

Handout: Goal Setting

Effective goal setting with students is the foundation of successful instruction. When students set their own reading goals and then are able to monitor and see progress toward those goals, they are more likely to persist in adult education programs. In addition, goal setting and monitoring provides valuable information to help tutors make instructional decisions about materials, methodology, and focus of instruction. Below are some tools and strategies you can use to help students set and monitor their goals.

Setting Long-Term Goals

Initially, an adult student may enter a program with very vague or general long-term goals; specific short-term reading goals and no long-term goals; or maybe without any goals at all –just the sense that he wants to read better. In long-term goal setting, the objective is to get students to think about the “why” more than the “what.” For example, a student may want to get his GED (the what). In setting the long-term reading goal, you want to help the student identify why he wants his GED: to move up in his job, to continue his education, to be a role model for his children. This discussion helps the student clearly define a big picture for what he wants to accomplish. Once the student can describe the big picture, begin to talk about how reading fits into this big picture. In the example above, you could begin by asking the student what kinds of things he reads at work now and what kinds of things he would need to read if he got a promotion. You can talk about what kinds of things he thinks he would need to be able to read to pass the GED and how those might be similar to or different from the things he would read at work. These then become the student’s long-term reading goals.

Setting Short-Term Goals

Once the student has established some long-term reading goals, it is important to break these down into short-term reading goals that can be clearly identified, articulated, accomplished in a short period, and measured. To do this:

- Have the student discuss the reading strengths and skills he already has and can build on to accomplish his goals
- Discuss with the student what gives him trouble when he reads and help him identify the areas that he needs or wants to develop
- Identify the skills, knowledge, and abilities that are needed for the student’s long term goal.
- Identify with the student the short-term reading goals that will be the focus of instruction.

Once you and the student have identified the short-term reading goals, be sure there is a clear link back to the long-term reading goals. In the example above, the student might identify the need to identify details in work documents, follow a sequence of steps, and skim for important information. These are also skills that the student will need to pass the GED. Discuss with the students what the two of you will do in and out of class to accomplish the goals, and how the student will know the goal has been met.

Monitoring Goals

Once you've worked with the student to set long-term and short-term reading goals, it is important to monitor the goals on a regular basis. Monitoring involves reviewing the long-term reading goal to see that it is still relevant to the student's life, and then reviewing the short-term reading goals related to it. During this review, you and the student want to identify the goals that have been accomplished and what progress he has made on the other goals. If the student has not made progress on a goal, discuss the reasons why and make adjustments in the strategies you both are using to achieve the goal. Setting and monitoring long-term and short-term reading goals helps the student see progress, avoid frustration, and remain motivated to continue his education.

Handout: Goal Setting Activity

My Goals

Long-range goal _____

Short-term goal 1: _____

Activities	Methods/Materials

Measurement: _____

Short-term goal 2: _____

Activities	Methods/Materials

Measurement: _____

Short-term goal 3: _____

Activities	Methods/Materials

Measurement: _____

Short-term goal 4: _____

Activities	Methods/Materials

Measurement: _____

Goal Setting

Student: _____ Date: _____

1. These are my most important goals _____

2. I will get there by first reaching these goals _____

3. I know I am on my way because I can already _____

4. I can help myself reach my goals if I _____

5. These things stand in my way _____

6. This is what I can do to get help _____

7. Here is my plan _____

Goal Setting

Goal Statement

I need to improve _____ so I can _____.

Goal Planning

Skill What do I need to learn?	Measurement How will I know I've learned?



Handout: Assessment

Role of Assessment

We can think about assessment in literacy instruction as performing two roles: initial assessment, where we seek to establish a starting point for student instruction; and ongoing evaluation where we measure student progress.

Initial Assessment

The initial assessment often consists of an interview and a reading and writing assessment. During the interview, we are trying to build a rapport with the student and find out why they came to the literacy program and what they want to accomplish. We will ask questions about the student's previous experiences with school, their work, and any hobbies they have. We will ask them about their current reading and writing habits – what they read and how they use writing – and what they think it means to be a good reader and writer. We will ask them questions about how they like to learn new things and strategies they use when faced with a difficult task.

As part of the interview, we will administer a literacy assessment to identify the student's existing reading and writing abilities and their needs. This might be a formal standardized assessment like:

- The Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE, <http://tabetest.com/>)
- The BEST Literacy and BEST Plus test (<http://www.cal.org/aea/>)
- The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS, <https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/assessments>)

or a generic, less intensive assessment like:

- Reading Evaluation Adult Diagnosis (READ, <https://www.newreaderspress.com/read>)

or a placement test to identify where to start in a series of instructional materials:

- Pretests for High School Equivalency (HSE) exams used to place students in the study materials:
 - GED (<https://www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/freepracticetest>)
 - HiSet (<https://hiset.ets.org/prepare/materials/>)
 - TASC (<http://www.tasctest.com/practice-items-for-test-takers.html>)
- Placement tests for instructional materials like
 - Endeavor and Voyager (https://www.newreaderspress.com/endeavor#productDetail_resources)
 - Laubach Way to Reading (https://www.newreaderspress.com/laubach-way-to-reading-level-1#productDetail_resources)
 - Challenger (https://www.newreaderspress.com/challenger-levels-1-4#productDetail_resources)

It is helpful to think of the initial assessment as a process that lasts over the first 3-4 meetings. Some of the information may be obtained by the literacy program, before you ever meet with the student, but other information you will unearth as you get to know the student during your initial weeks of work.

Ongoing Evaluation

We use ongoing evaluation to measure and celebrate the student's progress; check off goals that have been accomplished and establish new short and long term goals; and make any needed changes to the instructional approach.

Ongoing evaluation usually occurs at specific milestones. These milestones may be based on time in the program (every 4 or 6 months), hours of instruction (at 40, 50, 80, or 100 hours of instruction), or on completion of a project or a level in a set of published materials.

Four Types of Assessment

There are four general types of assessments. Literacy programs may use one type or a combination of types to meet different needs.

Standardized Tests

These tests are similar to the standardized tests given in schools. They provide a snapshot of the student's reading and writing abilities. They usually give results in terms of grade-level equivalents and may include more detailed diagnostic information. The standardized tests mentioned earlier have many iterations, so they can be given multiple times. The difference in scores is an easy way to demonstrate progress. The focus of standardized tests is illustrated by the statement "The results of the test indicate the student can read and write as well as the average student in grade _____."

Materials-based Assessment

This form of assessment helps determine where to place a learner in a specific set of instructional materials, and then continues to measure how well the student has learned the skills taught in the materials. Many published materials will have an initial placement test, periodic checkups like you might find at the end of a chapter, and a final assessment which covers the skills learned through the entire series and provides guidance as to whether the student is ready to move to the next level. Materials-based assessments are rarely applicable to other materials. However, because published materials are usually correlated to reading grade levels, a program may use a standardized test as a generic placement tool for multiple materials; or they may use a placement tool for published materials to get a broad assessment of the student's reading level. The focus of materials-based assessments is illustrated by the statement: "The student has mastered the skills taught in the following materials _____."

Competency-based Assessment

This kind of assessment measures a person's ability to apply basic skills to accomplish specific tasks in functional contexts, such as reading calendars, maps, traffic signs, and newspaper ads. The individual tasks are usually associated with a longer-term goal, and checklists are often used as a way to show progress toward that goal. For example, if a student wants to get their driver's license, a checklist for a competency-based assessment might include:

- student read the driver's manual
- student was able to identify traffic signs by shape
- student was able to explain right of way

Competency-based assessment is best summed up with this sentence: "The student is able to use his or her reading and writing skills to perform the following functional tasks:..."

Performance Assessment

Performance assessment focuses on why the student came to the program, what the student wants to do with his or her new skills, and how the student currently uses these skills in his or her own life. Performance assessment involves the student and tutor in conversations about the student's changes in literacy behaviors and the use of literacy skills inside and outside of the classroom. The focus of performance assessment is summed up with this sentence: "The student has used his or her new skills (such as reading, writing, math) in the following ways:"

Portfolio Assessment

What is a Portfolio

Each of the assessments mentioned above has their own strengths and weaknesses: standardized tests are easy to quantify, materials-based assessments provide detailed regular insight into the student's learning, competency-based assessments demonstrate clear progress toward the student's goals, and performance assessments show long term impact on the student's life. **A good assessment process will include multiple types of assessment to get a complete picture of the student's literacy growth.**

This is the definition of portfolio assessment. The purpose of portfolio assessment is to:

- document learning and assess progress over time
- help the student develop self-evaluation skills by reflecting on the learning
- demonstrate the variety of reading and writing activities the student has performed
- identify needs and plan future lessons
- show program representatives how the learner is doing

The Working Folder

Portfolio assessment begins with working folders where the student's work is kept. The working folders might include:

- short and long-term goals
- test scores
- assessments associated with published materials the student is working in
- homework
- writing samples
- reading logs
- language experience stories
- audio recordings of the student reading aloud
- journal entries or reflection logs that capture how the student is using reading outside of the classroom
- newspaper articles, children's books, and other samples of real-life materials the student has read
- vocabulary word lists
- tutor observations

Portfolio Assessment

At regular intervals, the tutor and student meet to review the folders and select materials to place into a portfolio as a representation of the student's work. During the meeting, the tutor and student:

- Work together to decide what the student wants the portfolio to measure or track. The student may want to track reading or writing progress, progress toward a specific goal, changes in literacy behaviors outside of the classroom, or areas the student would like to continue to develop.
- Review the materials in the working folder.
- Select materials from the working folder that measure progress in selected areas and that represent all the ways the student uses reading and writing. Make sure all items are dated so you can track change.
- Identify reasons for choosing certain items to place in the portfolio. The student writes or dictates the reason each item was selected and how the item reflects his or her literacy development. These reasons are included in the portfolio.
- Discuss the student's short and long term goals, make changes, and include a record of that discussion in the portfolio.

Handout: The Language Experience Approach

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) involves using a story dictated by a student and written by the tutor to teach different components of reading and writing. Using both the learners' own experiences and language as the basis for instructional material is an effective way of collaborating with learners from the very first lesson. This approach gives immediate success and is an icebreaker in a new teaching situation. It also gives you insights into the learners' worlds that can be of great help in selecting materials for a series of lessons.

The Language Experience Approach emphasizes the connections between oral language and written language. This technique allows even beginning readers to create sophisticated oral compositions which are then put into print. Language Experience works well with any level student and in individual and group settings. Eventually it can be the basis for students writing their own stories.

Steps

1. **Converse with students to identify an experience or topic.** Begin the language experience approach by inviting the student or students to talk. The conversation will help you narrow the topic for the language experience story, and will help the student generate ideas. Topics for the conversation might include asking the student what they did over the weekend, what they enjoy doing for fun, or where they went for vacation. You might also use a prompt to spark conversation, like reading a short article from the newspaper or using a picture.
2. **Focus the conversation and ask the student to tell you a story.** Once you've discussed the topic with the student, narrow the topic and have the student tell you a story about it. If you're working with a group of students, you might rotate from student to student, with each student giving you one or two statements about the topic.
3. **Print exactly what the student says.** Use correct spelling and punctuation, but do not change any words. It is very important to maintain the integrity of the student's voice. Leave blank lines between each printed line. You will give the student a chance to make edits later in the process. For beginning readers, a story of 3-5 sentences is long enough. For more advanced students, a longer story is better. Ask the student or students to give the story a title.
4. **Read and verify the story.** Read the story back to the student and ask if the story says what they wanted it to say. Ask the student if there are any changes they would like to make to the story. Reread the story as many times as needed for this process.
5. **Read the story to the student.** Read the story to the student, tracking the words with your finger, while the student watches and listens.

6. **Ask the student to read the story.** After you have read the story, ask the student to read the story. For beginning students, you will combine steps five and six. You will read a sentence tracking the words, and then ask the student to read that sentence back to you. You will repeat the process until the student can read the entire story independently. Higher-level students may be able to read the story on their own after listening to you read it first. When working with a group of students, have the students read the story together and then give each student a chance to read parts or all of it on their own.
7. **Identify reading and writing skills.** Now that you have a story, you will use the story to identify reading and writing skills for the student to work on. Based on the student's needs, here are some of the things you might do:
 - **Alphabetics and word study.** Review the story and identify words that reflect specific phonemic awareness and phonics skills the student needs to practice, such as selecting words that have a short /i/ and a short /e/ and practice distinguishing between the two sounds. You might select a word that uses a common word pattern and have the student use it to form new words. You might select a group of words that use prefixes and suffixes and have the student practice identifying the prefix, suffix, and root word for each one.
 - **Vocabulary.** Since the vocabulary in the language experience story are the student's own words, he or she has some idea of what the words mean. However, people often don't have a complete understanding of the words they use regularly. Review the story and identify tier 2 vocabulary words. Ask the student what he or she thinks each word means, then read the complete definition. Discuss how the word might be used in other contexts and create a word chart. Identify vocabulary words that lend themselves to helping the student develop word building skills – identifying the meaning of a word through understanding the meaning of the root word and any prefixes and suffixes.
 - **Fluency:** You will have already worked on fluency as you read the story to the student and the student read it back to you. If there were phrases or portions of the story that gave the student problems when reading, use an activity such as phrase reading or pencil tracking to practice those phrases.
 - **Comprehension:** You may not be able to work on applying the broad comprehension strategies since the student already understands what he or she was trying to say. However, you can use the story to develop specific comprehension skills like how cause and effect, main idea and detail, or sequencing function within the story. You can compare these structures to similar examples in other stories the student may have read.
 - **Writing:** There will likely be grammatical errors in the story. You can use those to teach grammar lessons. After the grammar lesson, give the student another opportunity to revise the story.
8. **Student copy the final story.** Finally, ask the student to copy the story.

Generating Story Ideas

Use the questions and other ideas below to start conversations that will lead to the creation of a language experience story.

- What is your favorite hobby? Describe it.
- If you could have three wishes, what would they be?
- What type of work do you do? What do you like and dislike about your work?
- What is the strangest thing that ever happened to you?
- Tell me a story about someone in your family.
- If you had as much time and money as you needed, how would you spend your vacation?
- What is something you do well? How would you tell someone else how to do it?
- What was the best choice you made in the last five years?
- What do you most like to do on your day off?
- Do you have a favorite song? Can you tell me the words?
- Tell me about your favorite television show.
- What would you say to the president if you met him or her?
- Think about someone you know. Describe what he or she looks like.
- Tell me about a tradition your family has.
- Have you ever had an experience like _____? Tell me about it. (*after reading a story*)
- Read an article from a newspaper, magazine, or website to the student. Ask the student to tell you about the article in his or her own words.
- Read a submission to a personal advice column or blog. Ask the student how he or she would respond.
- Use a short video clip related to the student's interest to start a conversation.
- Bring in an interesting picture and ask the student to describe it, or how he or she feels about it.
- Choose a photo depicting an odd situation. Ask the student to describe what they think happened just before the photo was taken and just after it was taken.
- Ask the student to bring in a photo and tell you what the photo represents.
- Create a shared experience such as going on a field trip to a local museum. Afterward, ask the student or students to share their thoughts about the experience and what it mean to them.

Benefits of the Language Experience Approach

There are many benefits to using the Language Experience Approach with students:

- **Empowers students to see their own words in print.** When students see a story about a personal experience, written in their own words, it is both empowering and motivating.
- **Emphasizes the connection between oral and written language.** As students tell you the story, you write the story down on paper. This immediately helps student make the connection between their oral vocabulary and the same words in print.
- **Gives insight into the student's vocabulary and language structure.** The language experience story gives you an opportunity to understand the size and scope of the student's vocabulary, their understanding of composition and grammar, and their experiences that you may draw upon in later lessons.
- **Allows beginning students to produce sophisticated work.** Even though a student may be reading at a first or second grade level, they have been speaking and telling stories all their life. Students can tell complex and detailed stories using high-level vocabulary words.
- **Works well for individuals or groups.** It is a process that is easily adapted to individual learning or group learning.
- **Works well with new students.** This approach provides a new student with an immediate opportunity to experience success in reading and writing. It also gives you an opportunity to establish rapport with a new student before delving into published instructional materials.