

Teaching Reading & Writing to Adult Low-literacy Learners

(Using the Principles and Methodologies of Reading Recovery®)

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Key Principles for Teaching Literacy

- **Foster learner independence**
 - Teach our students how to make sense of print by themselves.
- **Foster learner flexibility**
 - Teach learners to be flexible when they are making sense of print.
- **Building on what learners know**
 - Use only language our learners already know in L & S for reading and writing.
 - Teachers must find out and keep track of what learners know.
 - Zone of Proximal Development / instructional level

Too much →



Some new learning →
in the 'zone of proximal development'

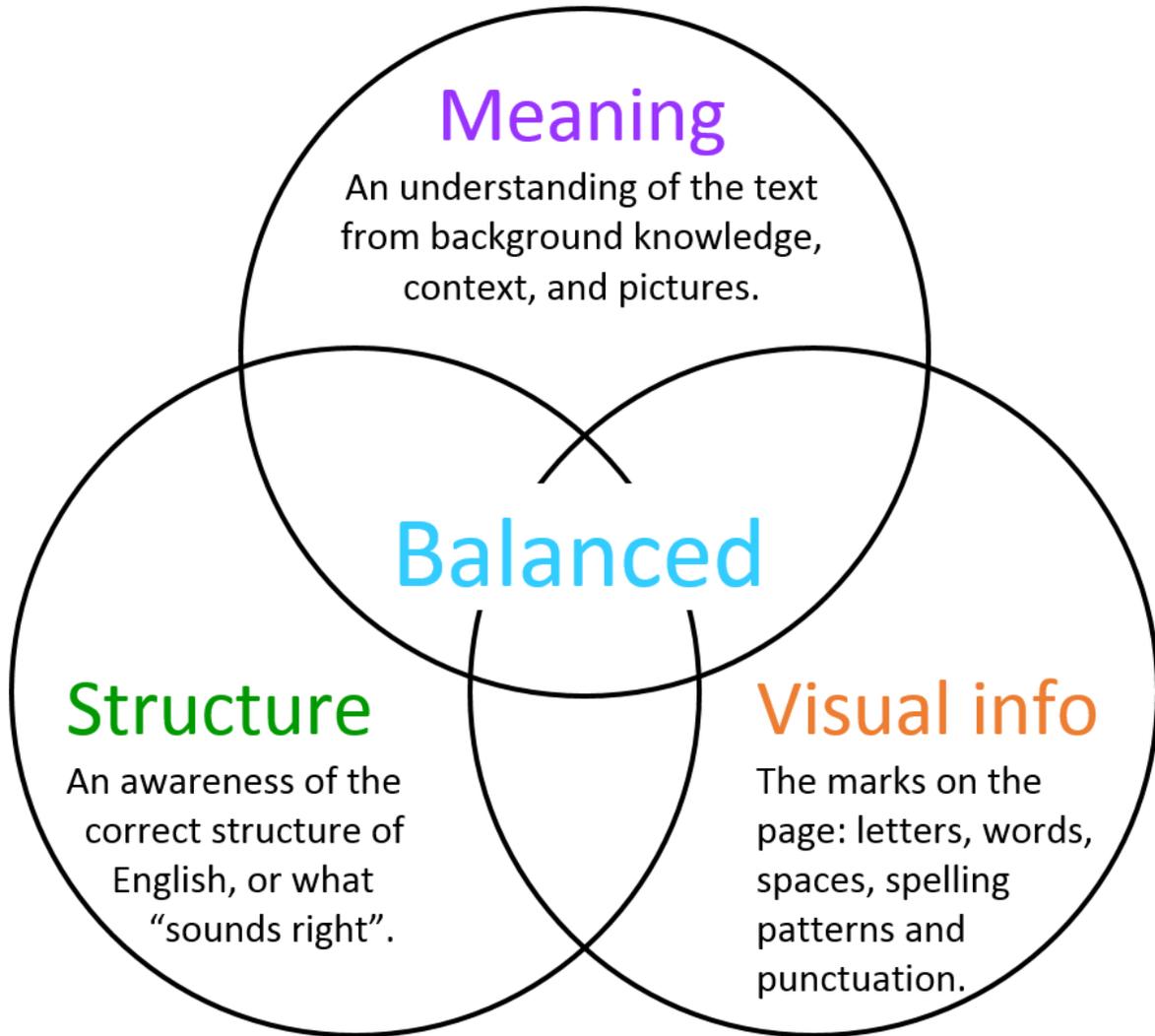


The learning that
students have mastered



3 Sources of Information that Good Readers Use While Reading:

M, S & V



9 Activities that support:

- the key teaching principles of fostering independence, flexibility, and building on what the students have already mastered.
- the use of Meaning, Structure, & Visual Information while reading and writing.

1. Reading familiar, easy books

Ss practice using M, S & V to make sense of print.

Develop an awareness of correct English structure.

Ss develop fluency (natural pace, phrasing, intonation & expression).

Ss gain confidence.

Ss develop an enjoyment of reading.



2. Reading Assessment with a Running Record

The student independently uses M, S, & V Info to make sense of print.

The Running Record captures concrete evidence about how the learner is processing text.

The teacher does not help.



Try taking a Running Record.

3. Fast Letter Identification

Develop S's ability to use the Visual Info of print.

Ss must quickly recognize letters and letter sounds and must quickly say letter sounds for reading.

Printing practice forces Ss to notice the details of letters.

↓→↘↗ straight letters 1st

↺ counter clockwise letters 2nd

↻ clockwise letters 3rd

Letter sort activity: Ss quickly group the same letters together with both hands.

Teacher and student make an individualized alphabet book. Start with the letters they know.



4. Breaking Words into Parts

Develop S's ability to use the Visual Info of print.

Use magnetic letters to show Ss how words are made. Show students how to :

- Form words letter by letter L → R
- Break words into the first sound and the rest.
- Break words into syllables
- Break words into onsets and rimes.



Hearing Individual Sounds in Words

Develop S's ability to use the Visual Info of print. Students must be able to hear the individual sounds in words (phonemic awareness) before they can see them in print.

Activity:

Use pictures of words the Ss know and boxes for each sound (not each letter).

T & Ss say the word slowly.

Ss watch the T's mouth.

T elicits the sounds in the word.

T moves a marker into a box as she says a sound. Ss copy.

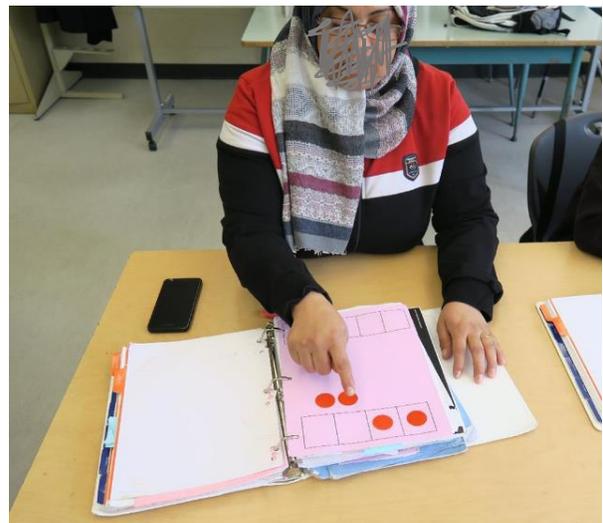
T 'reads the word with her finger' by running her finger below the word form L → R.

The T & Ss repeat this and then the T does it at a more natural speed.

Ss volunteer to say each sound as they move markers and then read it with their finger.

Begin with 2-sound words and only progress to 3-sound words when the Ss can easily hear 2 individual sounds. Then 4-sound words.

Do 2 or 3 words each class.



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5. Compose and Write a Short Message

Develop an awareness that text contains Meaning.

Ss come up with a message that they can easily remember and say.

Volunteers come to the board and write a word.

Help the Ss to write unknown words with 'sound/letter boxes'.

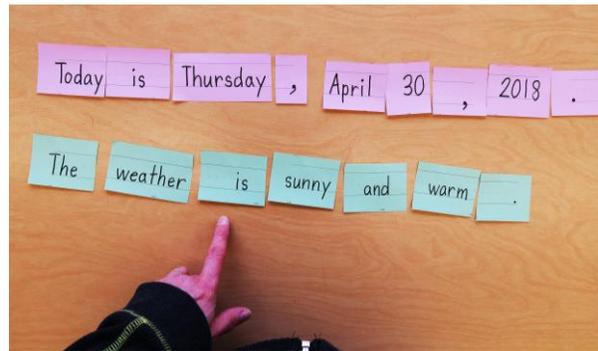


6. Sequence the Cut-Up-Message

M, S, & V info are used in a balanced way.

Use the message that the class composed or other sentences that the Ss have mastered in L & S.

Words can be cut into syllables.



7. A Book Introduction

An effective book introduction prepares Ss for successful reading.

The choice of book is crucial for student success. (Zone of proximal development).



A list of adult literacy readers is at the end of this handout.



8. Students Read the New Book

M, S, & V info are used in a balanced way to make sense of print.

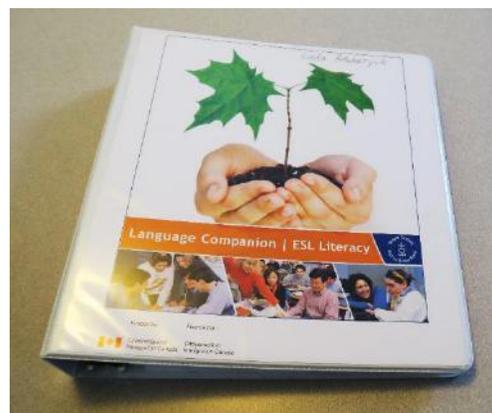
The teacher can observe and help with skillful prompting that develops independence and flexibility.



9. Homework

Students review and read the papers from class.

Students practice writing a new word from memory most days.



Conclusion

When teaching literacy learners, we should aim to use activities that:

- foster learner independence, teach flexibility, and build on what our students know.
- enable our learners to use Meaning, Structure, and Visual Information in a balanced way to make sense of print.

Understanding these principles and methodologies helps teachers to understand the details of what good readers do when they read. Teachers can then teach those good reading strategies to their literacy learners and help them on their way to being successful readers and writers.

References:

An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, Third Edition, by Marie M. The Marie Clay Literacy Trust, 2013

Catching Readers Before They Fall, by Pat Johnson and Katie Keier, Stenhouse Publishers, 2010

Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals, Second Edition, by Marie M. Clay, The Marie Clay Literacy Trust, 2016

Effective Literacy Practices - Learning about Phonology and Orthography, Reading Recover Council of North America,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59tyNTCLgt4>

Running Records: A Self-Tutoring Guide, by Peter H. Johnston, Stenhouse Publishers, book & CD

When Readers Struggle, Teaching That Works, by Gay Su Pinnell and Irene C. Fountas, Heinemann, 2009

Some Literacy Readers:

- Free ESL Literacy Readers, ESL Literacy Network, Bow Valley College, AB,
<https://globalaccess.bowvalleycollege.ca/esl-literacy-readers>
- Grass Roots Press: Adult Literacy and ESL Resources,
<https://www.grassrootsbooks.net/us/>
- PageTurners, <https://pageturners.prace.vic.edu.au/>
- The Westcoast Reader (adult literacy newspaper)
<https://thewestcoastreader.com/>