

Facilitator's Notes

The Challenges of Literacy and Employment



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge funding from the National Literacy Secretariat Human Resources Development Canada, which made this project possible.

Our thanks also to Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development which provides funding for our Challenges literacy program and small group workshops.

Sincere thanks to all Edmonton Recycling Society staff for their interest, kindness and cooperation throughout the project.

Special thanks to Anita Opheim, Marg Reine and Shelin Hussein for their tutoring work with Darren and Angele.

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1995
9913-108 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
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Printed in Canada
Cover design and layout: Steven Nederveen

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THE CHALLENGES OF LITERACY AND EMPLOYMENT

Foreword

The *Challenges of Literacy and Employment* is a collaborative project between Prospects Literacy Association and Edmonton Recycling Society. The focus of the project has been the experiences of two adults who are involved in a basic literacy program and who are employed as sorters at Edmonton Recycling Society. Their ideas and experiences have formed the basis of the book.

The Facilitator's Notes are for use with the photo-story *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment*. They are intended for tutors, teachers, parents, or other advocates who are assisting students to develop reading and writing skills. Basic literacy strategies are included and grouped into three main categories: before reading, during reading, and after reading activities.

Good readers think about the text, even before they begin reading the material, by using all available print cues and picture cues. While reading, strong readers ask questions to confirm predictions and to help comprehension. Able readers have developed strategies to integrate unfamiliar words. Similarly, good writers brainstorm ideas and organize thoughts in a logical progression and are able to write to different audiences for different purposes. Readers need to develop comprehension strategies in all three areas to become competent readers.

Also included in the Facilitator's Notes are some ready-to-use student activities and exercises which reflect the strategies presented. Users of the notes will also be able to adapt other reading and writing strategies when working with *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment*.

ABOUT PROSPECTS LITERACY ASSOCIATION

Prospects Literacy Association is a community-based volunteer organization committed to advocating and providing literacy development opportunities for adults and families in order to enhance community participation and quality of life.

Prospects is a well established charitable organization which recruits and trains volunteers to tutor adults with low literacy levels. We also provide classes in reading, writing, math and family literacy. In the past 15 years more than 3,000 adults have improved their literacy skills through our programs. Our small paid staff includes specialists in literacy education at both the child and adult levels. In addition we work with about 200 trained volunteers each year who contribute up to 12,000 volunteer hours to our programs.

Prospects is recognized as a leader in the literacy community and has accomplished a number of innovative projects with funding from many sources including the National Literacy Secretariat, Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation, Wild Rose Foundation, Clifford E. Lee Foundation, and Edmonton Community Foundation.

One such project was The Challenges Project, which ran for two years in 1989-1991. This project looked at the challenges and successes of volunteer tutors who worked one-on-one with adults who have developmental disabilities. After two years as a pilot project the Challenges program was re-integrated into Prospects, supported by a modest annual grant from Alberta Advanced Education & Career Development. The Challenges program continues to run effectively as an integrated program, with students participating in all areas of the Association - such as student group, workshops and social events. *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment* project was the result of on-going efforts to provide interesting reaming opportunities for people with disabilities.

ABOUT EDMONTON RECYCLING SOCIETY

The Society's mission is to "conserve creation and create employment". Edmonton Recycling Society (ERS), is a community based non-profit organization. In 1988 it was awarded a contract by the City of Edmonton, to collect, process and market recyclable materials from the solid waste stream of the private residences in the north half of the city.

The Society has provided training in life skills and employment to more than 500 people and has provided steady, full-time employment to a workforce of more than 70 persons.

The five following priorities are wholly consistent with the non-profit nature of the ERS.

1. "Revenue" sharing with the employees.
2. Hiring more employees, particularly more people with developmental disabilities and others with employment impediments.
3. Recycling more things, like building materials and textiles, so reducing the amount of material going into landfill sites or polluting the environment.
4. Research into how more things can be recycled.
5. Returning profits to the City of Edmonton.

ERS demonstrates leadership by successfully employing adults with disabilities. Some of the more innovative employment practices and benefits at Edmonton Recycling Society include the following: competitive wages; in-house resident counsellor; 181 seniority policy, where an employee may be rehired within 181 working days of terminating employment if there is an opening; unused sick leave over 120 hours is refunded to employees in cash; employee representation on the Board of Directors; educational tours for schools and other community groups; blue cross health coverage; monthly barbeques; protective clothing provided at no cost to employees; free tickets to Oiler hockey games and Eskimo football games drawn at monthly barbeques. Edmonton Recycling Society has been able to offer meaningful employment to many disadvantaged adults but at the same time has remained economically viable and continues to contribute to the community.

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES



Pre-reading Discussion

Pre-reading discussion helps the student to focus on the subject of the text, predict the story, and relate story events to his or her personal life. In addition, pre-reading discussion draws on the student's background knowledge and allows the student and tutor to talk informally about the book before actually reading the text. This allows a student with minimal reading ability to actively participate in a discussion.

Before reading, write down the ideas discussed and the predictions made by the student. These can be revisited after the book has been read.

1. Have the student read the title of the book, and together tutor and student discuss what the title means. Ask the student the following question:

How are literacy and employment related ?

2. Look at the photo on the cover of the book and discuss what the student sees on the cover. What interpretation and thoughts does the student have from looking at the front cover?

Predict what the book might be about based on the title and picture.

Who are the authors of the book?

3. Discuss aspects of the book which might relate to the student's life.

Is the student employed ?

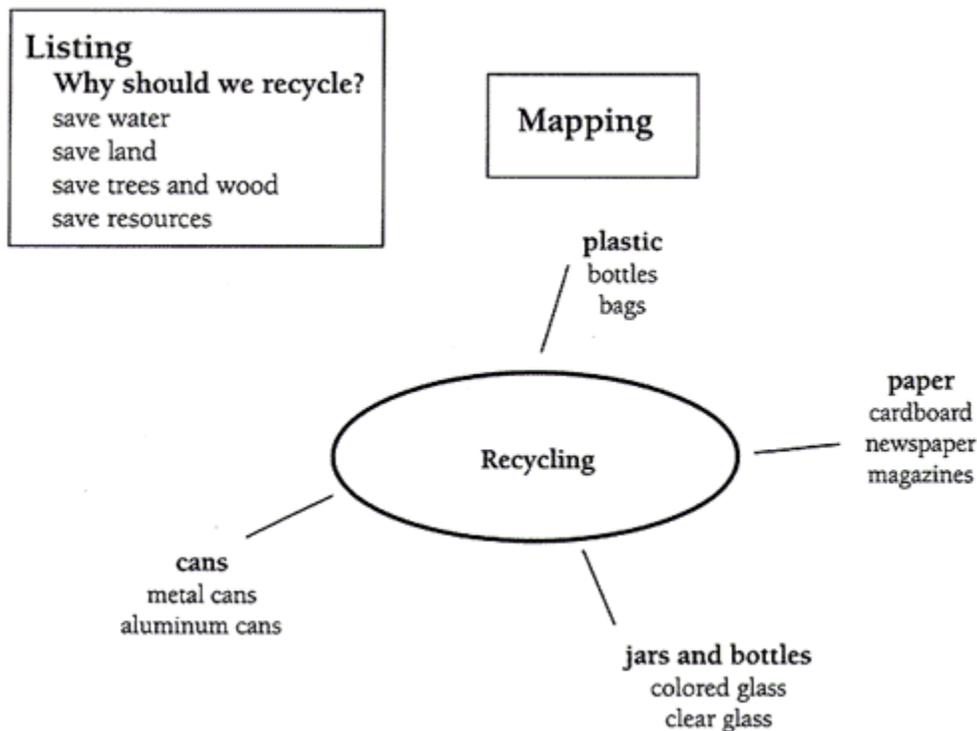
What are the challenges to employment the student faces ?

Listing and Mapping



Students can begin to think about the material before they read by jotting down their own ideas about the topic.

1. Ask them for their ideas on the topic and list them.
2. Alternatively, write the topic in the middle of the page and write the students' ideas about the topic around the main idea in a "mapping" format (see example below).
3. As they begin to read, they can check off the ideas listed as they appear in the book; also they can add new ideas to their list or map. As students become familiar with this technique, they can go a step further and organize the ideas into categories with category labels.





Assisted Reading

Assisted reading helps readers at beginning levels to get some reading practice. The tutor takes the lead and the student reads along with the tutor.

1. Explain that you want the student to read along with you. Say that you will point to the words as you read them and that the student should try to read them at the same time. Let the student know that seeing and hearing the words at the same time will help in recognizing more words.
2. Begin with a pre-reading activity (see first section) so that the student will have talked about words that might appear in the story.
3. Begin by reading a paragraph on your own. Make sure the student watches as you read along. Move your finger under the words, to help the student match printed and spoken words.
4. Now re-read the paragraph, asking the student to read along with you. Try to match your pace to the student's. Continue pointing to the words as you read.

You can keep your voice a little louder if the book is difficult or softer when the student finds the book easier.

This book can also be used to practice "Paired Reading". For more information on this technique see the listing in the bibliography. (*Brailsford et al, 1991*)

Predicting



Fluent readers make use of three cueing systems to predict unfamiliar words.

1. Meaning cues (context)
2. Language cues (grammar, syntax, context)
3. Print cues (phonics)

Students who are print-based readers need practice in using the cues with materials that are "predictable» e.g. familiar vocabulary and topics, students' own writing, texts with repeated words.

At Beginning Levels:

- 1) Assisted reading is a useful predicting activity.
- 2) Pattern sentences repeat familiar phrases e.g. I like... I want... I feel...
 - a) Suggest a phrase and ask the student to complete it.
 - b) Compose and print additional sentences using this phrase.
 - c) Now read the sentences together allowing the student to predict the words he or she supplied.

At More Advanced Levels:

- 1) Encourage the student to use all of the cueing systems. Practice the use of the following questions when predicting unknown words:
 - Does it make sense? (meaning cues)
 - Does it sound right? (language cues)
 - Does it look right? (visual cues)
- 2) Practicing Predicting
 - e.g. "I sweep floors at the end of the day" page 13 (Student doesn't know the word "floors")
 - a) Explain that the rest of the sentence can be used to figure out the word.
 - b) Cover the word «floors" and have the student re-read the sentence.
 - c) Ask the student what Darren would be sweeping. list the suggested words e.g. "garbage", "dust", "up", "floor" .
 - d) Ask the student to re-read the sentence, trying each word on the list. Discuss which Make sense", and whether they " sound right".
 - e) Have the student look at the pronoun word again to see which one starts with an "f".
 - f) Practice this several times until the student uses this strategy whenever reading.

Reading and Thinking Aloud

Tutors can model active reading by verbalizing their thoughts as they read. This process of making thinking public is called "Think aloud."

1. Select a passage to read aloud. As the tutor reads, the student follows along silently, listening to how to think through the series of events.
2. Choose specific instances when comprehension breaks down and model ways to cope with the breakdown. Model how to re-read sections when comprehension might be more difficult.
3. Remember the following points during "think aloud":

a) make predictions (develop hypotheses)

*e.g. From the title of the book **The Challenges of Literacy and Employment** I predict that the book might be about how hard it is to get a job if you can't read very well. From the picture I think they're looking in a wheat bin.*

b) use photos in the story to predict what will happen next

e.g. Look at the photo on page 34 of Angele writing to her penpal, and ask what is happening, and what will happen next.

c) encourage the student to picture the story in his/her imagination (develop images).

e.g. Read the passage on page 25, where Angele is describing her work and picture the recycling sorting line. Imagine the uniform Angele wears everyday to work.

d) compare experiences in the story with those of the student (link prior knowledge to new information in the text).

e.g. Read the passage on page 23 where Darren says "I don't want handicapped people to feel as bad as I do sometimes. I want them to feel as good as I do sometimes".

e) verbalize confusing parts to show monitoring of comprehension

e.g. I don't get this part what does this mean.

f) demonstrate fix-up strategies (correcting lagging comprehension)

e.g. "I'd better re-read" or "I'll read ahead to see if it makes more sense". e.g. "This is a new word - I'll read on and try to make sense of this in context".

After several modelling experiences, students can take a turn to think aloud for the tutor, reading orally and sharing thoughts.

g) finally, encourage readers to practice "think aloud" strategies as they do silent reading independently.

Twelve Ways to Decode Words



Here are some of the ways in which a good reader figures out or decodes unknown words. The student can be taught many of these in the context of reading *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment*.

1. Context

Guesses from context; the rest of the sentence shows what the word must be. e.g. We have a cat named Dede and she just had five ... The missing word is probably 'kittens'.

2. First Letters

In addition to the context, the reader makes use of the first letter or two and the general shape or configuration of the word.

e.g. My girlfriend's n..... is Dianne .The 'n' shows that the missing word is probably 'name'.

3. Consonant Substitution

The reader notes that the word is similar to a known word except for one or two letters. e.g. 'card' knowing 'hard' and 'c', the reader mentally substitutes the sound of 'c' for the 'h' to get 'hard'.

4. Word Parts

Divides the word into large parts which he or she already knows as units. e.g. 'girlfriend' divides into 'girl' and 'friend'; 'Newspaper', divides into '~news' and 'paper'.

5. Root Words

Notes that the word consists of a familiar root and an ending.

e.g. 'working' consists of 'work' and 'ing'; 'sorter' consist of 'sort' and 'er'.

6. Words Within Words

Looks for familiar small words within longer words.

e.g. coveralls (cover- all-s)

7. Word Structure

Analyzes words structurally into known prefixes, root and endings.

e.g. 'independent' in...depend....ent

8. Phonic "Rules"

Applies phonic rules, such as the effect of final 'e' on a preceding vowel.

e.g. 'here'; knowing 'her' and the rule gives the 'e' its long sound

9. Syllabification

Dividing into syllables structurally and sounding the syllables phonetically.
e.g. 'condominium' con....do...min...i...um

10. Word Families

Thinks of a 'word family' to which the word belongs.

e.g. 'sad': recognizes it as belonging to the 'ad' family along with 'mad', 'dad', 'had'

e.g. 'keep', recognizes it as belonging to the 'eep' family along with 'sweep', 'beep', 'deep', 'creep', 'sheep'.

11. Sounding Out Groups of Letters

Sounds the word out by groups of letters and blends the sounds together.

e.g. 'reality': real...i...ty OR re...al...i...ty

12. Sounding Out Letter by Letter

Sounds the word letter by letter and then blends the sounds together.

e.g. 'team': t...e...a...m, c...h...a...l...l...e...n...g...e

Asking Questions



Asking and answering questions are very effective teaching and learning strategies. When you ask students questions, you are drawing on their ideas and knowledge in the reading process. When you encourage students to ask questions of themselves, you are helping them to increase their comprehension and become more able readers.

Questions can be categorized as either narrow or broad. Narrow questions focus on facts and details while broad questions require use of the students' own knowledge and experience to provide answers. While questions are often asked after reading as a way of testing comprehension, they can also be used before, and during reading to encourage active reading and to check for understanding.

Narrow Questions

who
what
where
when
why
explain
compare
contrast

Broad Questions

predicting
inferring
judging
giving an opinion
evaluating
researching

Asking Questions

Narrow Questions

Remembering fact and detail.

Who are Darren, Angele, Susan, and Peter?

What are their jobs?

Where is Edmonton Recycling Society?

Where is Prospects Literacy Association?

What are Darren and Angele's career goals?

What kind of material can be recycled?

What are the support services and benefits available to Darren and Angele in their jobs?

What supports do Darren and Angele have in their lives?

Compare Darren's lifestyle with Angele's lifestyle.

Broad Questions

Thinking it over and evaluating.

How do Darren and Angele think reading and writing will help them in their lives?

How did Darren and Angele get hired at ERS?

Why does Darren want to work on improving his reading and writing?

How do you think Peter might help people at ERS?

How do some of the innovative employment practices help the employees?

How do you feel about the type of opportunities available for adults with developmental disabilities?

What is happening in your community/city in terms of work and literacy opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities?

List some of the employment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities in your community?

What is FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) and what causes FAS?

What are some of the symptoms of FAS?

Do you know of some other businesses/organizations which have a resident counsellor?

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES



Reader Response

A discussion after reading helps to integrate new information, confirm predictions the student made, and draw connections to the student's personal life. After the text has been read, the tutor can solicit the reader's response by asking the following basic questions.

What did you like about the story? Why?

Which part of the story did you not like? Why not?

Written Response

If students are able to write independently they can also be encouraged to keep a response journal for their reading. They can then jot down thoughts and ideas about this book and others they read. The writing can be used as a basis for discussion.

What do you think Darren is saying in his story? and Angele?

Was there a part of the story that reminded you of something in your own life?

What feelings did you have when you read this book?

Did the story turn out the way you thought it would?

Do you think you are more like Darren, or Angele?

Cloze

Cloze is an activity that helps readers learn how to predict unfamiliar words. In the cloze strategy, predictable words are deleted throughout a text. Students then read around the text and fill in the blanks with words that make sense and sound right.

To develop a cloze passage for your student, follow these steps:

1. Photocopy a short, complete passage at the student's reading level, from a book, newspaper, magazine etc. Delete some of the predictable words (about one in ten words). Nouns and verbs are most easily predicted. Leave the first sentence or two intact so that the student will have some meaning cues.
2. Explain the purpose of the exercise to the student e.g. "You can use information from the story to figure out what the missing word might be. The word must make sense and sound right in the sentence." Model the exercise for the student.
3. Ask the student to read the passage and make predictions. (It's a good idea to read it through once to get an overview before making any predictions). Encourage the student to read around the blank, thinking about the author's ideas that come before and after the blank.
4. Discuss how the student chose certain words. If the student chooses an inappropriate word, ask «Does it make sense?» (to help student use meaning cues) and "Does it sound right?" (to help student use language cues).

A Few Pointers

- Encourage several choices when appropriate to show it doesn't have to be one "right" answer.
- Offer your own choices too sometimes.
- As the student becomes more adept at this activity, you can leave the first letter of the word intact so that choices will be more limited and the student will need to pay attention to print as well as meaning cues.
- Encourage your student to transfer use of this strategy to other reading situations when he/she needs to figure out unfamiliar words.

Cloze Activities



Here are some sample passages from *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment* which could be used as cloze exercises. Read the entire passage out loud and have the student fill in the missing blanks with words which are appropriate.

From page 28

My family is wonderful. My mom is a piano teacher. My _____ does many different things. He was involved in setting _____ Edmonton Recycling Society. My family enjoys camping in the . We do a lot of hiking when we're there and games around the camp _____ in the evenings.

From page 34

Writing letters is hard for me. I say it and my mother _____ it out for me. Then I copy it. I want that to change. I would like to write more _____ to my brother and to Rosy, a _____ I sponsor in Calcutta, India. Every Christmas Rosy sends me a pretty _____ card. I would like to write her more _____

From pages 20 - 23

The thing I would like to tell other people is, "Look at yourself before you look at others. " I can't write that yet though. I am not comfortable enough with my _____ yet. I need more time. I have to _____ more.

Susan makes me _____ more. She is good to me. She makes me feel that I belong here. We do reading, _____ and math together. We play games with fake money so I can learn more about it. Those are my favorite. If I learn more about _____, I can become more independent.

Language Experience

This is the best method of teaching a beginning reader because it uses the student's own words and experience. The method also builds confidence as it recognizes that students' ideas are worth communicating and preserving in writing. It allows for emphasis on communication and self expression. *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment* may be too difficult for beginning readers. However, tutors might read the story to their student and then use it as a stimulus for students to write about their own literacy and employment experiences.

How To Do Language Experience

1. The tutor and student brainstorm topics relating to literacy and employment and make a list of them. The student then chooses one topic to write about.
2. They discuss the topic, allowing "think time" for the student to develop ideas.
3. The student then dictates the ideas to the tutor who writes them down with no changes or corrections (double space, print neatly, break sentences into short lines using natural phrases). The student watches the tutor write, making the connection between written and spoken words.
4. The tutor reads each sentence after writing it. Begin with just one or two sentences. Write longer texts as the student develops confidence.
5. When the story is complete the tutor reads it back to the student. The student can add more if he or she wishes.
6. The student and tutor read the story together a few times. The student can make changes as desired.
7. Once the student feels confident, he or she can try reading the story alone. The tutor chimes in again if the student needs help. If the student has difficulty following the text, a finger can be used to follow the words.
8. Keep a copy of the writing for future use. The stories can be typed up if desired. Keep all writing in a folder to see changes and improvements.

The Writing Process



Some Techniques To Use At Each Stage

Invent

brainstorm, visual stimulant, free writing, journal writing, ask questions/discuss, guided themes, personal experience, listing, modelling, patterned writing, reading, probing, field trips, audience

Organize

mapping, listing, separate sheets, chronological order, questions, headings/sub-headings, argument/order points

Write

scribe/transcribe, word processor, choice of writing tools, begin with easiest paragraph

Revise

oral reading, questioning, throw out, re-organize, audience, re-write, read onto tape

Edit

spellcheck, % of words correctly spelled out of total words in each sentence, "polish", show own work, check grammar & punctuation

Publish

mail letter, submit to newsletter, display, share with someone else

N.B. Important to Remember

- Writing needs a sense of audience (who are you writing for?)
- As much as possible there should be real purposes for writing
- The above model is not linear, writing is a recursive process.

Writing Topics

In one sentence, identify the theme of Darren's story, of Angele's story.

a) Describe characters by writing a full description of Darren and of Angele.

b) Predict outcomes by

- writing an ending to Darren's story
- writing an ending to Angele's story
- writing about what they might be doing 5 years from now? 10 years from now?
- writing about where they will be living 5 years from now

c) Relating to author's message/tone

- Do you identify with Darren? Why? or Do you identify with Angele? Why?
- Is there a difference in tone between Darren's message and Angele's message?

d) What do you think are the real challenges for Darren and Angele in their work, their studies and in their lives in general?

e) In what ways are Darren and Angele independent? And in what ways do they want to become more independent?

Comparisons

List all the ways that Darren and Angele are alike?

List all the ways that Darren and Angele are different?

Fact Versus Opinion

Find statements of fact in the story.

Find statements of opinion from the text for each Darren and Angele.

Sight Words



Sight words are words that a reader recognizes instantly because they are stored in visual memory. When teaching a beginning reader, one goal is to increase the number of words in the student's sight vocabulary. The student's bank of sight words may include the following:

1. Social sight words or common words in the environment
2. Function words (the, but, an)
3. High frequency words that occur frequently in all printed matter. Use cards to print these words out in order to practice them for recognition. One third of all words we read consists of the following 32 words:

a, it, I, in, is, and, of, that, the, to, was, him, all, as, at, be, but, are, for, had, have you, his, not, on, one, said, so, they, we, with.

Along with the additional words below, the total 100 words make up on average half of all we read and write:

about, an, back, been, before, big, by, call, came, come, could, did, do, down, first, get, go, has, her, here, if, into, just, like, little, look, made, make, me, more, much, must, my, new, no, now, off, old, only, or, other, our, out, over, right, see, she, some, their, them, there, two, up, want, well, went, were, what, when, where, which, who, will, you.

4. Words which your student wants to learn (e.g. family names)

Teaching Sight Words

1. Select magazine or newspaper pictures to illustrate sight words e.g. take a few visual words from the book *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment*. This approach is much easier with names of people, places and things rather than with words that have less meaning. The pictures may be placed on one side of a card or piece of paper with the word printed on the other side. After the student masters the word, the pictures may be removed and the student is drilled with the words only.
2. Picture-word bingo may be enjoyable for a student to play. Pick out those sight words which can be illustrated by picture cut-outs such as: *money, kittens, condominium, books, newspaper; school, letters, mountains, campfire, and bible*. Make a bingo-type card with 25 squares. You call the word and/or show a picture of it. Your student places beans, corn, or buttons on the corresponding word. Five correct covered words in a row is the object, providing that your student can call the words and give sentences for words he/she has covered.
3. Often, sight words have configurations, which will help a student recognize them more easily. It may be helpful to "map" configurations of words.

work

books

bags

This would only be used in early lessons with non-readers.

4. If your student has difficulty with sight words, it may be necessary to trace a large copy of the word letter by letter while pronouncing the word. This is especially effective for tactile learners. Half sheets of paper or fine sand-paper are used to make word models for these students. Your student practices saying the word as he or she traces with a finger. When known, the word can be traced in the air and then written again on another sheet of paper.



5. Print word cards for the student to choose from. Ask him or her to match a word card with a description that you read. For example, show three cards:

cat

church

girlfriend

Read to the student these definitions:

A place where people pray.

A quiet pet you might have in your home.

Darren is planning to marry his _____

Ask your student to choose the word that fits the definition.

6. The following sight words have been taken from the book *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment*.

Vocabulary words

handicapped, recycling, environment, work, employment, sorter, community, friends, condominium, money, girlfriend, married, kittens, reading, writing, mathematics, books, stories, newspaper, explosive, disease, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, mood swings, angry, emotions, comfortable, counsellor, team, positive attitude, independent, mountains, hiking, camp fire, church, bible, sponsor, letters, tutor chances, disabilities, school, satisfaction, pride, success, challenge.

HINTS

- Teach approximately 5 words each lesson.
- Use recipe cards to keep a file of sight words. set up a file with three dividers for "known" and "study" words.

Phonics

Write each word from the list under the word having the same short vowel sound. Say each word to yourself as you write it, and listen for the short vowel sound.

get
plant
jugs
stress

think
along
with
job

is
man
help
fun

cat
had
tell
copy

at

end

it

on

up

Word Search

Find and circle the hidden words by looking up, down, backwards, forward and diagonally

z d a f m b l f r s j o p
m s e q l o x j d o l p x
i j w r i t i n g r z d c
v r g s a g w f r t i l a
a e n v i r o n m e n t s
g c i s m p r o v r h u k
j y d v c y k e c u z t d
c c a q n h i c w t h o g
x l e d i s a b l e d r t
l i r i f u x l g a s x h
p n l h s f g k l m w k f
b g o k w p r i d e q e k
t h o t f c b i o o n a d
k o h n d m o n e y a g o
b f c h u r c h t n b n e
r l s a m r y m w u d m a
n c b o s i n l r y c s f

recycling
environment
tutor
work

challenge
pride
church
sorter

disabled
school
friends
books

money
team
reading
writing

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