

NCSALL Seminar Guide:

Teaching Learners What Reading Is All About

September 2005



National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

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Teaching Learners What Reading Is All About

This seminar guide was created by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) to introduce adult education practitioners to *Understanding What Reading Is All About: Teaching Materials and Lessons for Adult Basic Education Learners*, a set of 13 lessons designed to help learners understand the components of reading that are part of becoming a more fluent reader. Programs or professional developers may want to use this seminar in place of a regularly scheduled meeting, such as a statewide training or a local program staff meeting.

Objectives:

By the end of the seminar, participants will be able to:

- Name the components of reading—decoding (analyzing words, knowing words by sight), vocabulary (learning meaning of words), fluency (reading with speed and ease), and comprehension (understanding what is read)
- Explain why it is important for adult learners to understand the components of reading that are part of becoming a more fluent reader
- Utilize with learners the goal-setting lessons in *Understanding What Reading Is All About*
- Summarize the key points from lessons in *Understanding What Reading Is All About*

Participants: 8 to 12 practitioners who work in adult education—teachers and tutors

Time: 4 hours

Agenda:

- 20 minutes 1. Welcome and Introductions
- 5 minutes 2. Objectives and Agenda
- 15 minutes 3. Overview of *Understanding What Reading Is All About*

60 minutes 4. Lesson Four: The Components of Reading

15 minutes **Break**

10 minutes 5. What Should Learners Know About Reading

60 minutes 6. Key Points from the Lessons

20 minutes 7. Goals for Reading

25 minutes 8. Planning Next Steps for the Group

10 minutes 9. Evaluation of the Seminar

Session Preparation:

This guide includes the information and materials needed to conduct the seminar—step-by-step instructions for the activities, approximate time for each activity, and notes and other ideas for conducting the activities. The handouts, ready for photocopying, are at the end of the guide.

Participants will need the following guide at the seminar. The guide can be downloaded from the NCSALL Web site at www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/uwriiaa.pdf

-  *Understanding What Reading Is All About: Teaching Materials and Lessons for Adult Basic Education Learners.* July 2005.

The facilitator should review the guide, in addition to studying the seminar steps and preparing the materials on the following list.



Newsprints (Prepare ahead of time.)

- ___ What Should Learners Know About Reading? (p. 6)
- ___ Objectives and Agenda (p. 7)
- ___ #^^%** (p. 8)
- ___ Definitions (p. 9)
- ___ Question Prompts (p. 11)
- ___ Next Steps (p. 13)
- ___ Useful/How to Improve (p. 14)



Handouts (Make copies for each participant.)

- ___ *The Components (Parts) of Reading*
- ___ *Reading Goals*



Reading (Make copies for each participant.)

- ___ ***Understanding What Reading Is All About: Teaching Materials and Lessons for Adult Basic Education Learners***

Materials

- ___ Newsprint easel and blank sheets of newsprint
- ___ Markers, pens, tape
- ___ Sticky dots

Steps:

1. Welcome and Introductions

(20 minutes)

- **Welcome participants** to the seminar. **Introduce yourself** and state your role as facilitator. Explain how you came to facilitate this seminar and who is sponsoring it.
-  **Post the newsprint What Should Learners Know About Reading?**

What Should Learners Know About Reading?

Note to Facilitator

Since time is very tight, it's important to move participants along gently but firmly if they are exceeding their time limit for introductions.

- **Ask participants to introduce themselves** (name, program, and role) and briefly explain what they think learners need to know about reading. Record their responses on newsprint.
- **Make sure that participants know** where bathrooms are located, when the session will end, when the break will be, and any other housekeeping information.

2. Objectives and Agenda

(5 minutes)

-  **Post the newsprint Objectives and Agenda** and review the objectives and steps with the participants.

Objectives

By the end of the seminar, you will be able to:

- Name the components of reading
- Explain why it is important for adult learners to understand the components of reading that are part of becoming a more fluent reader
- Utilize with learners the goal-setting lessons in *Understanding What Reading Is All About*
- Summarize the key points from one lesson in *Understanding What Reading Is All About*

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions (Done!)
2. Objectives and Agenda (Doing)
3. Overview of *Understanding What Reading Is All About*
4. Lesson Four: The Components of Reading
5. Why Teach Learners About the Components
6. Key Points from the Lessons
7. Goals for Reading
8. Planning Next Steps for the Group
9. Evaluation of the Seminar

3. Overview of *Understanding What Reading Is All About*

(15 minutes)

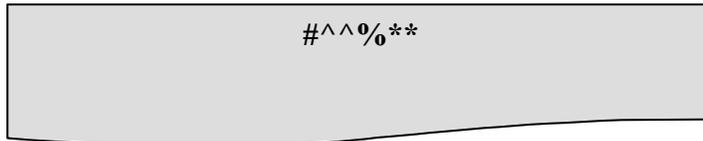
-  **Explain that in this next activity participants will review the contents of *Understanding What Reading Is All About*.** This guide includes 13 lessons to help low-level readers understand the components of reading—word analysis, sight words, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and spelling. The document also provides guidance for setting realistic, relevant learning goals and discusses learning disabilities. This guide can be used independently as a mini-course for students or can be integrated into existing curriculum. The primary audience for this guide is adult basic education (ABE)

instructors and their students reading at a 0-6 grade level, but it can be adapted for others, including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners.

- Make sure that each participant has a copy of *Understanding What Reading Is All About*. **Ask the participants to take about 10 minutes to read** the Introduction, pp. 1-4, and the Overview—Lesson by Lesson, pp. 5-7, and briefly preview the rest of the guide.

4. Lesson Four: The Components of Reading (60 minutes)

- Explain to the participants that the purpose of this next activity is to participate in Steps 2, 3, and 4 from “Lesson Four: The Components of Reading.” Ask them to act as learners as the group explores the components of reading that are part of becoming a more fluent reader.
- (From “2. First steps in learning how to read”) **Explain:** *Learning to read requires learning things step-by-step or in stages, just like learning to drive. Let’s find out how we learn to read.*
-  **Post the newsprint #^ ^ % **** and ask the learners why they can’t read it.



Answer: They have not seen the word before and do not know what all the symbols mean or understand how they go together to make a word.

- **Ask** learners what they would need to know in order to understand the “word.” If they have trouble responding, guide them to realize that they first need to recognize the letters of the “alphabet” and to produce the sounds that correspond to the letters before they can read the “word.”
- **Ask:** *So, what is the first thing you need to be able to do in order to read real words?* In the steps below, you will guide learners to realize that they must sound out (**decode**) the individual letters in a word and then pull (**blend**) them back together by modeling the process for them.

Helpful Hint

This is an abbreviated version of Lesson 4: The Components of Reading, Sections 2, 3, and 5. You may want to note that for the participants, as they should use the entire lesson with learners.

- **Write** the word “yit” on the flipchart.
- **Slowly sound out** each letter /y/-i/-t/ and ask the learners to describe what you are doing. You explain that this process of sounding out the letters is called sounding out or **decoding**. Then you model how to put the sounds back together to form “yit,” and again ask the learners to describe what you have done. You explain to learners that putting the sounds back together is called **blending**.
- **Explain:** We call decoding and blending words back together “*analyzing words*.”
- **Explain:** *When we read the word “yit,” we have to look at each letter and sound it out. Then we have to blend the sounds back together. When we “decode” or “blend” sounds back together, we are analyzing words because we are looking very closely at parts of individual words.*
- (From “3. Explain parts of reading”) **Explain** to learners that you are going to introduce the various parts, or components, involved in the reading process and that you will return to each of these components in more detail in later lessons.
-  **Post the newspaper Definitions.**

Helpful Hint

You may need to remind participants that they are to participate as a learner, not as a teacher or tutor.

Note to Teacher

Some learners learn words by sight before they learn how to decode. Sight word reading, however, becomes a less effective strategy as higher level texts begin to include a larger number of unfamiliar words.

Definitions

Automatic	Feeling comfortable with something; doing it without having to think
Decode	The process of sounding out individual letters
Blend	Putting individual letters back together again
Fluency	Reading with ease, reading with speed
Analyze	Decoding and blending words back together
Vocabulary	Words and their meanings
Comprehension	Understanding what you read
Components	Parts

-  **Pass out** the handout *The Components (Parts) of Reading* to each learner. Point out that “components” means “parts.”

- You can point to the various sections of the pie to **explain each part**. Refer to the pie chart to explain the following:

⇒ **“Decoding”** is the process of sounding out or analyzing individual letters and words.

Explain that sometimes it is not possible to sound out or decode a word because the word does not follow the rules. For example it is difficult to decode the word “because.” It is easier to memorize the word or “learn it by sight.”

Go back to the driving analogy. Explain to learners that after they learn to analyze words, they need to practice their reading skills in order to read fluently or smoothly, the same way they had to practice driving in order to drive smoothly.

⇒ **“Fluency”** is reading with ease.

Explain that we need to read with speed and accuracy to easily understand what we read. Practice builds fluency.

⇒ **“Vocabulary”** refers to words and their meanings.

Explain that knowing what a word means is often as important as knowing how to say it.

⇒ **“Comprehension”** means understanding what you read.

Explain to learners that we need to be able to understand what we read so we can get information, be entertained, communicate, etc.

-  (From “5. Wrap-up & reflect”) There are a number of ways you can help learners reflect on what they learned during the session. Use the question prompts below (**post the newsprint Question Prompts**) and have learners choose from the following ways of reflecting:

⇒ Write in a journal

⇒ Discuss the questions with a partner

⇒ Make brief notes to himself or herself

Tell learners that spelling, grammar, and correctness do not matter for this kind of writing—here, writing is a tool to help them reflect on what they are learning.

Question Prompts

- What did you learn today?
- Did you learn anything that surprised you?
- Why do you think I am teaching you about how we learn to read?
- How might this help you?

- **Ask participants to resume their roles** as adult education practitioners. Ask participants how they think these lessons might work with learners, having just participated as learners in portions of one lesson from *Understanding What Reading Is All About*.

Break (15 minutes)

5. Why Teach Learners About the Components (10 minutes)

-  **Repost the newsprint What Should Learners Know About Reading?** Ask participants what they would like to add to the list now that they have reviewed the components. Record the responses.

What Should Learners Know About Reading?

6. Key Points from the Lessons (60 minutes)

- **Explain to participants that in this activity they will be taking a closer look at the lessons in *Understanding What Reading Is All About* and thinking about how they might use the lessons with their learners.**
- **Ask the participants to form small groups and assign one of the following lessons to each group:**

- Lesson Five: Analyzing Words
- Lesson Six: Reading Words by Sight
- Lesson Seven: Reading with Fluency
- Lesson Eight: Developing Reading Vocabulary
- Lesson Nine: Developing Reading Comprehension
- Lesson Twelve: Understanding Learning Disabilities
- Lesson Thirteen: Improving Your Spelling (Optional)
- **Ask the groups to read through the assigned lesson and discuss the key points** and how they think they can use or adapt this lesson for their learners. Pass out blank sheets of newsprint, and tell groups to record their ideas on them. Give them 30 minutes to do this.
- **Ask groups to briefly summarize and explain the key points** from their lessons, highlighting the notes recorded on the posted newsprints.

7. Goals for Reading

(20 minutes)

- **Explain to participants that in this activity the group will discuss the importance of goal setting** and how increased understanding of the reading process can contribute to setting realistic and relevant goals. Goals for Reading is the topic of the first three lessons in the guide.
- **Provide an overview of these lessons.** For example:
 - In lesson one, learners review their own reading habits and strategies and identify the kinds of reading they would like to improve. Learners are asked to brainstorm the times from the day before that they came across text that they needed to read. Then the teacher leads a discussion on strategies that they used when they needed to read and write, such as pictures, getting someone else to help read it, and so on. For homework, learners are asked to bring in items from their daily lives that they need or want to read, as well as to think about other strategies reading.
 - Lesson two builds on this first lesson as learners explain the role reading plays in their lives by identifying the kinds of text they need or want to read regularly. They also explore the role they would like reading to have in their lives by investigating what reading means to experienced readers. For homework, learners interview people they know about their reading habits.
 - Learners continue to explore what, how, and why experienced readers read and apply this knowledge to their own reading process in lesson three. Learners then set reading goals in their

roles as family members, workers, individuals, and community members.

-  **Review the handout *Reading Goals*** from “Lesson Three: Goals for Reading, Part 2.”
- **Ask participants how they could use this goal-setting process** with their learners and/or how they would modify it to meet their learners’ needs.

8. Planning Next Steps for the Group

(25 minutes)

- **Ask participants to take five minutes reflect on how they might use** *Understanding What Reading Is All About: Teaching Materials and Lessons for Adult Basic Education Learners* in their instruction and/or programs.
-  **Post the newsprint Next Steps.** Explain that now that the individual participants have ideas for using the lessons in their instruction and/or programs, the group should make a plan about its next steps.

Next Steps

- How might participants share with each other how the lessons worked, or how might they ask each other questions?

- **Write up potential next steps** on the newsprint as the participants mention them. After five minutes of brainstorming, ask participants to silently look at the options and individually select two ways for the group to continue the discussions.
- **Hand out two sticky dots to each participant** and ask the group to put their dots next to the idea that they would most like the group to do. If they don’t want to do any of the activities, they should not put their dots on the newsprint.

- **Lead the group in organizing its choice. For example:**
 - If they choose to schedule a follow-up meeting, set the date, time, and place for the meeting, and brainstorm an agenda for the meeting. Determine who will definitely be coming, and who will take the responsibility to cancel the meeting in case of bad weather.
 - If they choose to organize an e-mail list, pass around a sheet for everyone to write their e-mail addresses. Decide who is going to start the first posting, and discuss what types of discussion or postings people would like to see (e.g., questions about how to try out something in their classroom, descriptions of what happened after they tried it, sharing of other resources, etc.).

9. Evaluation of the Seminar

(10 minutes)

- **Explain to participants that, in the time left, you would like to get feedback from them about this seminar.** You will use this feedback in shaping future seminars.
-  **Post the newsprint Useful/How to Improve.**

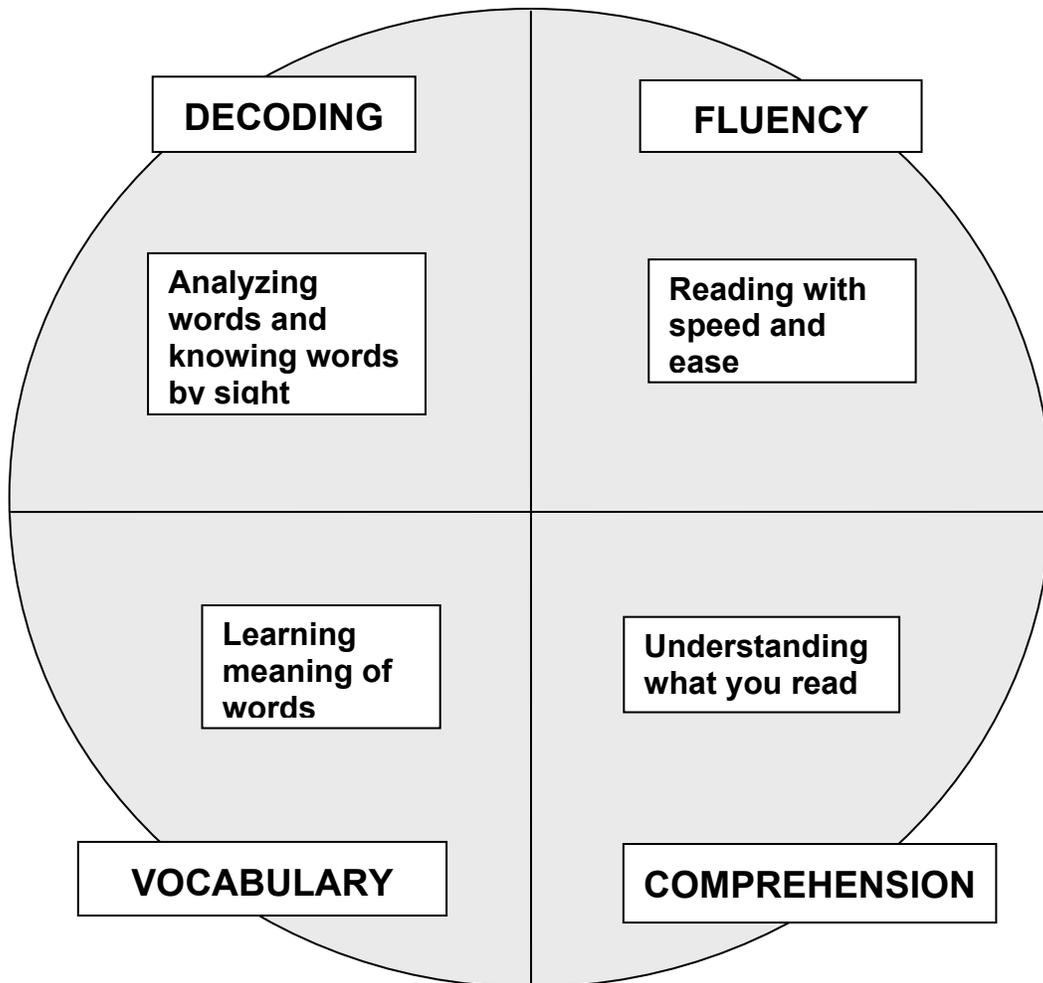
<u>Useful</u>	<u>How to Improve</u>

Ask participants first to tell you what was useful or helpful to them about the design and content of this seminar. Write their comments, without response from you, on the newsprint under “Useful.”

- **Then ask participants for suggestions on how to improve this design and content.** Write their comments, without response from you, on the newsprint under “How to Improve.” If anyone makes a negative comment that’s not in the form of a suggestion, ask the person to rephrase it as a suggestion for improvement, and then write the suggestion on the newsprint.

- **Do not make any response to participants' comments during this evaluation.** It is very important for you not to defend or justify anything you have done in the seminar or anything about the design or content, as this will discourage further suggestions. If anyone makes a suggestion you don't agree with, just nod your head. If you feel some response is needed, rephrase their concern: "So you feel that what we should do instead of the small group discussion is . . . ? Is that right?"
- **Refer participants to the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy's Web site (www.ncsall.net) for further information.** Point out that most NSCALL publications may be downloaded for free from the Web site. Print versions can be ordered by contacting NSCALL at World Education: ncsall@worlded.org.
- **Thank everyone** for coming and participating in the seminar.

The Components (Parts) of Reading



Handout 

Reading Goals

Name: _____

Date: _____

As a family member, I now read:	I would like to be able to read:
As a community member, I now read:	I would like to be able to read:
At work I read:	I would like to be able to read:
For myself, I read:	I would like to be able to read:

Information About NCSALL

NCSALL's Mission

NCSALL's purpose is to improve practice in educational programs that serve adults with limited literacy and English language skills, and those without a high school diploma. NCSALL is meeting this purpose through basic and applied research, dissemination of research findings, and leadership within the field of adult learning and literacy.

NCSALL is a collaborative effort among the Harvard Graduate School of Education, World Education, The Center for Literacy Studies at The University of Tennessee, Rutgers University, and Portland State University. NCSALL is funded by the U.S. Department of Education through its Institute of Education Sciences (formerly Office of Educational Research and Improvement).

NCSALL's Research Projects

The goal of NCSALL's research is to provide information that is used to improve practice in programs that offer adult basic education (ABE), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and adult secondary education services. In pursuit of this goal, NCSALL has undertaken research projects in four areas: (1) student motivation, (2) instructional practice and the teaching/learning interaction, (3) staff development, and (4) assessment.

Dissemination Initiative

NCSALL's dissemination initiative focuses on ensuring that practitioners, administrators, policymakers, and scholars of adult education can access, understand, judge, and use research findings. NCSALL publishes *Focus on Basics*, a quarterly magazine for practitioners; *Focus on Policy*, a twice-yearly magazine for policymakers; *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy*, an annual scholarly review of major issues, current research, and best practices; and *NCSALL Reports* and *Occasional Papers*, periodic publications of research reports and articles. In addition, NCSALL sponsors the Connecting Practice, Policy, and Research Initiative, designed to help practitioners and policymakers apply findings from research in their instructional settings and programs.

For more information about NCSALL, to download free copies of our publications, or to purchase bound copies, please visit our Web site at:

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