

## Follow-up Discussion

Professional Development Monthly Advisor and Planner (PDMAP)

### ***Literacy for Low-Level Adult Learners***

March 2010

#### Discussion Questions:

1. \*What is the typical profile of literacy level learners in your classroom or your program? Consider the learners' ages, prior education completed, real life need for using literacy skills and, if you teach ESL, which literacy category the learners belong in (pre-literate, non-literate, literate in a non-Roman alphabet, etc.)
2. Which resources from the Literacy for Low-Level Adult Learners PD MAP did you read?
3. Briefly share one significant challenge you have faced in working with literacy level learners.
4. \*Which standardized assessment does your program use to place learners in a class? What activities or tools are you using in class to get a more complete picture of learners' literacy skills in the component areas of phonetics, fluency, word recognition and comprehension?
5. Embedded in several articles are descriptions of specific techniques for teaching the four reading skills. How have you been able to learn about and train yourself to use classroom techniques for phonemic awareness/phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension?
6. In past years, teachers were told to instruct learners to figure out word meanings from context. Learners were told to search the surrounding sentences for meaning to figure out what the unknown word meant. Current research supports the direct instruction of words in which the teacher orally defines difficult words for students before they begin reading the text. What have your experiences been with these two different approaches?

7. \*What did you learn about “top-down” and “bottom-up processes” for reading? How do you use and balance these two processes in your instruction with low-level adult readers?
  
8. \*Literacy level learners “may be beginning learners but they are not beginning thinkers” (Shirley Brod) How can activities in beginning level classes reflect this principle?
  
9. The Vinogradov article “Maestra” emphasizes that literacy instruction for low-level ESL learners starts with oral conversation about learners’ lives and then moves to print. Is this a technique that ABE teachers also use and find effective? Why? Why not? Several articles describe using the Language Experience Approach for ESL learners to create a written text from an orally shared experience. Could this also be used with ABE? What other techniques do you use in class to use oral language to segue into written language?
  
10. Of all the ideas that we have discussed today, what is the most important idea you can take with you to your classroom or your program?