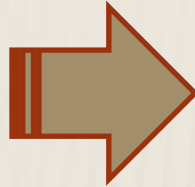


Before you get started...

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER

CULTURE & COMMUNICATION

CULTURE is a system of behaviors and beliefs.



COMMUNICATION is the combination of speaking, listening, reading, writing and non-verbal behavior.

Non-verbal messages are an important component of communication and without meaning to, your actions could be causing confusion for the learner or, worse, may be extremely offensive!

You are not expected to know it all...but be aware. If the learner appears uncomfortable; or you are unsure if what you are doing is making an impact; or you are uncomfortable or confused reach out to the literacy staff to discuss it.

For example, is your learner giggling during your lesson? They are probably not laughing at you but it is the way they express their nervousness!

Learner Acculturation

- which stage are they in? It makes a difference.

Euphoria

Overwhelming excitement

Culture shock/alienation

Awareness of cultural differences & their own images of self and security – panic and crisis...

Anomie

Stage of gradual and tentative and vacillating recovery – begin to accept the difference...

Assimilation or adaptation

Near or full recovery, acceptance of the new culture and self-confidence

DIFFERENT CULTURAL BEHAVIORS

EYE CONTACT...

In Canada, eye contact between people is considered important. Assumptions regarding the honesty or integrity of a person who does not have “good eye contact” may be made. In other cultures, avoiding eye contact with people who are older or of a higher rank is considered polite and respectful.

FEAR OF MAKING MISTAKES...

Your learner may have had very different experiences while she was in school. Some educational systems emphasize accuracy in a manner with which we may not be accustomed. Law and Eckes discuss an experience where a class of Vietnamese students, who were generally lively and gregarious, became very quiet while their teacher was being observed by her boss. *Barbara Law and Mary Eckes, The More-Than-Just-Surviving Handbook:ESL for Every Classroom Teacher. (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Portage & Main Press, 2000), pp.68 – 69. Copyright © 2000 by Barbara Law and Mark Eckes. Used by permission of Portage & Main Press.* For these learners, the fear of making mistakes while their teacher was being observed was the issue – they thought that answering incorrectly would shame their teacher.



ATTITUDES ABOUT COOPERATION...

vary from culture to culture. What North Americans consider “cheating” in school may be considered “sharing” for many learners. While this may not be problematic for you as a tutor (since you are not assigning marks), it can cause numerous difficulties for your learner who is now living in a country, and may be part of a school system, that focuses more on individual rather than group achievement.

TABOOS AGAINST TOUCHING...

A hug or a pat on the head may be considered affectionate to you but could make a learner feel uncomfortable. In some cultures it is even considered an affront. It is probably best to avoid physical contact unless your learner indicates otherwise, especially if you are matched with someone of the opposite sex.

LEARNING STYLES

Visual *(take in messages through the eyes; they learn by reading)*

- Can recall words after seeing them a few times
- Like written directions
- Discriminate between letters and words that look alike (pass, past)

Auditory *(take in messages through the ears; they learn by listening)*

- Can remember words after hearing them a few times
- Like oral explanations
- Discriminate between sounds that sound alike (pail/bail)

Tactile *(take in messages through the skin; they learn by touching)*

- Recall words after tracing or typing them a few times
- Write legibly
- Excel at sewing, model making etc.
- Recall words after touching an object

Kinesthetic *(take in messages through body movement; they learn by doing)*

- Recall words after writing them a few times
- Can recall information more easily when moving

Selected information obtained by English-as-a-Second Language, Tutor Training Kit, A Learner-Centered Approach to Tutoring Adult ESL Learners, TUTOR TRAINING MANUAL by Myrina Rutten-James (funded by the National Literacy Secretariat), 2003.

Remember –
don't develop your lesson plans around
YOUR learning style
... consider the learner!



LEARNING DISABILITIES...LEARNING DIFFERENTLY

Learning Disabilities are a general set of disorders that can affect a person's ability in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and mathematics.

Learning disabilities are real. A person can be of average or above-average intelligence, and yet struggle to keep up with their peers in their ability to learn.

Persons with learning disabilities are not 'lazy' or 'dumb.' In fact, they usually have average or above average intelligence. Often they fall within the range of 'gifted.' Their brains just process information differently.

Dyslexia does not mean a person sees words 'backwards.'

LD may include any or all of the following:

1. Problems in processing information (visual, auditory, spoken or written verbal materials);
2. Problems in memory (immediate memory; rote memory);
3. Difficulties in receptive and expressive language;
4. Problems in visual-motor integration;
5. Problems in spatial orientation;
6. Organizational problems – keeping track of details; keeping track of time

HOW LD MAY MANIFEST THEMSELVES IN LITERACY LEARNERS

Reading Skills

Slow, labored reading

Poor comprehension

Poor mastery of phonics

Written Language Skills

Poor penmanship

Slow writing

Frequent spelling errors,
including omissions,
substitutions, transpositions

Oral Language Skills

Difficulty concentrating and
comprehending

Difficulty with grammar

Oral expression better than
written (or vice versa)



Mathematical Skills

Reversal of numbers

Confusion of operational
symbols

Organizational and Study Skills

Time management
difficulties

Slow to start and complete
tasks

Did you know?

Processing time.....

...is up to **3 times longer** for adults with learning disabilities



So, give the learner time to think...

And always review!

What do you do?

- ✘ You are *NOT* responsible to diagnose – that takes a trained professional team!

- ✘ *But* be alert –
 - + If you think “I know this learner is capable..they excel at other tasks...what is the challenge for this task?” consider the possibility that they could have a diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disability.

- ✘ Creating lesson plans that work for all types of learners will ensure that your learner, no matter their skill level, can succeed! Include in your lessons:
 - + Different learning styles activities
 - + Consider incorporating creative tools – i.e. colored transparencies; different lighting; breaks –don’t be afraid to get up and move!; encourage your learner to use a ruler, their finger, a highlighter, or even increase the font size of the reading material

- ✘ Ask for HELP!

REQUIRED ACTIVITY

Please take some time to complete this activity.

Find out what your learning style is by taking the [Learning Styles Inventory](#)

