

A COMMON THREAD FOR ESL PLANNING

A yearlong curriculum guide for new and experienced ESL teachers

OR

"Where do I start?"

"Which book is best?"



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Introduction

Teaching adult ESL has changed over the past years. When I first entered the field I was asked to talk with the students, teach some culture and reading skills. I searched for the "perfect" text, one that would be interesting to both the student and the teacher. I would often order a text with the current class in mind and as luck would have it, the class that came in the fall had different needs and wants!

Then there were the wonderful workshops that I attended and came back with many great ideas that I could use for the next class. The class loved them on Monday and then came Wednesday, follow up? I felt a bit restless. The best solution for me was to begin a collection of ideas that I could pull from: great worksheets, sample texts, newspaper or magazine stories and pictures.

As the ESL Mentor teacher, I am many times asked the questions: "Where's the text?" or "Which book do I begin with?" or "Where and how do I start?" I share with new teachers the resources I have and how they can pull ideas and lessons from many books they have at their Centers. For those who are really new, as well as those with experience, there was still a need for "something" to follow, groundwork from which one can build. This is how the idea for this "curriculum skeleton" grew.

I have gone through my files and tried to pull the best of the best to share with you. I have spent time thinking about the classes and levels I have taught and how they are the same as well as how they are different. The curriculum that I share here with you is intended to be groundwork from which you can build and add your personal style. How fast you go through it, what you choose to skip and what you choose to use will depend on the class you have. You can use it from year to year as you build on it. Learn to: stretch a lesson to cover the multi-levels in your room; save an idea from one month to reuse at a later time as well as stretch your limited budget and use the materials you currently have.

I wish you many happy planning and teaching sessions in NH Adult ESL! Please let me know how you are using this curriculum guide, how you have improved and personalized it. It is by sharing ideas that we all become better teachers.

CURRICULUM

SEPTEMBER



This is an important month for both you and the students. There is a saying that “adult students speak with their feet”. They know what they want and what they are coming to class for and if they are not getting it they will not tell you but rather not come back to class. This can happen in any given month but at the beginning as they set their goals they need to know that you are going to help them meet these goals. They need to know that they will be respected and are in a safe learning environment. Much of the first few classes need to be spent on creating class community. Once the community is established the students will care for one another and are comfortable and ready to learn.

Setting a community does not mean all fun and game-like activities for the first month. Students need to know that they are learning English as well as forming a community. As the teacher you need to combine fun with English so that as they leave the first day they feel they have learned something new, made new friends and want to return.

A goal for the teacher is to be sure that in each class the students are learning practical, useful English. We are community, survival based ESOL programs. Most students will improve their English to get a better job or have more confidence communicating in English in the community. You may have a few that will go to college or a HiSET program but they are the minority and may not be the focus. At the end of each class ask your students: “What have you learned today that you can use outside of class? What are you taking with you and feel you can use this afternoon or tomorrow?”

Keeping usefulness in mind, this is how I suggest you begin in September.

SEPTEMBER

1. Greetings/Introductions
 - a. Class expectations
 - b. About "me"

2. Numbers
 - a. Address
 - b. Phone
 - c. Calendar

3. Weather
 - a. Seasons

4. Holiday - local primary day

Beginning:

Keep the information simple and clear. Look for books with lots of white space on the pages so as not to "overload" the student with letters and words that might not have much meaning at this point.

Students learn how to greet someone they know and how to respond when they meet someone new. They learn to ask simple questions such as: How are you? Where are you from? Where do you work? They need to know their name and address without having to look at a piece of paper. They learn the days of the week, months and 1 to 30 so that they can give the date.

Weather is a great topic - it is what New Englanders love to talk about!

Intermediate:

These students will be able to express themselves and give basic information. They will be able to make a class directory with little guidance. They will learn where their classmates live in relation to where they live. They can tell what they did last month and plan to do next month. The seasons are familiar to them and they can begin to compare the weather in each and choose a favorite.

Advanced:

These students can compare their country to the United States. They can create a class directory and decide what information they would like to have in it. When speaking of weather they are learning to compare and contrast the weather here, daily and seasonal, to the weather in their country.

OCTOBER



You have established community within your classroom. You have found some of the interests of your students, how they like to learn, and why they are in class. In October you will take that information and stretch it to learn more about their families and friends. Most students want you to know about their families and friends and can begin to talk in English about them.

As you begin to introduce the students to American holidays you are teaching culture. It is important that the students know what is happening and why. They do not have to celebrate the holidays and may want to keep their own holidays and customs but need to know what we celebrate in the United States and why.

OCTOBER

1. Family
 - a. Relationships
 - b. Friends

2. Clothing
 - a. Seasonal wear
 - b. Weather

3. Holidays
 - a. Columbus Day
 - b. Halloween

Beginning:

Family trees (actually drawing trees) can be a good visual way to begin this month. Students can also bring in pictures of their family members to share. Bring in your own family pictures and teach vocabulary: mother, father, sister, brother, husband, wife, son, daughter, aunt, uncle, grandmother and grandfather. Students label their family members with names and relationship. As the weather is changing notice what the students are wearing. Review the weather (recycle September!) and how it is changing. Relate the clothing in the pictures of their family members to review vocabulary that is relevant. Holidays are noted on a calendar and what to expect. Simple picture stories are good.

Intermediate:

Students are familiar and will review relationships within families. This level student is ready to use and understand in-law relationships. Clothing is tied to comparison of what they used to wear in their country and/or last month/season. Vocabulary increases with the different types of clothing (jacket, coat, parka; shirt, blouse, t-shirt; pants, slacks trousers etc) Try to look for simple readings about the holidays and talk about what they will do as far as celebrating them.

Advanced:

Family and friends vocabulary is known so that students can tell about them and learn to write and give good descriptions of people. Students can name clothing types and learn accepted dress for work, recreation and special occasions. Comparisons and opinions can be expressed orally and written at this level. The weather is described in more details with more descriptive vocabulary. Look for more intense readings that include family, as well as the holidays. US history is good to begin at this level for holidays.

NOVEMBER



Your class has been established. You have a core of students that are coming to class and with open or managed enrollment you may now have new students who are back at the September starting point - what to do?

Recycling is good for everyone. The students who have been in class can be the ones to explain what they have been learning. This will reinforce for you that they do understand what they have been learning and are ready to use it OR need a refresher too!

It is your role to welcome the new students to your community and to make them feel welcome. Let them know that as a class you have been working together since September so for a while they may get confused but they are free to ask any questions of you or another student.

You may want to have a set time to review during each class or you may want to continue with the new topics while making sure the new students have the grammar that has been covered thus far and they need.

NOTE: Since Thanksgiving is a US holiday it is the one time that the food can be limited to a traditional Thanksgiving table so as to introduce students to this cultural meal. For many it is the only chance they will have to experience this food that is so much a part of American culture. With guidance they are happy to help prepare a traditional Thanksgiving dinner or at the minimum they can bring in samples of some of the items to have a class tasting party.

NOVEMBER

1. Food
 - a. Food groups
 - b. Nutrition

2. Money

3. Holidays
 - a. Election Day
 - b. Veteran's Day
 - c. Thanksgiving Day

Beginning:

Picture dictionaries are great for food as well as the weekly local circulars from the grocery stores. Have students find pictures of what they eat and label them. Plan a daily meal plan using the food groups and nutritional guidelines. Most know money but need work on pronunciation and how much various foods cost. Compare from store to store. For the holidays simple picture stories work the best so that students can learn the related vocabulary.

Intermediate:

Students can compare the foods they eat in the USA to what they used to eat. Using comparisons they can decide if their diet is healthy and why or why not? The student at this level can describe foods and teach how to make/cook something giving directions. They can begin to talk about health and healthy eating. Using circulars or field trips the students learn to compare prices using more than or less than. Easy to read stories about the holidays and their importance to US history are good at this level.

Advanced:

Students at this level have a good hold on the food vocabulary and can focus on modals and different verb tenses to express eating habits. They can comment on various diets and their benefits to health. Money at this level is related more to value. Readings can involve the newspapers to learn more about the local, state and national elections as well as more textbook cultural readings to learn more about the holidays.

DECEMBER



This is a great time to review all that has been taught and worked on up to this point. Many students are working a second job or overtime and class time is limited. They want to keep up with their English skills so let them have fun and enjoy the season.

Many ESL students do not celebrate Christmas but the season has become very secular and it is important for them to understand the vocabulary to understand the culture. Present the vocabulary as any other unit, whether health or food for example. These are words they need to understand when heard.

Everyone needs to shop. Each student needs food and clothing and at some point may purchase a gift for someone. The season is short so plan a fun unit to fit the needs of your class. Shopping does not need to be taught in the holiday sense but as an ongoing skill.

A review of clothing is good at this point and fliers are in abundance in December. Have the students use these fliers to look for articles of clothing they have or need to buy.

Stress the importance of attending class to better their English skills. If they can come for part of a class thank them for that. If they are traveling or working and can not be there make sure they let you know so that they will be welcome to return in January.

DECEMBER

1. Shopping

2. Holidays
 - a. Hanukkah
 - b. Christmas
 - c. Kwanzaa

Beginning:

Simple, clear lessons are best. Look for materials that have good pictures and simple explanations. Students can make a poster or personal dictionary of clothing they have or need to purchase. Make a list of things they plan to buy and stores they could find them in. By talking about a budget or cost of these items you will be reviewing money for them. Short stories or photos with captions can be good sources for reading.

Intermediate:

This level student has experience in shopping and possibly returning. The correct vocabulary for exchanging and a reason for the exchange or return are needed. The ability to bring back an item may be new as in some countries this is not possible.

Students can read short stories about the various holidays and express opinions on them. If the group has celebrated different holidays or the same one but differently have them work on comparisons.

Advanced:

The students in this level are usually good at purchasing and exchanging. What is needed is extended vocabulary. This is a good time to work on adjectives and adverbs. A class project would be to "adopt" a family. Find the family from your picture file. The class can give the family members names, addresses, jobs etc. Their task is to shop for this family. This can be for the holidays or for everyday needs. This will recycle a lot of the topics and vocabulary since September.

JANUARY



January can be a second September! Students who missed in December may feel that they missed too much and are no longer a part of the class. Attendance is often low and the seats may be filled by a new set of faces. There will always be the faithful strain that will return and want to continue where they left off in December.

This is an opportunity to ask: "What have you learned? What helped you? How have you used the English you have learned so far? What do you hope/need to learn as the class continues?" This can be the welcome to the new students and will spread excitement to be part of this ESL community.

The weather is cold so be sure to show you appreciate the extra effort they make to come out in the cold and snow. Review weather by using the current weather to stimulate conversation as well as recycling clothing as students wear coats, jackets, sweaters and boots now. Outerwear and underwear can be confusing and fun to work with!

Now that people spend more time inside the chances of getting colds and the flu increase. Review healthy eating habits. If they do get sick, where do they go, whom do they call? When do you call a doctor or go to the pharmacy? How much should it cost?

JANUARY

1. Health
 - a. Doctor
 - b. Dentist
 - c. Hospital
 - d. Diet

2. Holidays
 - a. New Year's Day
 - b. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Beginning:

Picture dictionaries are very good but there are many good materials with easy to read and understand medical lessons. There are many different kinds of doctors but at this level be careful to keep it simple. It is best to know a few well than to have heard many and remember none. General dentist, General Practitioner, pediatrician, OBGYN and orthopedic doctors are a good foundation. Have the students list the doctors they use and put into categories. Medical forms for the emergency room as well as a doctor's office are important to understand. Find simple forms to work on and make sure they know the important basic information. Eating well and the difference between colds and the flu are essential. Holidays again can be in pictures with simple sentences.

Intermediate:

At this level the students have basic vocabulary and knowledge for medical use. They need to expand upon it to learn the various levels and words for pain. What type of medicine can you get over the counter for the flu or a cold? When do you call 911 or go to the ER? How do I use a pharmacist for questions about medications? More types of doctors can be added to the basic list. Find out the types of questions regarding health students have and correlate the doctor that might be of help.

Advanced:

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a doctor, what kind? The advanced students can work on the types of medical doctors they have used and why. What is a good list of various types of doctors and then make the list for class use or to share with the other levels. Read about MLK and the Civil Rights movement of the 60's. How does it tie into society today? Use civics and citizenship books for the reading.

February



February is another short month. There are only 28 days and a winter break. Students who are from warmer countries may be challenged to leave the warmth of their homes to attend class. It is important that they feel the time in class is valuable - so much so that they do brave the weather to get there!

Survey the class to find out more about their jobs, both past and present. What would they like to do if they had the opportunity? Is it language that is holding them back? Education? How can we help them reach their goal?

Transportation has most likely changed for most students. Many have cars for the first time. A fun walk is through the parking lot to name the various types of vehicles: sedan, station wagon, mini-van, SUV, pickup truck, etc. Car insurance is a good topic to cover and many local agencies are willing to come in to speak about NH insurance regulations.

Valentine's Day may be new and it is important, especially if they have children in elementary schools, to understand the idea of Valentine cards. In our culture we send cards to good friends as well as "sweethearts".

FEBRUARY

1. Jobs
2. Transportation
3. Holidays
 - a. Valentine's Day
 - b. President's Day

Beginning:

Find out what jobs the students have. Do they have a title and what responsibilities do they have? Begin with pictures if they are unsure of the language so that they can acquire the language they need. How do they get to work? What types of transportation have they used: bikes, cars, trains, buses, foot? Use/recycle money to explain President's Day. Do they have George Washington in their pockets? This is a big car sale time of the year in this culture so ads are a good way to talk and show different types of vehicles.

Intermediate:

This level student may have enough English to want to look for a new job. Resume writing can be helpful. Students can list all jobs they have had and skills they currently have. They can then think about jobs they would like to have and what they think the requirements are. How can they get the skills they need? Newspapers and computers are good resources for job searching. If they are not working they can compare what they used to do or what they would like to do if they could. Simple readings on the founding of the US and George Washington, civil rights and Abraham Lincoln are good basis to help understand how America has grown.

Advanced:

Advanced level students may have a good job and not think about changing. If they felt their English was better would they stay where they are or look for something new? What would help their English to improve? This may be a good chance for them to look at the US education system and how they "fit in" and where they can go next. How many types of transportation are available in the US? How many have they used? How could it be improved?

MARCH



This is a good month for number of student contact hours available. There are few holidays and no vacation breaks. It is a good time to have the students think about all they have been working on and what they still want to accomplish before the year ends. Let them know how much time they have left with you. Set reasonable goals as a class. Remind them that you can "cover" a lot in the time left but it is more important to understand what they are learning and be able to use it. They will be welcome to return another year if they want to.

Weather is not usually an issue but once again we have a change in clothing types. Review what they have been wearing and what they need now. How is the weather changing? Will their budgets change as they start to lower the heat? Recycle and use language worked on through this month. Students may begin to be able to express themselves a lot more comfortably at this point with all the recycling throughout the year.

Set reasonable goals for yourself. You may "have a lot more to cover" before the students leave but who are you covering it for - you or the students? Whose agenda are you following? Remember to ask the students at the end of each class: "What will you take with you today to use in the real world?"

MARCH

1. Home
 - a. Apartment
 - b. Condo
 - c. House
 - d. Rooms/furniture

2. Education

3. Holidays
 - a. St. Patrick's Day

Beginning:

Simple language for the types of housing is a good starting point. Teach the difference between rent and mortgage. The various names for rooms in their apartment or house as well as the furniture in the rooms are good for basic level vocabulary. Explain the basic education system of the US and how students progress through it. Teach why they see shamrocks in the stores in March.

Intermediate:

Students can expand their vocabulary to include descriptions of their furniture as well as placement. Prepositions are useful and easier to understand as they describe their homes. Compare education systems in the US to those in their country. With the education they have where would they fit in the US system? Immigration can be tied to St. Patrick's Day and the Irish coming to America.

Advanced:

Advanced students increase their vocabulary to describe their homes and furniture. They will want to be more specific in describing how their homes are set up and where things are located. This level student may be dreaming of owning a home in the US one day. Teach various styles of homes and how to contact a realtor. How does the education system here compare to the one in their country? What is the next educational step to improve their English? Find readings or use the computer to learn how immigration has changed since the Irish came to The United States.

APRIL



Spring is here, flowers are beginning to bud and you begin to see English budding and beginning to flower in your students now!

This is the month that you begin to really see the students try to use English and they have more confidence in themselves. All of the drills and hard work is beginning to pay off.

April is a shorter month with a vacation week this month but there is still time to introduce one more topic - community. Community is a word that is used in many contexts. Have the students brainstorm the many communities that they belong to. If they are stuck let them know a few you are connected to. Reinforce the classroom community they have been building all year long.

This month is a good month to review and recycle as community can be thought of as a cumulative topic that includes many of the other topics that have been covered.

You may want to work on the various grammar points that you have taught this year. Use your imagination and think of how you can recycle readings from the past, grammar lessons from the past with the topic, community. In recycling you will notice confidence building in the students.

APRIL

1. Community
 - a. Fire
 - b. Police
 - c. Library
 - d. Resources

2. Holidays

Beginning:

911 - for emergency only! If they have other questions be sure they know the local number. Make a list of information that the fire and police departments can be contacted for. Local laws, parking and parking tickets as well as driving rules are basic necessary information. A trip to the library to get a library card will help them to locate resources available in the community.

Intermediate:

The levels of police, local and state, are good to know as well as how to contact local fire or police and for what purpose. Students can visit the local library with a set purpose. In addition to getting a library card prepare a scavenger hunt for information, such as how would you find a book for your child? A DVD? Can you borrow artwork? Does the library have a list of local resources?

Advanced:

Newspapers are a good resource at this level to help students discover the community. They can follow local stories as well as state and national news and sports. Who is a community figure they often read about it? How can they make a difference in the community? They can make a booklet of resources for the other level classes. If classes are at the same day and time they could make presentations to the lower levels. City/town government can be a focus with a comparison to the state level. Teach whom to contact in the community if they have a question or problem.

NOTE: Guest speakers from the police and fire departments are good at all levels. Be sure to let the speaker know the level of English and what you want them to focus their presentation on. Easter/spring is a holiday this month that can be focused on depending on your students and their interest.

MAY



CONGRATULATIONS! You have reached the end of the year. Look over your roster to see how your class has changed. Try to think of why: students moved, got jobs, objectives were not being met or maybe class time. It is helpful to give the class a survey to see what they liked and didn't like throughout the year. What can they do now that they couldn't do a few months ago? Do they feel better/stronger about their English? How can the class be improved for next year?

The theme for this month is review. Ask the students what they would like to go back over. Where are their weaknesses that need a bit of fine-tuning? They will let you know.

Gather pamphlets from New Hampshire rest areas on places to visit over the summer. Collect information from students who have been to some places and use computers to find out more information about places of interest for others.

Find ways for students to use English over the summer break: classes? Library? Groups they can join? The more they use their language the easier it will become for them.

MAY

1. Summer
 - a. Places to visit in NH/NE
 - b. Ways to keep up with English
2. Review
3. Holidays
 - a. Memorial Day

Beginning:

Bring in a few brochures from places to see in New Hampshire that are close to your location. Have students draw picture maps (not to scale) of these places related to where their class is held. Prepare a simple list of ways they can keep using or learning English over the summer. Review topics covered this year based on what they would like to review. Easy readings with pictures about Memorial Day and summer are appropriate.

Intermediate:

Bring in brochures for the students to look over and ask them to choose places that they have been to and would recommend to others or would like to see and why. Prepare activities that review what they students learned this year. If you used games or activities this is a good month to bring them back out and let them use the ones they want to review. If the majority chooses the same skill/topic prepare a mini review lesson. Read about Memorial Day, who it honors and when it became a holiday.

Advanced:

Plan an imaginary summer vacation to sightseeing places in New Hampshire. Have the students work in groups to choose where they would start and what they would see. Different groups could plan different trips (young children, teens, company from another state) as well as different lengths of time. Use various brochures to create a new brochure of their planned trip. Include topics covered throughout the year: where to seek medical, police or fire help; what type of clothing will they need; how will they travel; what will they eat.

NOTE: Plan an end of the year celebration to celebrate their accomplishments this year. Food, music and certificates let them know that you appreciate the effort they put into being part of the ESL community.

GRAMMAR

The grammar guidelines here are just that, guidelines. From experience in community based programs these are recommended for each level so that a student can move into the next level and be comfortable and successful. As with everything else, they may be more competent with one level of grammar than another but need the "push" into the next level to be more motivated or realize what they do understand and have learned.

I have chosen to keep the grammar a bit more general. As a teacher you can adapt what you need for your class. One year a class may grasp the point more quickly than another year. Before you move to a new point be sure the students have a good base of what you are leaving. Remember to recycle back throughout the year. The more the students use it the more it will become a natural part of their new language. You can move to a new month with a new topic but if the students are not ready to move to a new grammar point don't. Continue with the one you are working with. The new topic may help to make it clearer for the students.

As students move to a higher level they may feel a bit of apprehension at first. If each level is working on the same topics each month the student has a foundation to build upon through grammar. It is important to remember that we are community education and a goal of our programs is to help our students feel more comfortable in their new language.

Level 1

1. Simple present tense
 - a. Be and have
 - i. Statements
 - ii. Contractions
 - iii. Negatives
 - iv. Yes/no questions and short answers

2. Pronouns
 - a. Subject: he, she, you, it, they, you, we
 - b. Object: him, her, you, it, them, us
 - c. Possessive: hers, his, yours, mine, ours

3. Singular & Plural
 - a. Articles: a, an, the
 - b. These, those, this, that

4. Past tense:
 - a. Be
 - b. Regular verbs
 - c. Irregular verbs

5. Future tense
 - a. Be going to
 - b. Time expressions
 - i. Today
 - ii. Tonight
 - iii. Tomorrow
 - iv. Next week, next month, next year
 - v. In a few minutes, in a little while, in a few hours, in a week, in a month

6. Prepositions

- a. Place: in, on, next to, between, under, over, near, behind
 - i. In - school, a city, state, country
 - ii. At - work, school, home, building number

- b. Time: in, at, on

7. Present Continuous

- a. Now, right now, at this moment
- b. Be + verb + ing

8. Adjectives

- a. Descriptive
- b. Possessive - my, his, her, your, their

9. Adverbs

- a. Frequency
 - i. Always
 - ii. Sometimes
 - iii. Never

10. Questions

- a. Yes/no with short answers
- b. Who, what, when, where, why

Level 2

1. Present tense (facts, habits)
 - a. Be
 - i. Statements
 - ii. Questions
 - iii. Contractions
 - b. Have
 - i. Statements
 - ii. Questions
 - iii. Contractions
2. Present continuous (present progressive)
 - a. Now, right now, at the present time
 - b. Is + verb + ing
 - i. Spelling rules
3. Past
 - a. Regular verbs
 - b. Irregular verbs
4. Past progressive
 - a. Time clause, when
5. Future
 - a. Will + base of verb
 - b. Going to
6. Nouns
 - a. Proper - capitalization
 - b. Common
 - c. Count
 - d. Non-count

7. Pronouns

- a. Subject
- b. Object
- c. Possessive

8. Adjectives

- a. Descriptive
- b. Comparative
- c. Superlative

9. Adverbs

- a. Frequency

10. Prepositions

- a. Place
- b. Time
- c. Phrases

11. Modals

- a. Ability, possibility, request
- b. Can, can't
- c. Could, couldn't
- d. Should, shouldn't
- e. Would, wouldn't
- f. Have to
- g. Must

Level 3

1. Present
 - a. Simple present
 - b. Present Progressive
 - c. Imperative

2. Past
 - a. Simple past
 - b. Past Progressive
 - c. Used to

3. Future
 - a. Time clause, when

4. Phrasal verbs

5. Pronouns
 - a. Subject
 - b. Object
 - c. Possessive
 - d. Reflexive

6. Nouns and articles
 - a. Quantifiers
 - i. Some, enough, a lot of, any
 - ii. A few, several, many,
 - iii. A little, a great deal of, much
 - b. Articles
 - i. Indefinite: a, an, some
 - ii. Definite: the
 - c. Count
 - d. Non-count

7. Modals

- a. Ability
- b. Permission
- c. Requests
- d. Advice
- e. Suggestions

8. Present Perfect

- a. Since and for
- b. Already and yet
- c. Indefinite past

9. Adjectives

- a. Comparison with as
- b. Superlatives

10. Adverbs

- a. Frequency
- b. Comparatives
- c. Superlatives

11. Prepositions

- a. Place
- b. Time
- c. Phrases

12. Conjunctions

- a. And, but so, or

13. Gerunds

- a. Subject
- b. Object

14. Infinitives

- a. To + base form of verb
 - i. To make
 - ii. To help
 - iii. To meet

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS AND WEB SITES

MATERIALS

The following materials are not listed in any particular order. These are a few of the books that I have as resources and use according to the theme and grammar that is being covered. Some texts cover the same topics but the skill level increases with the advancement of each level. This allows you to use the same topic and stretch the activities to fit your multilevel classroom.

All books are good books. There are many to choose from to fit your teaching style as well as your student's learning styles. Keep an open mind as you review texts. If you can't afford a class set, purchase a half set so students share. Communication happens when they share! If you have taught a topic or grammar point and wish to use a text for reinforcement give out different texts (samples you have collected) and have students review and share what their text has with each other.

Teacher Editions are filled with great ideas. Even if you are not using a series or have an older edition, browse through different manuals for ideas to use.

Don't forget to re-look at your bookshelves. There may be a lot of old books with "new" ideas. Teacher's manuals also use recycling as we do in the classroom.

Thomson- Heinle

Grammar in Action

Four levels: Basic, One, Two, Three

Heinle Picture Dictionary

Heinle Picture Dictionary Workbook

Two levels: Beginning, Intermediate

Grammar in Context

Four levels: Basic, 1, 2, and 3

Pearson Longman

Longman ESL Literacy

Teacher's Resource Book

Student's book

Focus on Grammar

Six levels: Basic, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

True Stories

GREAT reading series - high interest from low beginner to advanced

Nine levels

Center Stage

Four levels with workbooks for each level: 1, 2, 3, and 4

Longman Dictionary of American English

Available with CD

Photo Dictionary of American English

Phrasal Verbs Dictionary

American Idioms Dictionary

Oxford University Press

Oxford Picture Dictionary

Oxford Picture Dictionary Workbook:

Two levels: Beginning, Intermediate

Grammar Activities for the Oxford Picture Dictionary

Classic Classroom Activities for the Oxford Picture Dictionary

Oxford Picture Dictionary Literacy Program

Resource binder with reproducible lessons as well as student books

Read All About It

Three Levels: Starter, Book 1, and Book 2

Step Forward

Four levels with Workbooks for each level: 1, 2, 3, and 4

WEB SITES

www.eslcafe.com

Dave's ESL Café has student and teacher resources.

www.learnenglishfeelgood.com

short movie videos

www.eslflow.com

guide to ESL lesson plans, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, games and activities

www.elcivics.com

More than citizenship information! This site is great for basic readings and well as working with culture.

In addition to these all publishers have their own web sites, which are great resources and full of wonderful ideas and suggestions. Even if you are not using a particular publisher's book, try their web site for ideas.

Activities

In this section I have listed a few activities for your classroom. This is the section of the book that you will add to each time you go to a workshop and come back with a great idea for Monday morning. Remember - you teach more than just that next Monday and is it a great idea that could be used for another lesson at a later date? Save it here and you will have it handy to refer to on a day when you just need to find something to change things up a bit.

Role Play

Role-playing is a great way for the students to have experience in a new area. They can be someone else for a few minutes. They can act as someone acted towards them to find out if their response was good in a given situation. It makes the lesson a bit more real.

At the beginning level role-playing is minimal with a few lines. Make sure the students are getting the right point across and understand what would be expected of them in a given situation. In the intermediate and advanced levels the students can use more vocabulary and may want to come up with a skit that they can share with their class or perhaps a beginning level class. Do they remember their first time to a doctor's office or the ER? What would have helped? Put it into a skit for another class.

Guest Speakers

Guest speakers give the students a new voice to listen to. Even in not all of the students are at the listening level they will be able to understand some words. If the topic is not of interest to them have them focus on the vocabulary. Each guest speaker has a purpose in speaking to your group. It is important that you know your class and each student's needs. If you have a real estate person speaking and you know a student already owns a home or another is not interested have them listen for something in particular: verbs, idioms, adjectives for example.

BLACKBOARD BINGO

Write 10-15 words on the board. Students choose any 5 and write them on a piece of paper. Teacher randomly reads from the list of words but not in the order on the board. The students cross off words on their papers as they hear them. First to get all five is the winner.

Variation: Instead of reading the words the teacher can say the definition of the word and the student must cross off the correct word.

FLASH CARD DICTATION

Have students make their own set for flash cards for the target vocabulary you are working on.

Each student is to write a sentence using one or more of the target words on a piece of paper. Volunteers are chosen to write a sentence on the board. If possible try to rewrite the sentence in order to form a paragraph. Each student copies the paragraph and has it to study for the next class.

Next class, review the story and have the students put the story away but leave their flash cards out. The teacher reads the story but leaves out the target words. Students must place their target words in order in front of them. They can work together as a group, as pairs or individually. When the teacher has finished reading the story have student volunteers write the words in order heard on the board. In a multilevel class some students may opt to write the words they hear, and others may choose to write the whole dictation.

Worksheets

Worksheets certainly have a useful place in the adult ESL classroom. They help students to practice what they are learning and also reinforce and recycle what is being or has been taught.

In this section you will build your curriculum. At first look you might find a theme or grammar point that a worksheet was intended for. Use it and then think how else you could use the same worksheet. In recycling an activity those who have seen it before are the experts and can help newer students. Now add a twist to the worksheet - using it for a new grammar point or theme.

As you add worksheets of your own to this section of the curriculum you'll have them handy for another year. You could also put a sticky note on a sheet dating when you last used the worksheet and what you used it for.

The following suggestions are ways to use a worksheet where you have limited access to copying or want to involve a group or class so students working together.

- One worksheet per table and rotate it around the group and take turns with each item
- Work in pairs to complete a worksheet
- Split the class in half, one to the odd numbers and the other the even and then regroup to get the whole worksheet accomplished
- Let students choose any 5 they would like and do and then circulate within the class to find the ones they didn't do but someone else did.
- Homework! Self correct with a partner and those who didn't have time can work with someone who did.

Post Script

I suggest that you to copy the curriculum and then put it into a 3-ring binder. As you work through the year and find activities and worksheets put them into the binder with the month that you used them for future reference. You will now have a curriculum that you can add to as you teach and personalize it for the group of students you are currently working with. It is a great place to save ideas so that you won't have that "Where did I out that ..." moment!

I hope you enjoy teaching adult ESL in New Hampshire. Please feel free to contact me at any time with suggestions or questions.

Chris Powers
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NOTES: