COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS: EDUCATION FOR INVOLVED COMMUNITIES

A Curriculum For English Literacy/Civics Education

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*This curriculum is dedicated
to the memory of
our colleague and friend,
Linda Dolan*

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS:
EDUCATION FOR INVOLVED COMMUNITIES

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The *Community Connections: Education for Involved Communities* curriculum was developed and field-tested over a two-and-a-half-year period year through a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The overall goal of the project was:

> to build Illinois' capacity to increase statewide the number and quality of English Literacy/Civics Education (EL/CE) programs through the development of innovative, pilot-tested EL/CE programs, related curricula and materials.

For the purpose of this project, the following definitions of English Literacy and Civics Education were adopted:

> *English Literacy* programs are English as a second language (ESL) programs providing instruction in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English with instruction appropriate to the adults' English skill levels.
>
> *Civics Education* helps adults enhance their roles as active and informed parents, workers, neighbors, and community participants by assisting them to understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, U.S. history and government, the naturalization process, and community participation. This includes being able to successfully access community resources and services (e.g., governmental, educational, workplace-related) as well as contributing back to and positively impacting on the community.

The *Community Connections* project had five objectives:

1. <u>Develop Statewide Partnerships</u>: The Adult Learning Resource Center established a State Advisory Council made up of representatives from governmental, educational, and community service providers. The Advisory Council gave initial input into module content and assisted with marketing and dissemination of the final product.

2. <u>Enhance Local Community Partnerships</u>: The three adult education pilot sites (see #3, below) worked to develop partnerships with social service providers, local libraries, governmental offices, and others in the communities they serve. These community partners provided input into the curriculum content and served as resources for experiential learning activities planned by the field-test classes.

3. <u>Develop and Pilot Innovative, Replicable EL/CE Programs</u>: The *Community Connections* curriculum was piloted in three adult education programs:

   - Waubonsee Community College is located in suburban/semi-rural Aurora, Illinois and serves many Hispanic ESL learners. Its pilot classrooms were in community-based locations such as churches and elementary schools rather than at the college's main campus.

- Consolidated High School District 214 Community Education serves the suburban community of Arlington Heights, Illinois as well as several surrounding suburbs. Its pilot classrooms were at its main campus site as well as community-based sites. The ESL learners served at this program come from many different language groups.

- The YWCA of Elgin, Illinois is a community-based organization that serves ESL learners from a variety of language backgrounds in a fairly urban setting.

Each of the field-test sites integrated the *Community Connections* curriculum into their regular ESL curriculum at all levels of instruction.

4. <u>Develop and Field-Test EL/CE Curricula</u>: As the curriculum modules were developed, they were field-tested by over 20 instructors in the pilot classrooms. The instructors met regularly with project staff to provide feedback on all aspects of the curriculum, including the illustrations and the experiential learning activities. The curriculum was revised extensively to incorporate the suggestions and experiences of the instructors and their students.

5. <u>Provide Professional Development to Support New EL/CE Programs</u>: The Adult Learning Resource Center provided training and support to the field-test instructors throughout the project. Instructors received ongoing training in methodology appropriate for teaching civics as well as a detailed orientation to the project and the curriculum.

In addition to training the pilot instructors through the *Community Connections* project, the Adult Learning Resource Center has provided numerous EL/CE professional development opportunities to adult educators in Illinois and other states. For more information about training opportunities, contact:

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CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

The *Community Connections* curriculum has three components:

> **I.** **SIX REPRODUCIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL MODULES**
>
> **II.** **CLASSROOM PICTURE SET**
>
> **III.** **FLASHCARD PICTURE SET (OPTIONAL)**

I.   SIX REPRODUCIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL MODULES

The curriculum contains six modules for classroom instruction. These modules can be used in stand-alone EL/CE classes or integrated into existing ESL curricula at all levels of instruction. Below are the six modules and the learning goals for each:

MODULE 1: THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS
1. Define voting.
2. Explain the importance of voting.
3. List the requirements for voting in the United States.
4. Identify the titles of executive leaders of national, state, and local government.
5. Identify the legislative leaders of national, state, and local government.
6. Explain the roles of the school board and the county board.
7. Participate in the decision-making process in their communities.

MODULE 2: COMMUNITY & HOME SAFETY
1. Call 911 (or other police/fire emergency telephone numbers) to report an emergency.
2. Distinguish between emergency and non-emergency situations.
3. State the laws regarding safe transportation of themselves and their children (e.g., proper use of restraints) in motor vehicles.
4. Develop an emergency escape plan for their house or apartment.
5. Identify safety education programs available in their community for adults and children.
6. Prepare a list of emergency telephone numbers for their community.
7. Participate in community outreach programs to enhance personal and community safety.

MODULE 3: THE PUBLIC LIBRARY
1. Locate the public library in their community.
2. Complete an application for a library card.
3. Describe the materials and services that the public library provides.
4. Ask for assistance in the library.
5. Find library materials of interest to them to check out or use in the library.

MODULE 4: THE U.S. SCHOOL SYSTEM

1. Identify how schools are organized in the United States school system (i.e., from preschool through college).
2. Identify the organization of grades and schools within their local school district.
3. Identify the approximate ages of children who attend the schools within their district.
4. Describe the similarities and differences between the United States school system and the school systems of their native countries.
5. Explain the organization of their local school district and school board.
6. Identify ways in which parents and other adults can participate in schools.

MODULE 5: PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

1. Explain the differences between private and public health care.
2. Locate public and private health care providers in their community.
3. Identify community resources for wellness programs (including prenatal care, immunizations, and screenings) and crisis services (including domestic violence, child abuse, and substance abuse).
4. Check eligibility requirements for public health care services.
5. Make an appointment for health care services.
6. Complete a patient information/medical history form.

MODULE 6: HOUSING

1. Identify the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants.
2. Contact their landlords or property associations regarding housing problems.
3. Report a problem with utility service or billing.
4. Obtain information about utility payment plans.
5. Locate resources for building permits or property tax questions.
6. Check a contractor's or solicitor's references or report a complaint against them.

II. CLASSROOM PICTURE SET

Each module contains numerous pictures to illustrate relevant concepts and vocabulary. The *Classroom Picture Set* consists of each picture in the curriculum enlarged on heavy cardstock for use in the classroom. Ideas for using the *Classroom Picture Set* are found in "Using Pictures for Vocabulary Development" and "Using Pictures for Language Experience" beginning on page xv.

III. FLASHCARD PICTURE SET (OPTIONAL)

The *Flashcard Picture Set* consists of each picture (and its accompanying vocabulary word or phrase) from the curriculum reduced to flashcard size on heavy cardstock. Ideas for using the *Flashcard Picture Set* are found in "Using Pictures for Vocabulary Development" beginning on page xv.

SELECTING & CUSTOMIZING CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

The *Community Connections* curriculum contains a wide selection of reproducible classroom activities for EL/CE. Not all of the materials will be appropriate for all learners. Instructors should select only those activities that meet the needs and language levels of their students. The modules do not increase in difficulty and can be used in any order.

The curriculum was field-tested on a wide variety of ESL learners in different classroom settings. It was used successfully with beginning-level learners who lack literacy skills in any language as well as with advanced ESL learners. Adults ranging in age from late teens to early 80's used the curriculum materials with equal success. It was used successfully with new immigrants as well as those who have lived in the U.S. for many years.

The activities found in the curriculum modules are:

- **PICTURES FOR VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT**

- **PICTURES FOR LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE AND GROUP STORY WRITING**

- **READING PASSAGES**
  (including pre-reading, vocabulary, and comprehension activities)

- **DIALOGUES AND ROLE PLAYS**

- **ACTION RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

- **WRITING ACTIVITIES**

- **HOME ACTIVITIES**

- **PAIR ACTIVITIES**

- **CULTURAL COMPARISON ACTIVITIES**

- **EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES**

The curriculum can be thought of as a "menu" from which instructors select activities and materials appropriate for their classes. Each module contains activities at a variety of language levels. The guide below will assist instructors with selecting curriculum activities appropriate for beginning language levels (the left side of the chart) and intermediate/advanced language levels (the right side of the chart).

EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVELS* Beginning ESL Literacy Beginning ESL Low Intermediate ESL	EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVELS Low Intermediate ESL High Intermediate ESL Low Advanced ESL High Advanced ESL
• **PICTURES FOR VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT**	• **PICTURES FOR VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT**
• **PICTURES FOR LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE**	• **PICTURES FOR GROUP STORY WRITING**
	• **READING PASSAGES**
• **DIALOGUES**	• **DIALOGUES/ROLE PLAYING**
• **ACTION RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**	• **ACTION RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**
• **WRITING ACTIVITIES**	• **WRITING ACTIVITIES**
• **HOME ACTIVITIES**	• **HOME ACTIVITIES**
• **PAIR ACTIVITIES**	• **PAIR ACTIVITIES**
• **CULTURAL COMPARISON ACTIVITIES** *(orally, native language only)*	• **CULTURAL COMPARISON ACTIVITIES** *(orally or written)*
• **EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES**	• **EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES**

* Educational Functioning Levels are from the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS). See www.nrsweb.org.

CUSTOMIZING CURRICULUM CONTENT

Although the *Community Connections* curriculum was developed for use in Illinois, instructors will occasionally need to customize the content of the reading passages and related vocabulary to reflect the community in which it is taught. For example, in Module 1 the word "sanitation" is used. However, the terms "waste management" or "garbage service" may be more widely used in particular communities. In cases where particular vocabulary items found in the modules are not those used in the learners' community, instructors will need to make changes in the reading passage and vocabulary activities before duplicating the module pages for classroom use.

Realia (authentic materials) from the community should also be customized whenever possible. For example, there is a sample library card application in Module 3, *The Public Library*. However, instructors should obtain an *actual* application from their students' local library for use in class. The "Teacher Notes" for each module include a list of "Possible Authentic Materials" from the community that can be incorporated into instruction.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR EL/CE

The six modules of the *Community Connections* curriculum are not intended to cover all areas of EL/CE. In working with their students, EL/CE teachers will no doubt discover other important topics, or additional aspects of the topics addressed in the six modules, that are relevant to their students' lives. These topics may include:

- Employment issues, including worker rights
- Volunteering in the community
- Family issues, including parenting skills or caring for the elderly
- Opportunities for recreation including park district programs and local cultural events

Instructors are encouraged to develop their own materials (including experiential learning activities) to address additional EL/CE areas.

LEARNER OUTCOMES

A unique aspect of the *Community Connections* curriculum is its emphasis on experiential learning activities that help adult ESL learners bridge the gap between the ESL classroom and their communities. Through field trips, guest speaker presentations, and other experiential activities, students are encouraged to become more active, engaged community members.

Students in the pilot classes reported exciting accomplishments and changes in their lives resulting from information learned through the *Community Connections* curriculum activities, including experiential activities. The instructors collected and documented many of these accomplishments and changes in students' lives. Here are a few examples related to particular modules:

MODULE 1: THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS
- Registered to vote and voted for the first time.
- Voted absentee in the presidential election.
- Wrote letters to Illinois legislators requesting a budget increase for adult education. An increase was approved in a fiscal year when many other education dollars were cut.
- Wrote letters to the governor's office requesting a copy of the Illinois "Blue Book," a directory of public officials.
- Brought a local library referendum flyer to class to discuss and share.

MODULE 2: COMMUNITY & HOME SAFETY
- Planned and practiced emergency escape routes with their families.
- Called the local village hall to find out if there was a Neighborhood Watch program.
- Called 911 when a family member needed emergency help.
- Reported a crime to the police (after meeting a police officer in class).
- Installed home security lights.
- Obtained car seats for their children.
- Called police station to find out what to do/whom to call when carbon monoxide detector beeped.
- Took a CPR class and became certified after seeing a CPR demonstration in class.
- Purchased a smoke alarm for the first time.
- Put a sticker from the fire department in child's bedroom window.

MODULE 3: THE PUBLIC LIBRARY
- Got a library card and checked out materials.
- Used the Internet to find out the local library hours and services.
- Became a volunteer at the local library.
- Asked a school counselor to find out how to get a library card. (Students lived outside the library service area and could not get free cards.)
- Visited a library for the first time after living in the U.S. for 20 years.
- Registered for a computer ESL program at the library.

MODULE 4: THE U.S. SCHOOL SYSTEM

- Attended parent-teacher conferences at child's school.
- Volunteered at child's school.
- Went on a school field trip with child's class.
- Joined the PTA at child's school.
- Requested a copy of son's screening from school principal's office.
- Started a savings plan to save money for college courses.
- Visited the school district office to discuss the availability of gifted services for her child after district was rezoned.
- Applied for a job as a translator with the school district office.
- Shared information on parent-teacher conferences with language-minority friends.
- Wrote a note to child's teacher.
- Set up a meeting with child's teacher to discuss the family's plans to be away for three weeks.

MODULE 5: PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

- Contacted the township health office to get information on eligibility for a county health insurance program for workers without health insurance.
- Took a pregnant friend to the county health department for pre-natal care and applied for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits.
- Went for check-ups to a physician, dentist, and eye doctor for the first time. Had dental work done, got contact lenses, and was put on medication for high blood pressure.
- Made a doctor's appointment in English for the first time.
- Called the health department about free immunizations.
- Cut down on salt intake after a dietician's presentation in class.
- Found a yoga class in the community and began attending.

MODULE 6: HOUSING

- Contacted the landlord about a leaking toilet.
- Shared information with classmates about free trees available for planting in their neighborhood.
- Began speaking to neighbors and eventually was asked to watch the neighbors' house while they were on vacation. (Before civics classes, this student had never spoken to her American neighbors.)
- Asked landlord for a written lease.
- Discussed a bill for repairs with landlord to determine which charges were actually normal "wear and tear" that shouldn't have been billed to the tenant.
- Called customer service to complain about being disconnected while using a calling card, and received 30 free minutes.
- Went to the village hall to get a building permit.
- Had gas bill converted to the budget payment plan.

TEACHING TECHNIQUES

This section contains ideas for implementing the following teaching techniques:

I.   USING PICTURES FOR VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

II.   USING PICTURES FOR LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE

III. TEACHING THE READING PASSAGES

IV.   TEACHING DIALOGUES AND ROLE PLAYS

V.   EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES

- **PLANNING SUCCESSFUL FIELD TRIPS**
- **MAKING THE MOST OF GUEST SPEAKERS**

The ideas presented in this section are suggestions gathered in part from the experiences of instructors and adult learners using the *Community Connections* curriculum materials. Instructors should feel free to adapt the suggestions that follow to their own particular teaching situations.

I. USING PICTURES FOR VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

The *Community Connections* curriculum contains over 200 pictures. Pictures are invaluable tools for helping language teachers convey ideas, teach vocabulary, and generate discussion at all levels of instruction.

Most of the pictures in the modules correspond to words or phrases in the reading passages. For intermediate to advanced students, the pictures can be used to develop vocabulary before or after students read the passages. For beginning students, the pictures can be used in place of the reading passages.

There are many ways to use pictures for vocabulary development--the development of both oral skills and sight reading skills. Following are some suggestions for using pictures in your classes. When teaching beginning students, it is a good practice to begin by presenting the pictures using the method described in *A* below and following up with a variety of practice activities such as those described in *B* through *E*. Feel free to invent your own ways of using pictures.

A) Introducing New Vocabulary Using Pictures
Using the large pictures from the *Classroom Picture Set*, say the new words/phrases one by one, repeating several times, as you point to the corresponding pictures. Ask comprehension questions as necessary to ensure that students understand the meaning of the words or phrases. Continue with listening comprehension practice, below.

B) Listening Comprehension Practice
This teacher-directed activity practices vocabulary that has already been introduced.
Say the new words/phrases one by one as students point to the corresponding pictures on their papers. When students demonstrate good comprehension, have them practice saying the new words/phrases aloud.

C) TPR Activities Using the Blackboard
These teacher-directed activities practice vocabulary that has already been introduced.
Tape the large pictures from the *Classroom Picture Set* to the board or wall. Have students walk to the board and identify the pictures you name. For additional oral practice, have various students take the role of teacher by naming the pictures for their classmates to identify.

For sight word/TPR practice, pass out flashcards with the words written on them. After you name a picture, the student who has that word walks to the board and puts the sight word on the chalk tray below the appropriate picture.

D) Flashcard Activities
These student-directed activities practice vocabulary that has already been introduced.
The flashcards in the *Flashcard Picture Set* can be used in two ways:

1) the pictures and their corresponding words/phrases can be cut apart so that there are separate flashcards for the pictures and the words, or

2) the flashcards can be folded and glued together so that there are pictures on one side of the flashcards and the corresponding words/phrases on the other side.

Pairs of students can engage in a variety of practice activities such as matching words with pictures, quizzing each other, or writing sentences about the pictures.

Small groups of students will enjoy playing "Concentration" with the flashcards. In this matching game, the picture cards and their corresponding words/phrases are placed face down on a table. Students take turns turning over two cards, looking for a match of a picture and its corresponding word/phrase. If a student finds a match, he or she keeps those cards and takes another turn. The game is over when all the cards have been matched up, and the student with the most cards is the winner.

E)   Whole Class Match-Up
This student-directed activity practices vocabulary that has already been introduced.
Using the *Flashcard Picture Set*, cut apart the words/phrases from their pictures. Pass out one word/phrase OR one picture to each student. Have the students circulate, using oral language to find their match. Do not allow students to show their pictures or words to each other. (Hint: In classes with mixed literacy abilities, give nonliterate students pictures and literate students words.)

II.   USING PICTURES FOR LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) is appropriate for students with limited literacy skills in the first language. LEA stories are brief passages made up by the learners themselves and transcribed by the teacher. The students then use their familiarity with the content as an aid to reading.

LEA stories are based upon class discussion. The stories may be prompted by the learners' own experiences or by a picture or a series of pictures. Each module in the *Community Connections* curriculum has an LEA story that is told through a series of pictures. Students will often draw on their own experiences when interpreting the pictures.

In addition to using the LEA pictures in the curriculum, teachers can also draw their own pictures or use pictures from current events or class field trips to generate LEA stories.

Here is one way to help students compose LEA stories:

1. Select an LEA picture series from the curriculum (or from another source) that has relevance to your students' lives. Discuss the pictures with the class, prompting with questions such as, *Who are these people? What is happening? How do the people feel? Has this ever happened to you?*

2. Have the learners dictate the story to you as you write the story on the board. Use questions as necessary to prompt the dictation.

3. Transcribe the learners' words exactly; don't worry about correcting grammatical mistakes.

4. Read the story to the class. Make any changes the learners want.

5. Read the story with the class. Point to each word as you read it. Help the class read the story.

6. Follow up with a variety of literacy development activities geared to each learner's literacy level. Some ideas are:
    *   Make flash cards of selected vocabulary. (Select 5-10 vocabulary words per story.) Have the students match the vocabulary words on flashcards to words in the story on the board.

    *   Have students copy the story, or provide them with a copy. Then have them circle the vocabulary words on their copy of the story.

    *   Prepare cloze exercises (in a cloze exercise, the story is written with blanks left for selected vocabulary items). Provide a word bank of vocabulary items for those students who need it.

    *   To practice sequencing skills, have the learners sequence pictures that have been cut apart (use the "Pictures for Group Story Writing" without the numbers). Write the story on sentence strips and have the learners put the sentence strips in order. Students can then match the sentences to the appropriate picture.

    *   Cut the sentence strips in half and have the students match the beginnings and endings of sentences.

III. TEACHING THE READING PASSAGES

Each instructional unit in the *Community Connections* curriculum includes one or two reading passages. These reading passages serve two purposes: 1) they provide the instructor with the content information that is to be taught, and 2) they provide low intermediate (and above) learners with the opportunity to increase their reading skills in English while learning about civic participation in the United States.

It is important to note that nonliterate learners ("non-readers") or beginning-level students will not be able to use the reading passages. Instructors of students at these levels should rely instead upon the pictures (for vocabulary development, language experience, and group stories) included in each unit to convey content information.

A NOTE ON THE LENGTH OF THE READING PASSAGES

Most of the reading passages in the curriculum are two pages long; some are a bit shorter and some are a bit longer. Teachers may find it useful to teach the reading passages in two parts, at two separate class meetings, depending on the level of the class. To facilitate teaching the reading passages at two class meetings, the accompanying vocabulary activities are divided into two: Vocabulary Activities 1-A and 1-B correspond to the first part of each reading passage, and Vocabulary Activities 2-A and 2-B correspond to the second part. (One exception is Module 1, which contains two separate reading passages, each with its own vocabulary activities.) The "Teacher Notes" for each module detail exactly where the reading passage may be divided into two parts.

Each reading passage has the following four parts:

1. Pre-Reading Activity
2. Reading Passage
3. Vocabulary Activities
4. Comprehension Check

Here are some suggestions for teaching the reading passages.

1. **Pre-Reading Activity**
   Before having students read a passage, hold a pre-reading class discussion. Each reading passage is preceded by a page of pre-reading questions designed to do three things: engage learners' background knowledge and focus their attention on the topic at hand, elicit/introduce relevant vocabulary, and instill in learners a desire to read. Students can write the answers to the questions before discussing them, if desired. It may be helpful to use pictures from the *Classroom Picture Set* to guide the pre-reading discussion.

2. **Reading Passage**
   After discussing the pre-reading questions, have the students read the passage silently a few times. Encourage them to underline unfamiliar vocabulary. If the students in your class have limited literacy skills, reading the passage aloud to them after they have tried it silently on their own may aid comprehension.

Note, however, that having individual students take turns reading aloud before everyone has tried reading silently is not a recommended procedure. Oral performance in front of the class does not develop reading skills for either the performer or the listeners. Oral performance of a reading passage is a test of English pronunciation skills and does not aid reading comprehension. If students want to read aloud, this should be done after vocabulary and content clarification have taken place.

3. Vocabulary Activities

Two sets of vocabulary words and related activities are included in each module. The words and phrases from the passage included in the vocabulary activities are those likely to pose difficulty to low intermediate learners of English. Depending on the level of the learners in your class, it might be necessary to include additional words from the reading passage. These can be written by the students under "Other new words" on the bottom of each vocabulary page.

The pictures in "Pictures for Vocabulary Development" in each module correspond to the words and phrases on the "Vocabulary Activity" pages. These pictures can be of great help in establishing the meaning of new words and concepts. The *Classroom Picture Set* and the *Flashcard Picture Set* may also help convey meaning and provide additional practice with the vocabulary words.

4. Comprehension Check

The comprehension check consists of "True-False" statements designed to develop reading skills and to generate class discussion. Learners can work individually or in pairs to complete the "True-False" activities. It is a good practice to encourage learners go back to the reading passage to find the correct answers (when possible) and to correct the false sentences. After this activity has been completed individually or in pairs, the whole class can discuss the answers.

The comprehension check is designed to develop both literal and inferential reading skills. Literal "True-False" statements are those whose answers can be found directly in the text. In the case of inferential statements, however, the answers are not directly found in the text; learners must use critical thinking skills to infer the correct answer.

IV. TEACHING DIALOGUES AND ROLE PLAYS

The dialogue is a traditional ESL teaching technique. Dialogue practice helps students develop functional listening and speaking skills, as well as vocabulary and pronunciation, in specific real-life contexts.

The dialogues in the *Community Connections* curriculum can be used by all but true beginning (zero level) students. For low-level students, it is important to follow the script exactly and to limit the length of the dialogue. For higher level students, you can be more flexible in adding new information to the dialogue and extending the dialogue as appropriate. Since the dialogues in the curriculum are relatively simple, follow-up discussions with advanced students can focus on grammar, vocabulary, or the function of the exchange.

HOW TO TEACH A DIALOGUE
Here is one way to teach a dialogue:

1. **Set the Scene for the Dialogue**
   - It is helpful to use pictures and/or to draw stick figures on the board to convey to the students who the speakers are and what the situation is. In many cases pictures from the *Classroom Picture Set* can be used to help establish the context. It may also be helpful to use realia and gestures to help establish meaning.
   - After establishing the context of the dialogue, ask the students if they have ever been in a similar situation.

2. **Model the Dialogue**
   - If possible, make a tape of the dialogue with another person before class. (Speak as naturally as possible when making the tape.) Play the tape while the students listen. Point to the picture of each speaker on the board as you play his/her part. This will help students realize who is speaking when.
   - If it is not possible to make a tape of the dialogue before class, simply read both parts of the dialogue while the students listen. Point to the picture of each speaker on the board as you read his or her part. Try to be expressive yet natural.
   - Play or re-read the dialogue several times. Ask comprehension questions to make sure that students understand the context.

3. **Practice the Dialogue**
   - Have the students repeat each part of the dialogue after you. (Note that the students have not yet seen the written words of the dialogue.)
   - Pass out copies of the dialogue, or write it on the board. Play the tape of (or read) the dialogue several times while the students read along silently.
     Note: If the class consists entirely of nonliterate learners, omit this step. If the class has mixed literacy levels (i.e., some students can read and some cannot), do not omit this step; those students who can read will use the written word to help them while those who cannot read will rely on listening skills only.
   - Have the whole class recite the dialogue *with* you.
   - Take one part of the dialogue; have the whole class take the other part. Practice several times and then reverse roles.

- Divide the class in half. Have each half take one part of the dialogue. Practice several times and then reverse roles.

- Have the students form pairs. While the students practice the dialogue in pairs, circulate around the room to monitor and give help as needed. Have the students reverse roles and continue to practice in pairs while you monitor their progress.

4. Perform the Dialogue
- Ask for volunteers to perform the dialogue for the class.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Substitution Drill

After students are comfortable with the dialogue, have them substitute key words with alternatives. The alternatives can be written on the board or given by you as oral cues.

It is a good practice to have students substitute information that is real to them. For example, if the dialogue is about calling the landlord to report a problem, have them use their landlords' actual names in the dialogue.

Role Plays

For intermediate and advanced students, it is good pedagogy to follow dialogue practice with role play practice. Role plays are less structured than dialogues and give the students the opportunity to use the language creatively and to tailor it to their own situations.

Here is one way to do role playing:

1. Have the students work in pairs (or groups of three, if there are three roles in the situation).

2. Assign each partner a role. For example, tell Partner A, "Your son needs immunizations and a check-up before starting kindergarten. Call the immunization clinic to make an appointment." Tell Partner B, "You are the receptionist at the clinic."

   Alternatively, you can prepare role cards in advance with the role information written out (see the example on p. 184) and distribute these to the students.

3. Give each pair or group time to prepare their role play. If appropriate, have them write their conversation. (Note: For advanced students, you can omit this step and have them perform their role plays with no preparation time.)

4. Circulate around the room and give assistance to students as necessary while they prepare their role plays.

5. Have each pair or group perform their role play for the class.

V. EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Experiential activities are structured learning activities that help adult language learners bridge the gap between the ESL classroom and their communities. The goal of these activities is to help the students become more active, engaged community members. As such, experiential activities are at the heart of the *Community Connections* curriculum.

There are many kinds of experiential learning activities including:
- Accessing community information by telephone, internet, or mail
- Taking field trips to targeted community locations (see page xxiii)
- Having guest speakers from the community visit the classroom (see page xxiv)

SELECTING EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Each module of the curriculum contains suggestions for numerous experiential activities. You should select or design activities that have relevance to your students' everyday lives and needs. When planning an experiential activity, it is also important to consider these two factors*:

Language Level: What level of ESL ability is necessary to successfully complete the activity?

Risk: How much risk-taking is involved? Activities can be low-risk, high risk, or somewhere in between. The more intense and less controllable the contact with unfamiliar people, the higher the element of risk.

For example, using the Internet to access information about a local election requires intermediate-advanced language skills, but it is a *low-risk* activity because it does not involve speaking to unfamiliar people. On the other hand, interviewing a candidate for a local election requires intermediate-advanced language skills but is a *high-risk* activity because the students must interact with someone in the rather uncontrolled context of an interview.

ORGANIZING EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Experiential activities can be organized in a variety of ways including:
- Whole class participating
- Pairs or small groups working together
- Individuals working alone

Select the organization that best suits the needs of your class. For example, if there are mixed language abilities in the class, you may choose to have students work in mixed-ability pairs or small groups. If there are varied interests in the class, students can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups on different topics.

PLANNING EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Effective experiential activities have three phases:
1. In-class preparation: Preparation activities might include discussion, vocabulary development, or practice of questions to be asked during the activity.
2. The activity itself.
3. In-class follow-up: Follow-up activities might include discussion or writing projects based on information learned during the activity.

PLANNING EFFECTIVE FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an ideal way to help bridge the classroom and the community. There are many ideas for field trips in the "Experiential Activities" section of each *Community Connections* module. Depending upon the resources available in your community and on your students' needs and interests, you will no doubt think of additional places to visit.

If field trips are to be effective, careful planning is essential. Below are some ideas for planning effective field trips.

1. **Plan the Trip**
    - Choose a destination that expands on current lesson work and that the students are interested in.
    - If possible, visit the destination without the class a week or two before the field trip. During this visit, you can identify what concepts and language students will need to benefit most from their visit.
    - Together with the class, decide on the date, time, and transportation.

2. **Prepare the Students**
    - Introduce relevant vocabulary and concepts as necessary.
    - Brainstorm and practice possible questions to ask the field trip guide, if applicable.
    - If students will be interacting with people at the field trip site, practice relevant dialogues and role plays.

3. **During the Trip**
    - Encourage the students to ask questions of the guide.
    - Assist students with communication as necessary.
    - If possible, take pictures (or have students take pictures) for use after the field trip.
    - Take notes for follow-up activities.

4. **After the Trip**
    - Debrief through discussion (same day as trip if possible).
    - Use photos that were taken on the trip to generate discussion and writing activities.
    - Have students write thank you notes as appropriate.

MAKING THE MOST OF GUEST SPEAKERS

In cases where it is difficult to take a group of students on a field trip, it may be possible to invite a member of the community to come to the class. Many of the experiential activities in this curriculum involve bringing the community into the classroom by inviting members from the community to serve as guest speakers.

Advanced planning is necessary for effective guest speaker presentations. Below are some ideas for making the most of guest speakers.

1. **Prepare the Speaker**
    It is essential to prepare the speaker before he or she arrives in the classroom. Ideally, a potential speaker should observe the class a week or two before the scheduled presentation. In this way, speakers who are unfamiliar with adult ESL students will be able to get a sense of the students' language level and the way you communicate with the class. When such a visit is not possible, plan to have a meeting with the speaker (either in person or by telephone) to cover the following points:

    *   Inform the speaker about the language level of the class.
    *   Encourage the speaker to use visual aids such as posters, diagrams, slides, or handouts to help convey meaning during the presentation.
    *   Encourage the speaker to avoid a traditional lecture format and instead give a short presentation followed by time for questions.
    *   Inform the speaker that you might need to intervene during the presentation or question/answer session if students are having difficulty understanding.

2. **Prepare the Students**
    *   Introduce relevant vocabulary and concepts as necessary.
    *   Brainstorm possible questions to ask the guest speaker.
    *   Practice asking the questions through role play (you can take the role of the guest speaker).
    *   Practice the language functions of asking questions (e.g., *Could you tell me… Would you happen to know…*) and thanking the speaker.

3. **Speaker Visits the Classroom**
    *   Introduce the speaker to the class.
    *   During both the brief formal presentation and the question/answer session that follows, intervene as necessary if students are having difficulty understanding.
    *   Takes notes for follow-up activities.

4. **Follow Up**
    *   Debrief through discussion (same day of visit if possible).
    *   Have students answer (orally or in writing) the questions that they prepared.
    *   Have students write thank you notes to the guest speaker.