

Effective Practices

Literacy Instruction in ESOL

Literacy instruction develops reading and writing skills. In recent years, large numbers of Aspire ESOL students placed into NRS ESL Level 1 and some are learning to read for the first time. The **Opportunities** below are evidence-based practices that offer guidance and support for serving ESOL learners with literacy needs.

Programs

Aspire Student Orientation is the first opportunity for program staff to learn about students' backgrounds and start meeting their needs.

Opportunities

❖ **Confirm availability for learning.**

Basic needs must be met; refer students to community services.

Resource: [Ohio 211.org](http://Ohio211.org), SettleInUS.org

❖ **Screen for literacy.**

Identify students' home language and type of writing system.

Find out if students have literacy skills in their home language.

Resource: [Past Schooling & Background](#), [Native Language Literacy Assessment/Screening Device](#)

❖ **Adopt a targeted curriculum.**

Utilize tools developed specifically for literacy instruction with adult ESOL.

Resource: [Pathway to Literacy](#), [Emerging English Language Literacy Curriculum](#)

Teachers

Teaching literacy may seem like a daunting task. Adopting a framework with effective practices provides a foundation for instruction. Using a structured routine supports learners with explicit instruction in language, literacy and other important content.

Opportunities

❖ **Assess literacy needs.**

Use diagnostic results to inform instruction.

Resource: [5-minute screening tool](#), [BATT](#), [Diagnostics & Assessment](#)

❖ **Follow a simple, structured routine.**

Language skills, literacy skills, other (strategies, numeracy, visual & digital literacy)

Explicitly teach literacy skills.

Resource: [Sample Lesson Outline & Teachers Guide](#), [Literacy Orientation Kit](#)

❖ **Teach oral language to bridge literacy.**

Oral language is the foundation for literacy skills.

Reading and writing must be based on words that are orally familiar, common, relevant, and known to students.

Resource: [Using Oral Language Skills](#), [Oral Language Development](#)

❖ **Activate background knowledge.**

Literacy learners may not have the general or cultural knowledge for the lesson.

Use visuals, realia, translanguageing and teach missing vocabulary/concepts.

Students

Literacy education can be confusing and overwhelming. Research shows connecting background knowledge and experience is critical for effective language learning.

Opportunities

❖ **Use home language.**

Make connections to what is familiar.

Process new language skills using what you know.

Resource: [Language comparison](#), [Translanguageing strategies](#), [Phonemic Inventories and Cultural and Linguistic Information Across Languages](#).

❖ **Draw what you cannot yet write.**

Use this beginning literacy skill to build language and literacy.

Resource: [Drawing](#), [Teaching Writing to English Learners](#)

❖ **Practice with touch-screen devices.**

Utilize for standardized testing.

Differentiate classroom tasks.

Complete assignments or practice outside of class on self-paced apps.

Resource: [Tablet Tips for LESLLA](#), [Using mobile devices](#)

Additional Information and Resources

Opportunities

❖ **Online Courses** Self-directed professional development in the PDN Moodle.

Resource: [Low Level/Emergent Literacy](#)

❖ **Instructional Resources** for ESOL teachers and students.

Resource: [Teacher Resources – ESOL](#) at ohioaspire.org