

TESOL Standards for Instruction

Source: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (2003). *Standards for adult education ESL programs*. Alexandria, VA. Pages 20-21, “Standards for Instruction”

A. Instructional activities adhere to principles of adult learning and language acquisition.

These principles include the following:

- Adult learners bring a variety of experiences, skills, and knowledge to the classroom that need to be acknowledged and included in lessons.
- Language acquisition is facilitated through providing a non-threatening environment in which learners feel comfortable and self-confident and are encouraged to take risks to use the target language.
- Adult learners progress more rapidly when the content is relevant to their lives.
- Language learning is cyclical, not linear, so learning objectives need to be recycled in a variety of contexts.

B. Instructional approaches are varied to meet the needs of adult learners with diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. Examples of these approaches include, but are not limited to, the following:

- grammar-based (focus on the basic structure of language, e.g., grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation)
- competency-based or functional context (focus on application of specific basic language skills in areas needed to function in everyday life or at work)
- whole language (integrated approach using listening, speaking, reading, and writing in thematic contexts often introduced through learner-generated content)
- participatory (focus on developing language and literacy skills to facilitate personal empowerment, community involvement, and social change)
- content-based (focus on developing language to support learner success in specific content areas, such as citizenship or vocational training)
- project-based (focus on developing language through collaborative work with the goal of completing a task or developing a product)

C. Instructional activities engage learners so that they take an active role in the learning process.

- D. Instructional activities focus on the acquisition of communication skills necessary for learners to function within the classroom, outside the classroom, or in other educational programs (e.g. ABE, GED preparation, postsecondary education, vocational training programs).
- E. Instructional activities integrate the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), focusing on receptive and productive skills appropriate to learner's needs.
- F. Instructional activities are varied to address the different learning styles (e.g. aural, oral, visual, kinesthetic) and special learning needs of the learners.
- G. Instructional activities incorporate grouping strategies and interactive tasks that facilitate the development of authentic communication skills. These include cooperative learning, information gap activities, role plays, simulations, problem solving, and problem posing.
- H. Instructional activities take into account the needs of multilevel groups of learners, particularly those with minimal literacy skills in their native language and English.
- I. Instructional activities focus on the development of language and culturally appropriate behaviors needed for critical thinking, problem solving, team participation, and study skills.
- J. Instructional activities give learners opportunities to use authentic resources both inside and outside the classroom (e.g. newspapers, telephone books, school notices, library resources, community agencies, work sites, television, and the Internet).
- K. Instructional activities give learners opportunities to develop awareness of and competency in the use of appropriate technologies to meet lesson objectives.
- L. Instructional activities are culturally sensitive to the learners and integrate language and culture.
- M. Instructional activities prepare learners for formal and informal assessment situations such as test taking, job interviews, and keeping personal learning records.