

Using the Standards Model Lessons across Levels

The suggested activities that accompany each standard are designed to give teachers a starting point for planning lessons. They should not be seen as the only means of teaching the skills required to meet the standards. Individual teachers using their own creativity and initiative will come up with many others.

While it would be ideal if each activity were accompanied with a lesson plan for each academic level, the committees did not do that for two reasons: such a document would be too cumbersome; and most teachers already have in their repertoires many lesson plans appropriate for the activities. We did not want to reinvent the wheel.

Some of the activities by their very nature will indicate the level of ability required to complete it. Others will not. For those that do not, we offer the following example of how to take an activity and adapt it to various levels of instruction.

Activity: Students research the structure of local, state, and federal governments.

Basic Literacy Level:

- Teacher starts with local government first by asking students what they already know about their town or city government and uses the information they give to establish a reading vocabulary.
- Teacher has students brainstorm questions about their local government and solicits ideas about how they can get their questions answered.
- Each student picks a question to answer and decides what they are going to do to answer it.
- Students bring in the answers to their questions; teacher writes them up for everyone and uses them for a reading lesson.
- Students create a wall poster showing the structure of town/city government.
- Teacher repeats exercise for state and federal government.

Intermediate Level:

- Teacher divides the class into three groups. Each group picks one level of government and researches its structure using methods of their own choice. The teacher will assist by providing appropriate level reading materials as needed.
- Each group will decide how they will present what they learned to the rest of the class: orally, written, pictorially, musically, etc.
- Teacher uses the information they bring in to design review exercises.

Advanced Level: (GED/Diploma)

- Class works together to come up with the names of people in the community they can invite to class to explain the workings of the three levels of government.
- Students write letters to their candidates to invite them, and follow it up with a phone call.

- Students brainstorm questions to ask the panel.
- Students write thank you letters to the panel members.
- After the presentation, students divide into groups; each group writes a paper about what they learned and presents it to the rest of the class.
- Each group then creates a test for the class to demonstrate what they learned.

Teachers who know their classes better than anyone else will be able to determine the extent to which the class can do its own research as opposed to the teacher presenting the information.

As teachers integrate the standards skills into their classes, we expect that many new and exciting teaching units will be developed that can be shared with others. This will enrich the work of all of us.

Pat Nelson

Introduction to ESOL Lessons: The Importance of Cultural Sensitivity

Lesson plans labeled “ESOL” are included in Community, Worker, and Family sections. These lesson plans have been developed by ESOL teachers, using the NH Standards for Adult Education Programs. These lessons can be used for native adult learners, but they are geared for adult ESOL learners with different language skills and, of course, different cultural traditions.

To make these ESOL lesson plans work, teachers need to be culturally aware and sensitive. Adult learning about how we raise children, how men and women divide the child-care and work responsibilities, how to find work, how to shop, eat well and stay healthy, etc., should also be encouraged to talk about how they do things in their own countries. Talking about similarities and differences often stimulates conversation and a sense of commonality. Finally, teachers should remember that our students are adults. We should be careful not to patronize or talk down to these ESOL learners.

Olga Skow