideas in this group setting, thereby creating more effective, more engaging, and more satisfying teaching and learning experiences in low-literacy adult ESL classrooms.

7. Do you have any other comments for the facilitator or organizers?

8. On what other topics would you like to have a study circle?