

## 2. Programming

### How Do You:

- A. **Choose Your Delivery Method?**
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  - iii. Set Up Classes or Small Groups
    - a. ELL Classes
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      - 1. ELL Conversation Classes
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  - vii. Offer Computer-aided Instruction
  - viii. Include Children or School-age Children
- B. **Measure Program Outcomes and Success?**

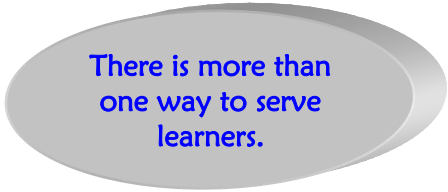
## A. Choosing Your Delivery Method

### *i. Key Concepts*

The majority of literacy organizations began their programming by providing one-to-one adult tutoring utilizing volunteers as tutors. As the needs and resources of communities changed through the years, literacy organizations were challenged to change their services and programming. This section will provide you with **MORE** programming options, including an overview of various methods of delivery, the objectives for this type of instruction, needed resources and evaluation tools.

Across Wisconsin, literacy organizations are providing instruction through many types of programming. Here are some of the most common:

- One-to-One Adult Tutoring (Literacy and/or ELL)
- Classes/Small Group Instruction
  - ELL Classes
  - Small Group/Specialty Instruction
- Family Literacy
- Workplace Literacy/Workforce Development
- Corrections Education in County Jails
- Computer-aided Instruction
- Child/School-age Literacy Tutoring



There is more than one way to serve learners.

In many instances, these programming options were a direct result of having long waiting lists (i.e., more learners than volunteers), dramatic changes in demographics (i.e., creation of ELL classes when refugees arrived in WI), or available funding (i.e., TANF funding, neighborhood block grants, 21st Century grants). Whatever the reason, literacy organizations are finding more ways to serve low-literate and limited-English-speaking adults and their families.

## *ii. One-to-One Adult Tutoring*

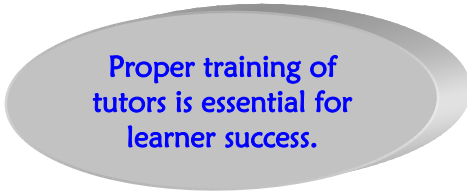
*What does a one-to-one tutoring program look like?*

A typical one-to-one tutoring program consists of:

- recruiting volunteers from the community to become tutors
- providing appropriate tutor training to volunteers
- recruiting adult learners from the community
- assessing learners for proficiency levels, strengths and weaknesses
- matching the adult learner with a tutor
- providing appropriate instructional materials/curriculum
- supporting the tutor's efforts
- monitoring the learner's progress
- recognizing the accomplishments of the match

Tutoring programs strive to provide services to meet these following needs of adult learners:

- learner-centered instruction
- adult-oriented curriculum/authentic materials
- confidential or private instruction
- attainment of personal goals
- flexible scheduling
- multi-sensory instruction
- free instruction
- repetition, reinforcement and recognition of new skills



Proper training of  
tutors is essential for  
learner success.

*What resources are needed to operate one-to-one tutoring programs?*

Volunteer tutoring programs are one of the most cost-efficient and effective ways to educate adults. The minimum resources needed for this program are:

- volunteer tutors
- curricular materials
- training for tutors
- tutoring space
- assessment materials
- a program coordinator (often a volunteer until program is well-established)

The coordinator's primary role is to match the tutors with the learners and oversee their progress. Often, this person is also responsible for recruiting and training the new tutors, evaluating/assessing learners, record-keeping of progress and outcomes, and choosing/creating curriculum and lesson plans.

### *iii. Classes/Small Group Instruction*

When suddenly there are more learners than there are tutors available, a literacy organization will often add group instruction, either utilizing volunteers working with small groups or hiring instructors to teach classes.

#### **a. ELL Classes**

In many areas of the United States, there is such a great demand for English instruction that literacy organizations have had to add English classes. In addition to the resettlement of many Southeast Asian and Somali refugees, many limited-English-speaking Hispanics have settled in the Midwest to work in the agricultural and meat-processing industries.

Formal English Language Learner (ELL) class programming strives to provide the services to meet these following needs of adult learners:

- instruction in reading, writing, listening and speaking English
- free or low-cost English instruction
- practical everyday conversational themes
- multi-level or multiple levels of group instruction
- classes held in locations accessible to learners using public transportation
- class scheduling that accommodates the shift/work schedules of local manufacturers and industries

Instruction should be relevant to the needs of the learner.

In addition, many organizations offering class/group instruction also provide childcare in order to retain learners in the classes.

#### *What are the components to designing ELL classes?*

- Needs Assessment – The literacy organization conducts a needs assessment to determine whether classes are necessary and feasible. Questions to consider:
  - Are there enough learners interested in classes?
  - Do you have space for classes?
  - Do you have a paid or volunteer instructor?
  - How do the classes fit in/flow with your other programming?
  - How will you measure outcomes/progress?
  - Will the classes be open entry/open exit, etc.?
- Skills Assessment – Once the need is determined, potential learners should be evaluated/assessed to determine their proficiency levels. This is necessary

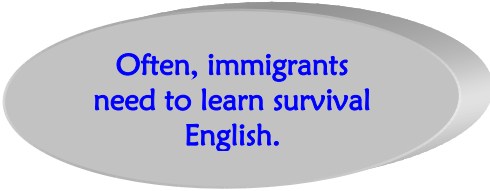
for grouping purposes, curriculum determination and outcome measurement.

- Curriculum Development – The literacy organization and instructors work together to choose/develop materials and methods for instruction. Some curriculum development happens before the instruction begins, but it is ongoing as needs and objectives are identified and modified during the instructional process. As much as possible, authentic materials relevant to the learners are incorporated into the curriculum.
- Instruction – Instruction is delivered according to the timeline/schedule determined by the literacy organization. Class progress and outcomes are reported. Post-testing of learners and instructor feedback are documented.

At the end of a class cycle, the instructor and literacy organization can determine whether to continue instruction with the same learners, start additional classes with new learners or discontinue class instruction.

### *What are some suggestions for pre-literate to beginning English language learners?*

In many instances, literacy organizations begin ELL classes when they have a high percentage of new immigrants with no English skills and/or low English proficiency, and the organization wants to have these individuals start learning survival English immediately. Here are some suggestions for those volunteers often found teaching a newly-formed, beginning ELL level class:



Often, immigrants need to learn survival English.

- Dialogues with related activities – Oral dialogues can be springboards for literacy-oriented activities such as cloze or substitution, where learners supply the missing words in written dialogue or substitute different vocabulary words in structured dialogues, sentence strips, role plays or dictations.
- Vocabulary-building activities – For literacy-level learners, matching pictures to words is key for vocabulary development. Flash cards, concentration games, labeling, vocabulary journals, picture dictionaries and bingo activities can be used to practice vocabulary.
- Class surveys – One type of class survey requires learners to ask the other students one or two questions such as "What month were you born?" or "What is your last name?" and record the answers on a form. The class can debrief the answers to make a chart or graph. If learner names are gathered, the list can be used for alphabetizing practice. A second kind of survey asks learners to find "someone who likes soccer" or "someone who comes from Bolivia." To find the information, learners need to ask questions such as "Do you like soccer?" and record the information on a form. Class surveys are useful for community building as well as for practicing the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Using real-life experiences in instruction is an important part of adult learning theory.

- Language Experience Approach (LEA) – The teacher records text that learners generate from a shared picture or event, drawing out vocabulary that is relevant to the learners. Other activities based on the learner-generated text follow, such as vocabulary development, phonics exercises, choral reading or dictation.
- Phonics exercises – Exercises such as minimal pairs (e.g., hat/cat, pan/fan) or identifying initial word sounds are important components of literacy-level lessons. Relating such exercises to the vocabulary being taught in a lesson contextualizes the learning and makes it relevant. Be sure to use actual words, rather than nonsense syllables. Whenever possible, use authentic materials (flyers, schedules, advertisements, bills) to connect literacy development to real-world tasks.
- Dictations of students' names, phone numbers and addresses – These activities can provide interesting, meaningful content while developing encoding skills. Tactile activities such as drawing the letters in sand with the fingers, coloring letters or manipulating plastic cutouts of letters may offer some variety.



**Resources:**

[www.cal.org/caela/esl\\_resources/faqs.html](http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/faqs.html)

Below is list of recommended publishing companies and websites that offer adult ELL curriculum. Many more are available.

New Readers Press: [www.newreaderspress.com](http://www.newreaderspress.com)

Steck-Vaughn: [steckvaughn.harcourtachieve.com](http://steckvaughn.harcourtachieve.com)

Alta Publications: [www.altaesl.com](http://www.altaesl.com)

Delta systems: [www.delta-systems.com](http://www.delta-systems.com)

ESL-Lounge: [www.esl-lounge.com/premium/why-join.php](http://www.esl-lounge.com/premium/why-join.php)

The following links contain excellent examples of ELL curriculum, lesson plans, learner inventories and teaching methodology that will be useful to a program manager or an ELL instructor:

[www.wvabe.org/tcher\\_handbook\\_pdf](http://www.wvabe.org/tcher_handbook_pdf)

[esl.about.com/cs/teachingtechnique/ht/ht\\_eslcurr.htm](http://esl.about.com/cs/teachingtechnique/ht/ht_eslcurr.htm)

[esl.about.com/od/teachingbeginners/a/ab\\_beg\\_intro.htm](http://esl.about.com/od/teachingbeginners/a/ab_beg_intro.htm)

[esl.about.com/od/eslflteachingtechnique/a/lesson\\_format.htm](http://esl.about.com/od/eslflteachingtechnique/a/lesson_format.htm)

[www.arlington.k12.va.us/instruct](http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/instruct)

[www.cal.org/caela/esl\\_resources](http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources)

## b. Small Group/Specialty Classes

ProLiteracy America has developed materials for designing small group instructional programming and for training tutors for small group instruction. For the purpose of this section, a small group differs from a class in that a small group utilizes a *volunteer* instructor, usually a tutor, and will feature a more focused instruction or specialized curriculum.

A small group is different from a class in that it uses a volunteer instructor.



### Resources:

Information from ProLiteracy's Small Group Instruction Handbook is located at the end of this part of the tool kit, Part A.iii. *Classes/Small Group Instruction*.

The state of West Virginia has an excellent handbook for teaching ELL: [wvabe.org/tcher\\_handbook\\_pdf/section14.pdf](http://wvabe.org/tcher_handbook_pdf/section14.pdf)

Small group specialty class programming strives to provide the services to meet the following needs of adult learners:

- learner-centered instruction
- adult-oriented curriculum/authentic materials
- short-term, specific curriculum
- flexible scheduling
- optional and/or intensive instruction

### Specialty Classes

Here is a listing of small group classes that can be incorporated into literacy programming. Learners may attend these specialty classes while on a waiting list for a tutor or classes, in addition to having a tutor and being in other programming, or they can enroll only in this opportunity.

The websites under the following *Resources* section link to best practices and lesson plans for these areas.

Specialty classes can be used for learners on a waiting list.

- ELL Conversation Classes:
  - Classes provide additional opportunities to "hear" spoken English.
  - Classes provide opportunities to practice speaking English with a variety of people.
  - Volunteers can teach the classes.
  - Learners may be at different levels of English proficiency.
  - Topics include American current events and cultural.



**Resources:**

[www.eastsideliteracy.org/tutorsupport/ESL/TalkTime.htm#oldtopics](http://www.eastsideliteracy.org/tutorsupport/ESL/TalkTime.htm#oldtopics)

[iteslj.org/questions/](http://iteslj.org/questions/)

[www.esljunction.com/conversation\\_questions/index.html](http://www.esljunction.com/conversation_questions/index.html)

[www.goenglish.com/OneForTheRoad.aspx](http://www.goenglish.com/OneForTheRoad.aspx)  
[esl.about.com/od/conversation\\_lessonplans/Conversation\\_Lesson\\_Plans\\_for\\_English\\_Learners\\_at\\_All\\_Levels.htm](http://esl.about.com/od/conversation_lessonplans/Conversation_Lesson_Plans_for_English_Learners_at_All_Levels.htm)

■ **Citizenship Classes:**

- Classes prepare the immigrant learner for the naturalization test and interview.
- Classes include content on the three parts of the test:
  - United States government and history (100 questions)
  - English reading and writing of sentences
  - Oral English proficiency
- Volunteers can teach the classes.
- Classes may offer assistance in completing naturalization forms.



**Resources:**

[www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis](http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis)

[www.themlc.org/citizenshipresourcesaenet.esuhd.org/Citizenship\\_lessons/Citizen/prac.html](http://www.themlc.org/citizenshipresourcesaenet.esuhd.org/Citizenship_lessons/Citizen/prac.html)

■ **Financial Literacy Classes:**

- Classes prepare learners to make sound financial decisions in their everyday lives.
- Classes contain units on:
  - banking system
  - checking and savings accounts
  - budgeting
  - investments
  - money scams
  - mortgages
  - credit cards
  - interest rates and more
- Classes are sometimes collaborative programs with a literacy organization and a financial institution.
- The instructor should have a financial/banking background.

Specialty classes are a good opportunity for collaboration between a literacy organization and other institutions.





**Resources:**

[www.money-wise.org/articles/moneywise\\_goes\\_to\\_norwood\\_mass](http://www.money-wise.org/articles/moneywise_goes_to_norwood_mass)

[www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov)

[www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic\\_text/money/66ways/index.html](http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/money/66ways/index.html)

[www.publicdebt.treas.gov/mar/marmoneymath.htm](http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov/mar/marmoneymath.htm)

[www.ncee.net](http://www.ncee.net)

[www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/csum06/index.html](http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/csum06/index.html)

■ **Health Literacy Classes:**

- These classes are unique in that there are often two focuses.
- Focus 1: To help a low-literate or limited-English-speaking learner navigate through the health care system.
  - Encourage learners to ask questions of health professionals.
  - Classes are often taught by or with a health care professional.
  - Curriculum may include the following topics:
    - a doctor's visit
    - emergency room visit
    - health/medical terms
    - preventive health measures
    - keeping a health history
    - completing medical/insurance forms
- Focus 2: To work with health care workers in understanding the scope of the problem.
  - Seminars emphasize how health care professionals can identify patients with low literacy skills.
  - Seminars are led by an adult literacy professional.
  - Topics may include:
    - speaking in plain language
    - reading levels of medical brochures and forms
    - cultural awareness and sensitivity

Health literacy is about better understanding of health and health care systems.



**Resources:**

[www.floridatechnet.org/in-service/esol2/home.html](http://www.floridatechnet.org/in-service/esol2/home.html)

[www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=899](http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=899)

[healthliteracy.worlded.org/docs/culture](http://healthliteracy.worlded.org/docs/culture)

[www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/curricula.html](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/curricula.html)

[www.aelweb.vcu.edu/publications/healthlit/about/index.shtml](http://www.aelweb.vcu.edu/publications/healthlit/about/index.shtml)

[www.askme3.org](http://www.askme3.org)

[www.cal.org/caela/esl\\_resources/Health/healthindex.html](http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/Health/healthindex.html)

■ HSED/GED Classes:

- Classes prepare a learner to pass the individual subject tests to obtain a high school credential.
- Instruction usually incorporates computerized curriculum in a lab setting.
- Several learners may be enrolled at one time.
- Learners work on their own individualized lessons.
- Instructors offer assistance/personal instruction as needed.
- Some group instruction occurs when learners work on the same areas (i.e., geometry).



*Resources:*

[dpi.wi.gov/ged\\_hsed/gedhsed.html](http://dpi.wi.gov/ged_hsed/gedhsed.html)

[www.curriculumbank.org/curriculumbank/index](http://www.curriculumbank.org/curriculumbank/index)

■ Remedial Writing Workshops:

- Learners may be at different levels.
- Spelling strategies are often included.
- Skills taught are based on learners' needs.
- Goals range from mastering cursive writing to writing letters/stories to writing and editing essay/research papers.
- A learner writing portfolio is often the end result.



*Resources:*

[www.theteacherscorner.net/daily-writing-prompts/december/index.htm](http://www.theteacherscorner.net/daily-writing-prompts/december/index.htm)

[www.dailygrammar.com/archive.shtml](http://www.dailygrammar.com/archive.shtml)

[www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=339](http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=339)

[www.ldonline.org/article/c653](http://www.ldonline.org/article/c653)

Specialty classes can meet the special needs of learners.

■ Book Discussions:

- Discussions provide opportunities to read quality literature and provide oral language practice, critical reading and group dynamic experiences.
- Books selected are appropriate for the learners (i.e., adult-oriented themes, culturally sensitive, appropriate reading levels).
- Learners can read books on their own, in class or with their tutors.
- The group meets monthly (or other specified times).
- Study guides are recommended.
- A group discussion leader is needed (and may come from another organization such as a library, university or school).



**Resources:**

[www.multcolib.org/talk/start.html](http://www.multcolib.org/talk/start.html)

[www.nhhc.org/Connections.php](http://www.nhhc.org/Connections.php)

[www.wisconsinhumanities.org/grants/guide.html](http://www.wisconsinhumanities.org/grants/guide.html)

[www.manitowoc.lib.wi.us/readers/guides/bookdiscussionkits.htm](http://www.manitowoc.lib.wi.us/readers/guides/bookdiscussionkits.htm)

■ **Computer Classes:**

- Classes focus on developing computer skills vs. using a computer as an instructional tool in teaching reading.
- Classes may introduce:
  - keyboarding (Mavis Beacon)
  - word processing (Microsoft Word)
  - spreadsheets (Excel)
  - creating presentations (PowerPoint)
  - using e-mail
- Computers, software and Internet hook-up are needed.
- Instructors have training experience in addition to computer/data processing experience.
- Class may be a self-paced lab or a scheduled class.
- A "project" is often the outcome of the class.

Computer classes  
can be self-paced.



**Resources:**

[literacy.kent.edu/Midwest/Materials/ndakota/complit/toc.html](http://literacy.kent.edu/Midwest/Materials/ndakota/complit/toc.html)

[www.internet4classrooms.com/on-line.htm](http://www.internet4classrooms.com/on-line.htm)



## Small-Group Information For Program Managers

When you hear the term *small-group instruction*, perhaps you find yourself wondering, “How would small-group instruction benefit our program, our tutors, and—most important—our students? How do small groups help students who haven’t been able to learn well in a classroom setting? Are the benefits worth the extra work it takes to design a new way of delivering instruction?”

ProLiteracy America believes that the answer to the last question is a resounding “Yes!”—and that even students who receive their primary instruction through one-to-one tutoring are helped by participating in some form of group work.

The benefits to students can be many. Among them are reduced feelings of isolation, access to a peer-based support system, an increased sense of belonging to a community, and a growing feeling of ownership of the learning process. All these benefits tend to result in greater enthusiasm for learning and increased retention rates.

We at ProLiteracy America are convinced that small-group instruction can have benefits for literacy and ESL students alike. However, we understand that every literacy program is different. Each program has to carefully consider whether small-group instruction will fit its particular needs.

We hope that the attached information will help you in your decision-making process. You’ll find information about small-group instruction that is of special interest to program managers and to staff and volunteers who support students and instructors, including:

- questions program staff need to ask themselves when deciding whether or not to offer small-group instruction
- descriptions of the four types of small-group learning that a program might offer: primary instruction, supplemental instruction, special-topic classes, and project-based groups
- interviews with tutors and students who are enthusiastic about small groups and able to discuss both the advantages and the disadvantages

## Communities of Learners: Each One Teaches Others

### A Definition

Small-group instruction goes by many names, each carrying its own nuances. *Collaborative learning*, *cooperative learning*, *participatory learning*, and *project-based learning* are just a few of the terms associated with small-group learning. For the purposes of its plans, ProLiteracy has defined small-group instruction to mean a group of two to about five learners. The learners see themselves as part of the group. They share a common purpose and make decisions together about the group’s goals.

## Varied Purposes

Small-group instruction can take many shapes and serve many purposes. A one-size-fits-all approach to small-group instruction doesn't serve the diverse needs of basic literacy and ESL learners, nor does it serve the differing capacities of programs sponsoring the instruction.

Most small groups have one of the following as a main goal:

- to provide primary instruction
- to supplement primary instruction (e.g., conversation groups, writing workshops, grammar or spelling classes)
- to explore special topics (e.g., math, citizenship, job readiness, health)
- to complete a project (e.g., organizing a student conference, publishing a book of student writings, getting out the vote)

## Reasons to Try It

Small-group instruction offers several advantages for programs, volunteers, and learners. For example, it can create a "community of learners," where the pressures, opportunities, and responsibilities of teaching and learning are shared. It provides an alternative for students and tutors who don't want the isolation of one-to-one tutoring. In the face of growing literacy and ESL demands, it maximizes program resources, including volunteers, staff, and time. It can prepare students to go on to adult basic education classes and GED classes. For ESL learners in particular, it provides English practice with a variety of people and a ready-made lab for cultural discussions and real-world interactions. (See the "Small-Group Learning Possibilities" piece for more details.)

## Meeting the Challenges

ProLiteracy recognizes that small-group instruction may add new twists to the familiar challenges of volunteer-based literacy work: managing groups, training volunteers, orienting students, keeping records, and assessing progress. ProLiteracy's efforts to support small-group instruction will attempt to address these areas.

ProLiteracy will also be offering small-group instruction workshops for program managers, trainers, and tutors at national, regional, and state conferences. Future issues of LitScape will also provide articles to help ProLiteracy affiliates learn more about the possibilities of small-group instruction.

## ProLiteracy America Recommends:

### → For All Students

- Make small-group and one-to-one learning opportunities available to students through primary instruction, supplemental instruction, special topics, and/or project-based learning.
- Encourage students to participate in one or more types of small-group learning.
- Train small-group tutors in appropriate small-group instructional techniques, materials, and assessment procedures.

## → For ESL Students in Particular

- Place ESL learners in small groups for their primary instruction whenever possible.
- When it's necessary to place ESL learners with one-to-one tutors, offer other programming opportunities for ESL students to come together in groups (e.g., conversation clubs, citizenship preparation classes, or groups to plan programwide special events), and encourage students to participate.

## Small-Group Learning Possibilities

Small-group learning can take many forms. It can be the way students learn all the time or part of the time. It can be the format for comprehensive basic literacy or English as a second language curricula. It can deliver smaller chunks of learning in supplementary classes, themes, or projects. Listed below are ideas for small-group learning that programs have used effectively.

### Primary Instruction Groups

**Regular, comprehensive, ongoing instruction is organized around reading, writing, and/or English-language development; e.g.,**

- biweekly or daily ESL groups
- biweekly or daily basic literacy groups

### Supplemental Groups

**Instruction is organized around targeted skill development in an area related to the primary instruction; e.g.,**

- grammar
- spelling
- phonics
- writing
- English conversation
- math
- pleasure reading
- public speaking

### Special Topic Groups

**Instruction is organized around the exploration of topics or themes of particular interest, generally for a fixed period of time; e.g.,**

- managing finances
- math for home improvement
- local history
- gathering oral histories
- getting a commercial driver's license
- health
- cooking
- first aid
- starting your own business
- voting
- understanding welfare reform and your rights
- career exploration
- how local government works

## Project-Based Groups

**Instruction is organized around producing a product or seeing an event from planning through evaluation; e.g.,**

- making story quilts
- publishing student writings
- planning, implementing, and evaluating a family, student, or community event
- taking a field trip
- renovating a room or building
- making a video or children's book
- developing a readers' theater group or literacy theater group
- celebrating International Women's Day (March 8) or International Literacy Day (September 8)
- creating a job portfolio
- publishing a community resource book
- maintaining a student bulletin board
- planning a student strand in a conference

## Thinking About Small-Group Instruction: A Starting Point

How can your program move toward implementing small-group instruction? As you consider the possibility of adding small groups to your instructional offerings, here are some important things to think about.

### Preliminary Questions

1. What are the benefits of small-group instruction for:
  - our program?
  - our students?
  - our tutors and trainers?
2. In what areas would small-group instruction be the best "fit" for our program?
  - ESL?
  - literacy?
  - math?
  - other areas?
3. Is any change in our mission statement required?
4. Does this instructional change have the proper "buy-in" from:
  - students?
  - tutors?
  - trainers?
  - staff?
  - board members?
5. Will offering small-group instruction present any public relations issues? (Many programs promote individual instruction as a unique benefit.)

## Questions About Instruction

1. How will small-group instruction help to:
  - provide primary instruction?
  - supplement one-to-one instruction (e.g., conversation groups or writing workshops)?
  - provide instruction on special topics (e.g., health, citizenship, or study circles)?
  - enable students to work together to complete a project?
2. How long will the groups last? Will we offer:
  - a four-week writing workshop?
  - a six-week project?
  - a 12-week semester?
3. Who will teach our groups?
  - paid staff?
  - volunteers?
4. How will students enter and exit groups so that group members can have a sense of group identity and learn effectively together over time?
  - through open entry and exit?
  - through closed entry and exit?

## Getting Ready

1. In what areas will training be required for instructors?
  - group process?
  - facilitation skills?
2. What materials are best for the type(s) of small-group instruction we select?
3. Will we need to adapt materials?
4. What location(s) will we use?
5. Will students need any orientation to or training about learning in small groups?



## Processes

1. How do we decide which students should be assigned to small groups?
2. How will we match students to particular groups (e.g., by skill levels, geographic location, or interests)?
3. How do we address such logistical issues as:
  - scheduling?
  - availability of materials and equipment at instruction sites?
4. In a small-group primary instructional setting, how will we provide for students who have specific individual needs from time to time (e.g., an ESL student who can keep up with the class conversationally but needs extra help with reading and writing, or a student who has specific work-related goals)?
  - arrange for concurrent one-to-one sessions as needed?
  - pull student temporarily from group and provide one-to-one instruction?
5. Will we assess student progress in our groups? If so:
  - which types of groups will we assess?
  - how will we assess them?
6. What methods will we use to manage the groups?
  - reporting of attendance and instruction?
  - supervision?
  - recording student progress?

## Basic Advice for Moving Forward

Important steps you can take when considering changes to instructional offerings include: conducting focus groups of students, volunteers, and board members; reviewing your mission statement; and talking with—or, better yet, visiting—a program with experience in areas you're considering.

As with any new effort, it helps to start small. Begin with the area that seems the most natural fit for your program. Evaluate as you move ahead, and don't be afraid to make changes if things aren't going well. Keeping in contact with someone who has experience with small-group instruction can be very helpful as well.

## Small Groups: Open or Closed Entry and Exit?

A primary issue to address in implementing small-group instruction is whether it's best for your program to have open or closed student entry and exit. Should your program allow students to come into and leave a group at various times (open entry and exit), or should it keep group membership stable throughout a cycle of instruction (closed entry and exit)?

Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages. A description of how other programs have resolved this question is given below. Learning what other programs have done, and why, may be helpful as your program considers open and closed student entry and exit.

The Nashua Adult Learning Center in Nashua, N.H., uses open entry and exit for basic education groups. Diana Owen, GED counselor at the center, explains that a deciding factor in choosing this policy was a desire to have new students begin instruction as soon as possible. Owen said putting students on waiting lists often means they won't come when instruction is available. "We want to accommodate them when *they're* ready to start," she says.

In the Nashua program, new students enter groups only once a week rather than every day. This limitation helps teachers maintain some sense of continuity. For example, they can at least develop weekly lesson plans.

Within groups that have open entry and exit, some individualized instruction is necessary. The Nashua program offers individualized instruction through use of workbooks, computers, writing, and projects. Group instruction is often organized around clusters of students' needed skills. The center also uses some smaller subgroups based on students' needs.

Owen recognizes that this approach can bring challenges for instructors. "Open entry is harder on the teacher," she says. "Teachers need to be extremely flexible."

The Pasadena ESL Program of the San Gabriel Valley Literacy Council in Pasadena, Calif., offers a citizenship class with closed entry and exit. This class has specific content that prepares English as a second language students to take the written citizenship exam.

"People popping in isn't good. There's just enough time scheduled to cover the content," says Joanne Costantini, director of the program. Students attend one-hour classes twice a week for an eight-week period. Instruction moves ahead regardless of the number of students in attendance.

Project: LEARN in Cleveland, Ohio, offers two closed-entry groups: a pre-GED class and a group called Student Orientation for Success (SOS). SOS runs on a 10- to 12-week cycle and helps reduce the program's waiting list. That's because students can choose the group if they don't want to wait for a tutor. SOS offers basic instruction and an orientation to the overall program.

Barbara Watson, associate director of Project: LEARN, says that after much discussion, SOS planners decided on closed entry. Their rationale was that SOS was a new effort, and they wanted to get a good handle on its effectiveness. Also, they previously had tried an open entry student book club and found that the continual entry of new students disrupted the core group. Some of the students disliked the backtracking that was necessary to get new students caught up with the rest of the group. The teacher also preferred closed entry.

## **Policy Advantages and Disadvantages**

### **Open Entry and Exit**

This policy has logistical advantages. It allows programs the flexibility to assign new students to a group at the students' convenience. This is helpful when programs use small groups to reduce waiting lists or take on students whose regular tutors become unavailable for any length of time.

A disadvantage of the policy is that new students can disrupt a group. Also, the policy demands a great deal of flexibility and creativity from teachers and tutors. It requires individualized instruction to avoid a constant struggle to get new students caught up with the rest of group, and it can be problematic in content-heavy instruction. Open entry is less problematic when students are at higher levels.

### **Closed Entry and Exit**

This policy has several advantages. It offers a chance for the group to develop a strong identity. Students can build relationships that have a positive effect on learning. The policy presents limited organizational challenges for teachers and tutors. It allows a wide variety of instructional options, including group projects and curricula with a lot of specific content.

A disadvantage is that group size dwindles when members leave and can't be replaced. Some programs practice flexibility by allowing students to join the group during the first week or two of a new cycle.

## *iv. Family Literacy*

### *What is family literacy?*

Family literacy is a program model designed to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and low literacy in families. Family literacy integrates several distinct programs – adult literacy education, early childhood education and parenting education – into a unified program. Basic assumptions of family literacy include that parents are their children's first and most important teachers, that a great deal of critical learning occurs in the home and that learning is a continuous, life-long process.

### *What does a family literacy program look like?*

Family literacy programs follow a holistic model in which parents and children learn together. As the child's first teachers, parents play a powerful role in their children's academic success, so family literacy programs promote the involvement of parents in all aspects of the child's early development and education.

Family literacy programs strive to provide services that integrate all of the following activities:

- Adult literacy education provides parents with basic skills (including English), life skills and the opportunity to earn a high school credential.
- Early childhood education provides opportunities for children to learn from birth and focuses on the education of very young children from birth through age 8. Family literacy programs emphasize children's eventual success in school and highlight the areas of physical, social-emotional and cognitive development.
- Parent education provides parents with a wide variety of learning topics including parenting strategies, how to be advocates and role models for their children and strategies to support their children's learning.
- Interactive literacy activities provide a time “to increase and facilitate meaningful parent-child interactions focused primarily on language and literacy development in a high-quality learning environment where they can learn and play together.” (Jacobs, 2004, p. 197). This is often referred to as “PACT time” – Parent and Child Together.
- Home visits provide a means for delivering literacy instruction in a familiar setting and to emphasize that parents are the child's first and most important teacher.

In family literacy, the entire family is the student.



**Resource:** [www.tei.education.txstate.edu/familit/familit.htm](http://www.tei.education.txstate.edu/familit/familit.htm)

## *What are reasons to have family literacy programming?*

- Parents are motivated to help their children and may even state this as their reason for joining an adult literacy program.
- Family literacy programming helps to create a tradition of reading and learning in the family.
- Family literacy programming provides great opportunities for community partnerships.
- Parents help their children by reading to them; children help their parents practice reading by listening.
- Parents in family literacy programs can become more confident interacting with their children's teachers.
- Children whose parents are involved do better in school.
- Family literacy programming provides adult literacy practitioners with a teaching challenge that is dynamic and satisfying.
- Children who are read to are more likely to become readers.
- Early childhood education has large benefits for children later in life.
- Community response to fundraising for family literacy is usually very positive.
- The single most significant predictor of a child's literacy level is his or her mother's literacy level.

The best indicator of children's success in school is the literacy level of their parents.



### ***Resources:***

For examples of family literacy programs, program evaluation tools and lesson plans and activities: [www.familyliteracyexpertise.org](http://www.familyliteracyexpertise.org)

For information on MotherRead/FatherRead family literacy book discussions: [www.wisconsinhumanities.org/motheread.html](http://www.wisconsinhumanities.org/motheread.html)

For information about "Parents as Educational Partners," a family literacy curriculum: [www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/family-pep.html#about](http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/family-pep.html#about)

## *v. Workplace Literacy/Workforce Development*

### *What is workplace literacy or workforce development?*

Workplace education programs focus on the literacy and basic skills training that workers need to gain new employment, retain present jobs, advance in their careers or increase productivity. Curricula are developed by educators working with employers and employee groups to determine what reading, computation, speaking and reasoning skills are required to perform job tasks effectively. Successful efforts to institute workplace education programs require strong partnerships among educators, employers and employees.

Workplace literacy programs strive to provide services that integrate the following objectives:

Successful workplace literacy programs require strong partnerships.

- improve employees' workplace basic skills
- meet specific employer workplace skills (i.e., understand safety manual, pass job-related test)

in order to:

- improve communication between employees and management
- increase employee retention and promotion
- reduce absenteeism
- reduce errors

that will lead to:

- increased productivity
- increased profits

### *What are other characteristics of a workplace program?*

In general, the majority of workplace literacy programs collaborating with nonprofit literacy organizations have these characteristics:

- offered at worksite
- no cost to the employee
- voluntary participation
- contracted instructor (provided by literacy organization)
- employer-specific topics included in instruction
- pre- and post-assessment of participants

## *What are workplace basic skills?*

Employers who participated in The Conference Board's *Turning Skills into Profit* (1999) study of 25 workplace education programs across the United States identified the following as key workplace basic skills:

### Literacy Skills

- improved understanding and ability to use “documents” such as safety instructions, assembly directions or maps
- improved understanding and ability to use “numbers” by themselves or in charts and tables
- improved understanding and ability to use “prose writing” such as reports, letters and manuals

Improved workplace skills  
are also improved literacy  
skills.

### Other Basic Skills

- improved ability to listen, understand, learn, analyze and apply information
- better ability to communicate by using English in the workplace
- improved capacity to think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems and make decisions
- improved ability to use computers and other technology, instruments, tools and information systems effectively

### New Attitudes

- greater willingness and ability to learn for life
- more positive attitude toward change

### Working with Others

- better ability to build and work in teams
- improved understanding and willingness to work within the culture of the group



#### ***Resource:***

For more information on Workplace Basic Skills identified in The Conference Board's report:

[www.conferenceboard.ca/education/pdf/Skills\\_Profits.pdf](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education/pdf/Skills_Profits.pdf)

### *When should a literacy organization consider offering workplace literacy services?*

There are several scenarios that may lead a literacy organization to consider offering workplace literacy services:

- The organization has already been contacted by businesses and companies in the community seeking basic skills, specific skills (i.e., math) or ELL programming for their workers.
- The organization has noticed that many of its current learners/clients work at the same companies.
- The organization and/or businesses want to collaborate with offering workplace instruction, often due to available grant funding.
- The organization has a waiting list for services.
- The organization wants to generate some revenue.

### *What are the components to designing a workplace literacy program?*

The designing of the program consists of these four steps:

1. **Needs Analysis** – The literacy organization meets with representatives from a company to determine company and employee needs and set training objectives. Site, fees and timeline are negotiated at this time.
2. **Skills Assessment** – Employees/learners are evaluated by the literacy organization to determine skill levels and type of instruction needed to meet training objectives.
3. **Curriculum Development** – The literacy organization and company representatives work together to develop materials and methods for delivering training. Some curriculum development happens before the instruction begins, but it is ongoing as needs and objectives are identified and modified during the instructional process. As much as possible, authentic materials from the work site are incorporated into the curriculum.
4. **Instruction** – Instruction/training is delivered according to the timeline/schedule determined by the company and literacy organization. Class progress and outcomes are reported. Post-testing of learners and company feedback are documented.

Assessment is an important part of success analysis.

When the instruction has concluded, the company and literacy organization can determine whether to continue the instruction with the same learners, start additional classes with new learners or discontinue classes.



#### **Resources:**

For more information on developing a workplace literacy program: [www.cal.org/caela/esl\\_resources/digests/PLANNINGQA.html](http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/PLANNINGQA.html) and [www.work-basedlearning.org/](http://www.work-basedlearning.org/)



## *vi. Corrections Education in County Jails*

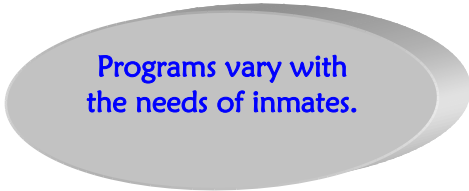
While state correctional facilities will provide in-house literacy, ABE, GED/HSED and English instruction programming for their inmates, most county jails do not. This may be due to budget concerns, indefinite or short-term stay of their residents or the work-release status of some residents. An opportunity to provide these services may exist within your county.

### *What does a jail program look like?*

Programs vary with the needs of the county jail inmates. Some programs offer exclusively one-to-one tutoring geared to the needs of the inmates. This may be provided by volunteer or paid tutors through the technical college system. Other programs may offer classes with instructors leading small group or lab type instruction. Or, programs may offer a combination of both. In some jails, HSED instruction is provided through the local school district for inmates under the age of 21.

Some of the programming that may be offered includes:

- GED/HSED
- Basic Education Skills
- ELL
- Vocational Education
- Financial Literacy
- Computer Literacy
- Book Club
- Writing Class
- Family Literacy
- Inmate Peer Tutoring



Programs vary with the needs of inmates.

### *What are some of the unique challenges for corrections education in county jails?*

Perhaps the most challenging issue with programming in a county jail is that inmates are usually there for a short time. They may be in jail waiting to be sentenced to prison, they may be serving their entire sentence in jail or they may be placed on Huber work release. Until they have their day in court, they do not know how long they will be in jail. The jail cannot give you that information either. So, the biggest challenge is that your learners may be here one day and gone the next, without warning.

Another challenge is that sleeping can be an attractive activity for inmates to help pass the time. Therefore, it is best not to schedule programming early in the morning.

Program managers should also be aware that the “lock down” setting of a county jail does not suit all potential tutors. Volunteers who tend to be claustrophobic should be discouraged from working in a jail setting.

*What are some of the unique benefits for corrections education in county jails?*

Many tutors and instructors consider programming in jail the most rewarding setting for helping another person. Most of the learners in your program have not had a lot of exposure to the goodwill of others. Therefore, they tend to be very grateful for any kind word or positive re-enforcement directed toward them. Jail tends to be a very negative atmosphere and, therefore, the opportunity to provide a positive atmosphere is like a ray of sunshine for them. Generally, inmates are motivated to attend class since it is one positive thing happening in their lives and an opportunity to change the direction of their lives. Since boredom is often the greatest challenge for inmates, a change in their daily routine is considered positive.

Tutoring in jails can be very rewarding.



**Resources:**

For information on requirements for students under age 21:  
[dpi.state.wi.us/alternativeed/jail-basedq&a.html](http://dpi.state.wi.us/alternativeed/jail-basedq&a.html)

For information on family literacy programming in corrections:  
[www.nald.ca/fulltext/hudson/bringing/cover.htm](http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/hudson/bringing/cover.htm)

## *vii. Computer-aided Instruction*

*What are the different ways that computers can be used with adult literacy learners?*

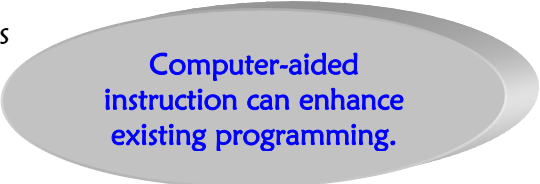
Computer-aided instruction can take a variety of forms. It can be used to supplement classroom or one-to-one instruction. It can be used as a stand-alone method of instruction via Web-based components or computer software. It can be used as a step toward job training and employment. However, no matter what form computer-aided instruction takes, it is important to understand that not every learner is well suited for this method of instruction delivery. Therefore, careful planning and analysis must be given to any recommendations for computer-aided instruction for adult literacy learners.

*What are the benefits of computer-aided instruction?*

Computer-aided instruction can increase the reach of literacy instruction by potentially meeting the needs of learners who have barriers such as work schedules, transportation issues and child care challenges in their lives. For those who have computers in their homes, computer-aided instruction can extend the amount of time that the learner can spend on their education. It can also create a more interactive form of instruction.

Computer programs that use the following have proven to be most beneficial:

- critical thinking skills
- customization and student interests
- human interaction
- student collaboration
- accommodating disabilities
- using drill for memorization
- performing real-life tasks
- performing complex tasks



Computer-aided instruction can enhance existing programming.

Successful computer programs prompt learners to think analytically, to compare various pieces of information and to question learners in a “safe environment.” A computer will accept or not accept an answer without judgment.

Computer-aided instruction can also increase interest on the part of the learner. A tutor or an instructor can ask a learner to research information on the Internet about their favorite hobby or special interest. They might create a game that can engage the learner. The language experience approach can be successfully used

with ELL instruction on a computer. Spreadsheets and math programs can free up some learners from tedious calculations to allow them to focus on understanding the concepts behind the math problems.

Another highly successful use of computers is for memorization and drilling. A good computer program can analyze the weaknesses in the learning and repeat those items that need additional work. A poor computer program will simply ask the same question over and over again causing the learner to get frustrated since they do not know what they are doing wrong.

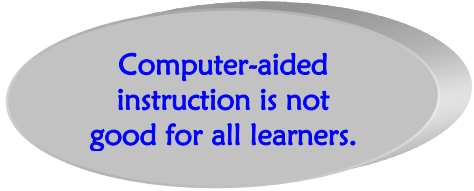
Computer-aided instruction is also very beneficial for learners with disabilities. Speech recognition software has become very skilled at helping learners with visual and learning disabilities. Spell check in word processing programs is useful for the writing and re-writing of drafts for learners at all levels.

To be most effective, live interaction before and after the use of computer-aided instruction between the learner and the instructor should be initiated. Just as discussion should be initiated before and after reading a book or working on a worksheet, discussion should take place before and after a computer-based assignment.

### *What are some of the limitations of computer-aided instruction?*

First and foremost, learners must have access to computer technology. Not all learners have computers in their homes and not all programs have computer labs available. Remaining current with both hardware and software needs is expensive. Some of the minimum requirements for successful computer-aided learning include:

- access to a computer connected to the Internet either at home, in a library or community technology center
- minimal competence at operating a computer and accessing information
- good self-motivation skills
- comfort with working independently
- strong study and organizational skills
- strong visual learning style



Computer-aided instruction is not good for all learners.

Many of the learners served by literacy programs do not possess these strengths. Therefore, it is important to analyze the individual needs and strengths of each learner before assigning specific instruction methods.

An additional limitation of computer-aided instruction is that computer software is usually not written by programmers who understand adult learning theory. Therefore, it is important to carefully review any software that you are recommending for learner use.

It is generally acknowledged that the future of computer-aided instruction is largely untapped for adult literacy instruction. As technology improves and becomes more accessible, as programmers become more aware of adult learning theory and as learners become more computer literate, the potential of computer-aided instruction continues to increase.



***Resources:***

For a list of good software to use with learners, see **Section 4. Volunteers, Part F. *Training and Development.***

For information about computer-aided instruction:

[www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/13/ad/51.pdf](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/13/ad/51.pdf)

[www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/1b/e1/44.pdf](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1b/e1/44.pdf)

[www.ncsall.net/?id=303](http://www.ncsall.net/?id=303)

[tech.worlded.org/docs/cia](http://tech.worlded.org/docs/cia)

[projectideal.org/pdf/other\\_print\\_resources/op\\_askov.pdf](http://projectideal.org/pdf/other_print_resources/op_askov.pdf)

[projectideal.org/IDEALpublications.htm](http://projectideal.org/IDEALpublications.htm)

For other online resources:

[www.thinkfinity.org](http://www.thinkfinity.org)

[www.proliteracy.org/proliteracy\\_america/ind\\_aff\\_only/links.asp](http://www.proliteracy.org/proliteracy_america/ind_aff_only/links.asp)

## *viii. Child/School-age Literacy Tutoring*

Often, adult literacy programs will receive referrals of children from schools, social agencies and parents. Many times, these are children who have reading/learning disabilities and need specialized instruction, or children who may not qualify for special education services in the school district but have fallen behind their peers and need extra help with homework or literacy skills. They may hear that your organization provides free tutoring and would like a tutor for a particular child/student. This leads to the question:

### *Should adult literacy organizations accept children into their literacy programs?*

The answer to this question is one that the organization's Board of Directors and staff will need to discuss and answer.

First, the organization will probably want to re-examine its mission statement to see if providing instructional services to children is part of its agency's mission. If it isn't, the organization should think through the questions found under **Section 1. Administration, Part A. Starting a Literacy Organization, Needs Assessment**. These questions are, again:

The decision about whether or not to serve children is up to the Board of Directors.

- Is your service (child tutoring) necessary to the community? Will the community be willing to support this program?
- Are there potential clients (children) for your services? How will they be identified and recruited?
- Are there any other agencies (after-school programs, YMCAs, Boys & Girls Clubs, university interns, for-profit programs like Sylvan Learning or EduCare) providing the same or similar service in your area?
- How long do you believe that your service will be required/needed?

### *What is involved in a child tutoring program?*

If it is decided to include child tutoring as one of your organization's programs, then you will need to determine the objectives of your program and how your service will be provided.

School-age/child tutoring programs strive to provide services that integrate the following objectives:

- reinforce skills already taught in the classroom
- include multi-sensory approaches
- make learning a fun experience
- increase a child's self-esteem and self-confidence

- include school (teacher), parent and learner input/feedback
- may also have role-model/mentoring aspects

There are two basic approaches to a child tutoring program:

- during school time
- after hours/summer and vacation breaks

Programs that take place directly in the school building during the school day will require very close collaboration with the school district. For the most part, the school district will provide:

- the students (the district will determine eligibility guidelines, possibly based on income, or at-risk school status, etc.),
- the space,
- the materials,
- some supervision of the pairs, and
- possibly the training and recruiting of the volunteers.

Does the literacy organization have enough tutors for all children wanting services?

The literacy organization may be responsible for:

- the recruitment and training of the volunteers,
- as well as the coordination of the program (matching tutors with students, following up on their progress, reporting back to the teacher/parents).

Possible limitations to a program such as this:

- **Scheduling** – The school day is filled with many subjects and activities. Where would tutoring be squeezed in? If it is in place of a particular subject, what is done to make sure the child is not missing any essential content or tests, etc.?
- **Teacher cooperation** – How does the teacher feel about children possibly being removed from the classroom or having additional people (volunteers) present in the classroom? Will the teacher be asked to supply materials or lessons?
- **Space** – Schools often have space issues.
- **School safety** – What are the school policies about volunteers entering the school? Would background checks be necessary, and who pays for them?
- **Enough volunteers** – Wouldn't every parent like a tutor for his or her child? What happens when there are more students than tutors?

For literacy organizations that prefer to have more authority and/or autonomy, an after-school or summer tutoring program for children may be considered. You may decide to limit your collaboration with the schools to referrals of students, and possibly instructional materials and tutoring space. Your child tutoring program, in many ways, may resemble your adult tutoring program.

Like an adult tutoring program, a child tutoring program's minimum resources are:

- volunteer tutors
- curricular materials
- training for tutors
- tutoring space
- assessment materials
- a program coordinator (often a volunteer until program is well-established)

Tutor pairs must be supervised for safety and legal reasons.

The coordinator's primary role is to match the tutors with the learners and supervise their meetings. Often, this person is also responsible for recruiting and training the new tutors, communicating with parents and teachers, record-keeping of progress and outcomes, and developing age-appropriate curriculum and activities.

### *What are differences between adult and child tutoring programs?*

Here are the major differences for tutoring involving children:

- Tutors are often teen volunteers and college students.
- The pairs **MUST BE** supervised for many safety and legal reasons.
- Parental permission is needed.
- Tutoring takes place for a specified length of time (i.e., a semester, 8 weeks).
- Training for tutors is much shorter (1-4 hours).
- Tutors usually do not prepare lessons since their main focus is to assist the child with school assignments.



#### **Resources:**

[www.ed.gov/pubs/RoadtoRead/part6.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/RoadtoRead/part6.html)

Two recommended handbooks are geared for child tutoring:

Morrow, Lesley Mandel, and Barbara J. Walker. The Reading Team: A Handbook for Volunteer Tutors K- 3. International Reading Association, 1997.

Blankenship Cheatham, Judy. Help A Child Learn to Read. Literacy Volunteers of America.



## B. Measuring Program Outcomes and Success

*Why is it necessary to conduct a program evaluation? Won't I know what works just by observing the feedback from staff, volunteers and learners?*

Certainly, looking at feedback can give you a general sense of how well-received your programming is, but a program evaluation will give you the specific information that will allow you to make whatever changes are necessary to best serve your learners and the community. Perhaps it will just be a matter of maximizing efforts in those areas that are working and troubleshooting those spots that need revision. Or, a program evaluation may reveal that broader changes in strategy and program objectives may be needed.

Program evaluations are also important to funders. Evaluations can provide the data that is necessary to determine the effectiveness of your program and the necessity of your program in the community, as well as supply information to determine if your program is one that funders want to support in the future.

*What should I look at when doing a program evaluation?*

When evaluating your programs, you should consider both the *process* and the *outcomes*.

In looking at the process, you want to analyze the step-by-step procedures for how various aspects of your program are carried out (how much a task was done, when it was done, who did it, etc.) From there, you can determine if the current process is the most effective and efficient way to carry it out or, if there were any deviations from the proposed process, what they are and if they are better than what was originally proposed.

*How do I measure program outcomes?*

The outcomes part of the evaluation looks at the changes that have happened as a result of the programming and compares it all to what the target changes were. Outcomes are measurable – numbers of learners or tutors, goals achieved, number of learners who attend more than XX number of hours of instruction and so on. However, other outcomes that are more intangible should also be tracked. Make sure to include narratives that speak to outcomes, such as better rapport with the community, increased volunteer satisfaction and learners' improved sense of ease in interacting in the community.

Measuring program outcomes is necessary if the organization wants to receive government (county, state or federal) or community (i.e., United Way) funding. Most other grants and foundations also require some type of reporting.

A very popular outcome measurement tool, which many United Way-funded programs are using, is the Program Logic Model. To assess your programs, you might ask questions such as these:

- What are the changes/benefits to the program participants during and after participation?
- What difference(s) did this program make in the lives of its participants?

(For literacy organizations, the answer is something like "increased reading, literacy and/or English proficiency" or maybe "improved quality of lives due to increased reading, literacy and/or English proficiency.")

For literacy organizations, behaviors or changes in the participants that can be measured to indicate that this outcome has occurred can include:

- post-testing that indicates learner has advanced a level
- attaining personal goals, such as finding employment, getting promoted, buying a home, getting a HSED, entering post-secondary educational program, etc.
- completion of graded curriculum (i.e., book 1 = 1.0 grade level to book 2 = 2.0 grade level)
- hours of instruction

For new literacy organizations or those still operating with only volunteers, it is recommended to document this minimum data:

- Numbers (annually and cumulatively)
  - of learners
  - of volunteers
  - of hours given by volunteers
  - of trainings held
  - of matches
  - of classes held
  - of learners waiting (if applicable)
- Demographics (for volunteers and learners)
  - gender
  - age
  - marital status
  - literacy or ELL
  - primary language

- race/ethnicity
  - education level
  - employment status
  - income level (for learners only)
- Dates
    - entry date
    - date matched/started class
    - date exited
    - reason individual left program
    - length of time in program

*Why collect this data?*

- for annual reports by ProLiteracy America and Wisconsin Literacy, Inc.
- for switching to a more comprehensive report like the Program Outcomes Logic Model
- for grantwriting
- for organization's own self-evaluation of program

*How does one evaluate the success of such a program?*

There are several ways to determine whether the program has been successful. Some ways to measure success include:

- **Post-testing of learners** – Test scores of learners after instruction show gains in the area on which instruction was focused (English proficiency, math, writing, etc.). These tests would be standardized, norm-referenced assessment tools.
- **Curriculum completion** – The texts and curriculum in which the learner had been placed and then completed are documented. This would also include curriculum placement tests and textbook post-tests.
- **Instructional hours/attendance** – Learners demonstrated satisfaction of and need for instruction by meeting tutors regularly. The number of instructional hours are recorded.
- **Goals achieved** – Each learner has identified personal goals upon entry of program and achievement of these are documented when they occur.
- **Tutor feedback** – A survey can be distributed to tutors to determine whether learners have increased their current level of skills or gained new skills.
- **Learner feedback** – A learner completes a skills inventory before and then after instruction to determine the areas in which skills have improved.

There are many ways to assess program success.

- **Learner portfolios** – Various materials (i.e., tests, writing samples, inventories, teacher observations) are collected to give a complete picture of a learner’s progress and achievements.

More and more, literacy organizations are being recommended to follow the NRS (National Reporting System) guidelines. This means the use of standardized assessments, like the TABE or CASAS for low-literate learners or Best PLUS for English Language Learners, are given at regular intervals (every 6 months or semester). This is necessary if an organization would like to receive federal or state funding. For smaller organizations with limited staff and resources, tracking progress using other evaluation methods, such as textbook correlations to the NRS guidelines, is encouraged. For more information on this, see Section 3. Learners, Part E. Assessments, *National Reporting System*.

For workplace literacy, you may consider these additional items:

- **Company feedback** – A survey can be distributed to company officials and direct supervisors to determine whether employees have increased their current level of skills or gained new skills.
- **Employee feedback** – Employees indicate whether they believe skills have improved or whether they are pleased with the outcome of the instruction.
- **Long-term outcomes** – These can also include data regarding reduced absenteeism, reduced errors or safety violations, increased productivity, improved employee team-work and other like factors.

For child or school-age tutoring, you might also consider:

- **Teacher feedback** – A survey can be distributed to the child's teachers for their opinions on whether the child has mastered new skills or made improvement in weak areas previously identified.
- **Parent feedback** – The parent(s) of the learner completes skills inventory before and then after instruction to determine the areas in which skills have improved.

### *How often should I evaluate our programs?*

It really depends on the program that you are evaluating. If it is a 12-week workplace literacy class, you will need to do a pre-program evaluation of the learners skills and then a post-evaluation at the end of the class to determine how effective it was. If it is your one-to-one tutoring program, you may find that smaller evaluations every six months to a year may be adequate to make sure you are continuing on the right track and to head off any potential issues before they mushroom into significant problems. More comprehensive evaluations can then coincide with your organization’s strategic planning efforts.



### *Resources:*

A workplace evaluation tool is located on the following page.

“A Practical Introduction to Program Evaluation” by Yolanda J. Nunn:  
[www.canonprofits.org/CANAlert/sept.oct.01/practical.html](http://www.canonprofits.org/CANAlert/sept.oct.01/practical.html)

Basic Guide to Outcomes-Based Evaluation for Nonprofit Organizations with Very Limited Resources:

[www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/outcomes.htm](http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/outcomes.htm)

Basic Guide to Program Evaluation:

[www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl\\_eval.htm](http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm)

“Measuring the Difference Volunteers Make: A Guide to Outcome Evaluation for Volunteer Program Managers” from Minnesota Department of Human Services:

[www.serviceleader.org/new/managers/files/measuring-the-difference-2005.pdf](http://www.serviceleader.org/new/managers/files/measuring-the-difference-2005.pdf)

For more information and examples of program outcomes and measurement:

[national.unitedway.org/outcomes](http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes)

[www.organizationalresearch.com/glossary.htm](http://www.organizationalresearch.com/glossary.htm)

[www.sfu.ca/~tcopley/pro/eval/PLM\\_ppt/index.htm](http://www.sfu.ca/~tcopley/pro/eval/PLM_ppt/index.htm)

[www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/outcomes.htm](http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/outcomes.htm)

[www.managementhelp.org/np\\_progs/np\\_mod/org\\_frm.htm](http://www.managementhelp.org/np_progs/np_mod/org_frm.htm)

[www.hmrp.net/CanadianOutcomesInstitute/Resources.htm](http://www.hmrp.net/CanadianOutcomesInstitute/Resources.htm)

For information or to order the Equipped for the Future tool kit:

[eff.cls.utk.edu/resources/home.htm](http://eff.cls.utk.edu/resources/home.htm)

For information on conducting a program evaluation or creating a program evaluation tool for family literacy programming, see: “A’ is for Assessment: A Primer on Program Evaluation” at:

[www.nsba.org/site/doc\\_EDLO.asp?TRACKID=&DID=11678&CID=936](http://www.nsba.org/site/doc_EDLO.asp?TRACKID=&DID=11678&CID=936)

# Evaluating Workplace Education Programs: SKILL GAINS

Which basic skills did your employees gain  
in your workplace education program(s)?  
(Please check all that apply)

Organization:

Program(s) Name:

WORKPLACE BASIC SKILL GAINS	Skill Gains?	Measured Results?
	✓ = Yes	✓ = Yes
• Stronger understanding and ability to use <i>prose</i> (such as reports, letters, computer and equipment manuals).		
• Improved understanding and ability to use <i>documents</i> (such as safety instructions, assembly directions, maps)		
• Increased understanding of and ability to use <i>numbers</i> by themselves or in charts and tables.		
• Better ability to communicate using English		
• Improved ability to listen to understand, learn and apply information and analysis		
• Improved capacity to think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems, and make decisions		
• Greater willingness and ability to learn for life		
• More positive attitude toward change		
• Heighted understanding and willingness to work within the group's culture		
• Better ability to build and work in teams		
• Improved ability to use computers and other technology, instruments, and tools and information systems effectively		
• Other (please specify)		

Dr. Michael R. Bloom, The Conference Board of Canada

March 24, 2000