

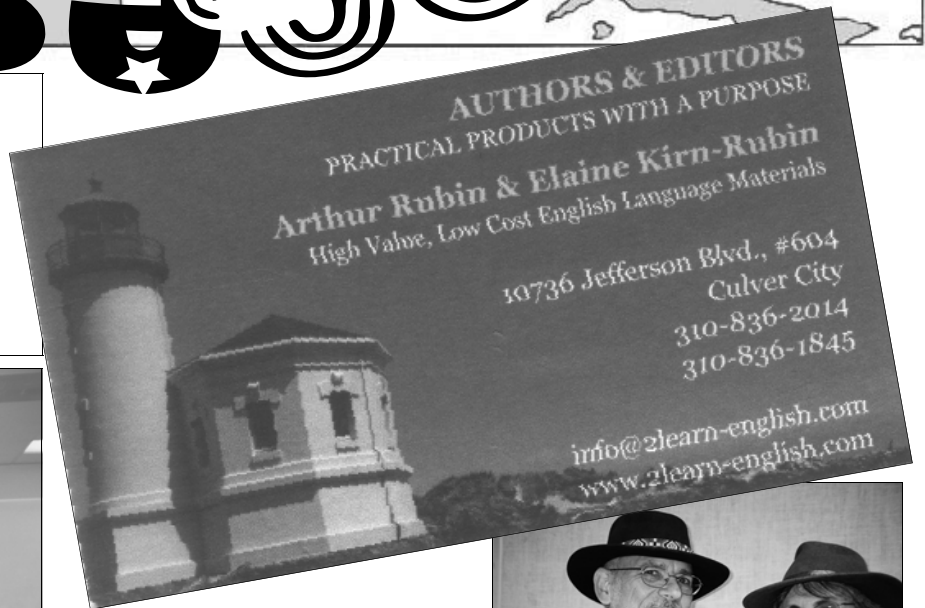
Empowering Newcomers with Skills & Knowledge



Arthur E. Rubin
Retired Social Worker
Group Facilitator
Community Organizer
authedit@ca.rr.com

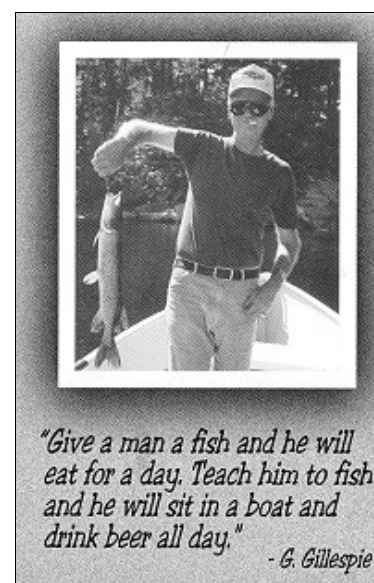
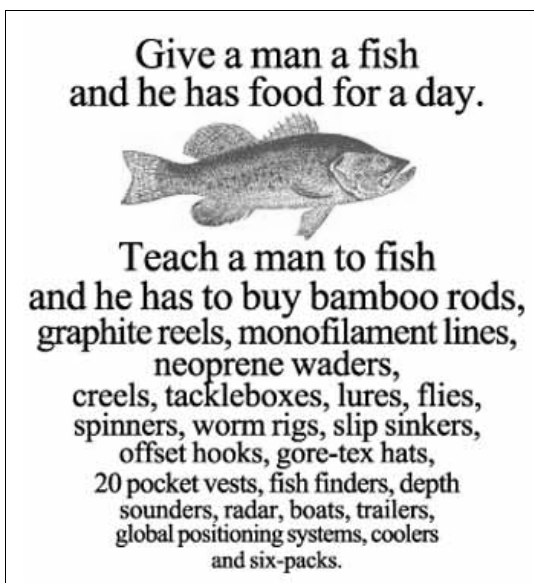
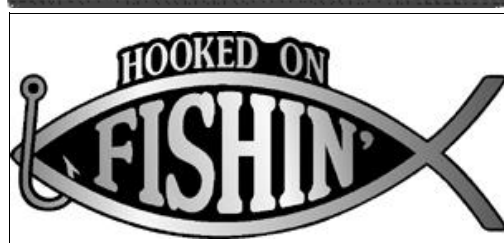
Elaine Kirn-Rubin

ESL Professor
Language Arts Division
West Los Angeles College
9000 Overland Ave.
Culver City CA 90230
310-287-4200, 9-8119



ABSTRACT: *Newcomers to this country need so much: language skills, information about the country's culture and laws, critical thinking skills, etc. Come with questions/problems. Leave with activities, based on typical Americana content (U.S. geography) that expand your ability to "teach them to fish."*

If you look up "teach a man to fish" on the Internet, you'll come up with images and comments like these:



Give A Man A Fish... Remodel an old saying

Good in its day, more than likely, but completely inappropriate for the thrusting, cut-throat, dog eat dog world of modern commerce. I would suggest an alternative version: "Teach a man to fish, and you introduce another competitor into the overcrowded fishing industry. Give a man a fish, and you stimulate demand for your product"

http://www.halfbakery.com/idea/Give_20A_20Man_20A_20Fish_2e_2e_2e

These aren't quite what we had in mind for our workshop. The following excerpts from various cited websites come a lot closer.

An old Chinese saying says: *Give a person a fish, and you feed them for a day.
Teach a person how to fish, and you feed them for a lifetime.*

A teacher should teach students how to learn, together with what to learn. If we, for example, as EFL teachers, teach our students the translation of single words, we may help them understand the meaning of those words in a particular text, in one particular moment. But if we teach them dictionary skills, they can apply and "reuse" what they have learned in any foreign language learning context as well as in many other contexts.

from http://www.langedizioni.com/varie/op/teach_them.htm

"Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day; teach that person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks"

http://thinkexist.com/quotation/give_a_person_a_fish_and_you_feed_them_for_a_day/163297.html

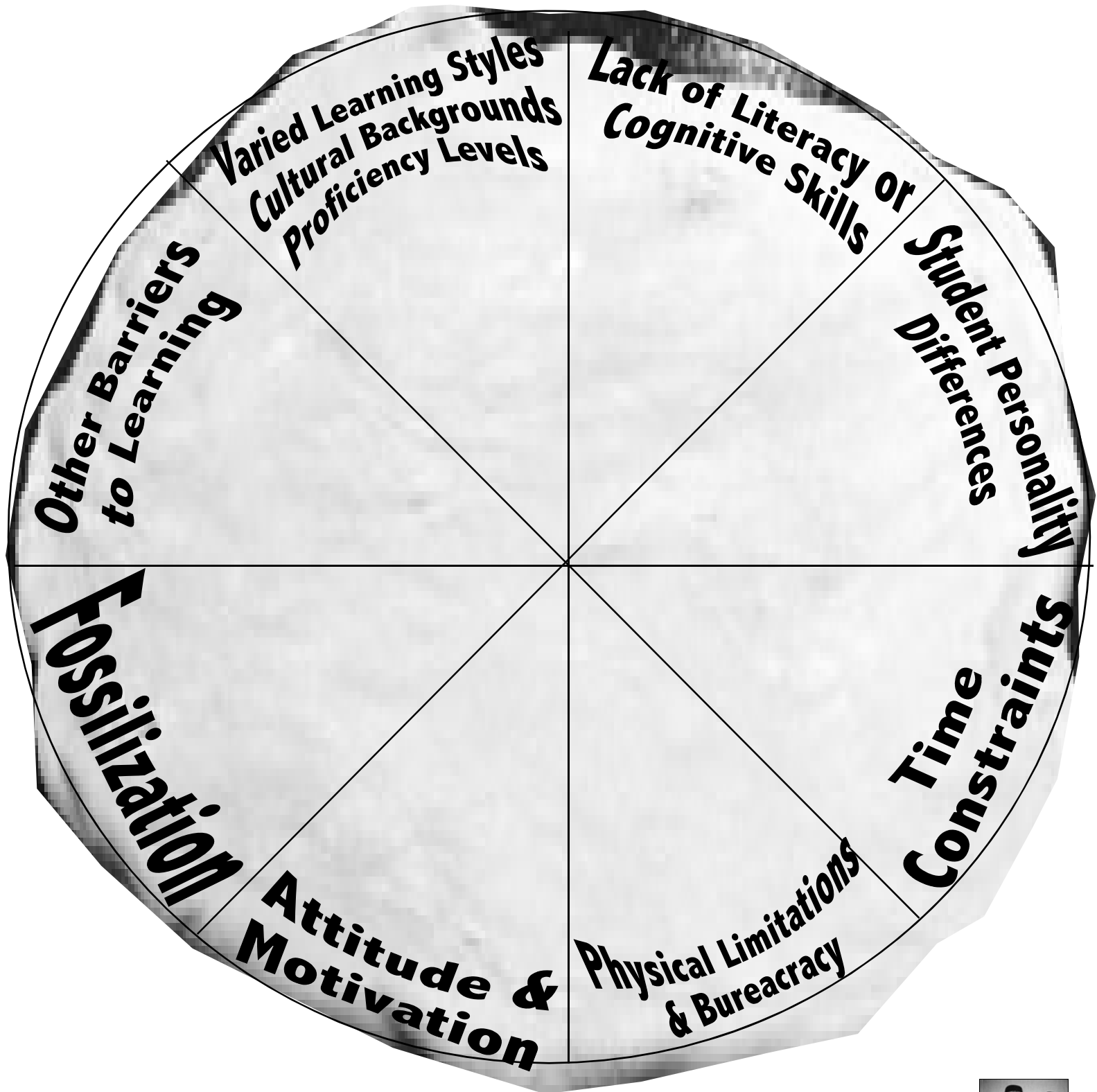
POWER TEACHING: Remember the old story about "give them a fish and they eat for a day, but teach them how to fish and they eat for a lifetime?" It's the same story with learning. Just giving students information does not teach them how to learn for a lifetime. It's better that students are empowered to learn how to learn. And yes, they also need a core of essential information as a foundation for learning, successful living in the world, and harmonious relationships . . .

<http://www.midnightbeach.com/hs/LearnToLearn.html>

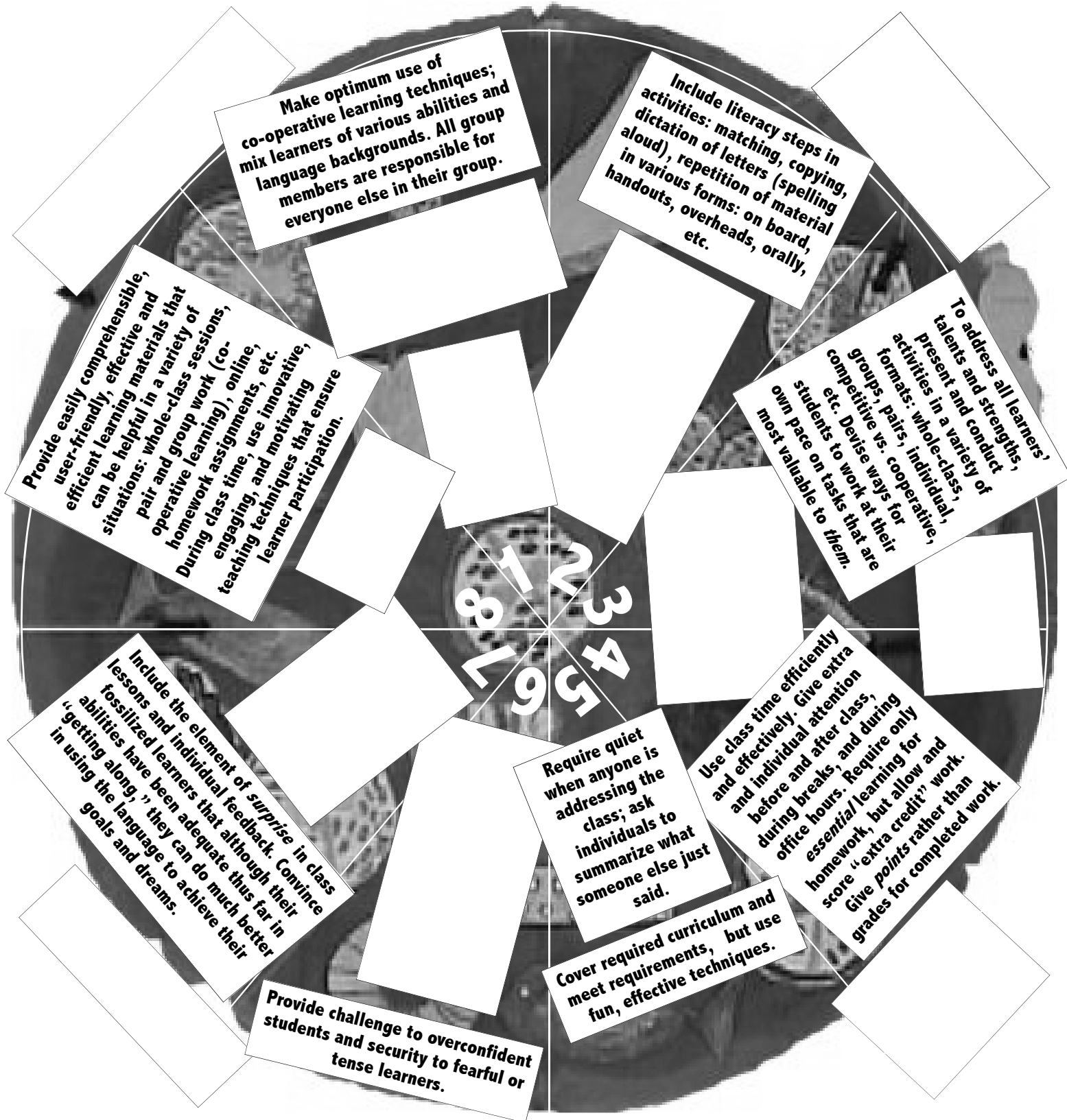
The concept of “teaching a person to fish” can apply to language acquisition of all four skills (and grammar and vocabulary), content-area information, critical thinking, acculturation, practical and social skills, etc. Let’s see what we can do together: [1] to collect and organize challenges in educating newcomers to this country, and [2] to come up with ideas to address them.

But first, here’s another Chinese saying: “Fish and guests start stinking after three days.”

So may we change our metaphor to “teach them how to pizza?” Let’s say that all our language acquisition and acculturation challenges can fit on a pizza crust. Can the problems we’ve identified be placed onto these eight separate pieces or are some of them sprinkled over the entire surface? With the sticky, uncooked dough, they’re going to blend into one another. And now we have to cover (most of) the crust with the ingredients of creative, efficient, and effective teaching and facilitation.



Now let's see how we can cover the pieces with the "ingredients" of effective pedagogy—ideas and solutions that move toward solutions to the challenges in empowering newcomers to succeed. Notice how the possibilities can overlap, be moved from one section to another, allow room for more contributions, etc.



Finally, let's create some ways to teach one typical kind of content: American geography. Eight examples are provided on the next two pages. Remember that they are only samples. You can—and will—come up with better "solutions"—custom designed to your own situations.

Finally, let's get specific. Based on a sample sub-topic of the content area of "Americana," following are some possible ideas (suggested techniques or activities) for the teaching and learning of United States geography. Note that the proposed steps within each idea are not only adaptable to a variety of language-proficiency levels and teaching situations; they are also applicable to most of the content areas that are of interest or use to newcomers to this country. These include biographies of famous Americans, U.S. history, American culture and holidays, government and law, U.S. citizenship, current events and politics, international issues, and more.

1 LITERACY ACTIVITIES. Activities to promote literacy (the ability to read and write English) may include [a] recognizing shapes, [b] matching pictures to words, [c] printing words and sentences from dictation and pronouncing and spelling aloud what they wrote, [d] copying information onto a map, etc.

Some corresponding ideas for class activities are [a] naming the U.S. states from their shapes and position on a map, [b] matching photos of landmarks to their names, [c] printing the names of geographical features from letter-by-letter dictation, reading the words aloud, and identifying them, [d] copying the names of states, cities, or physical features onto the appropriately marked places of a map.

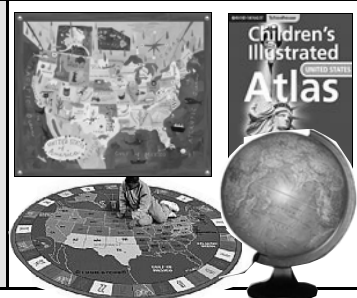


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2 USING REFERENCE MAPS. Have large political, physical, road, tourist, and children's maps of different formats available: wall maps, globes, big picture-map books, overhead transparencies, handouts, atlases, etc. Use them for reference during whole-class lessons. If appropriate and useful, give map-reading (and map drawing) lessons: teach map vocabulary (*continent, country, region, state, city, town, highway, mountain range, mountain, river, lake, peninsula, desert, ocean, etc.*), the meanings of map symbols, latitude and longitude, altitude, distances (how to use the scale of miles), directions on the compass, etc.



3 PRONUNCIATION LESSONS. No matter what their level of language proficiency, most second-language learners in the United States benefit from—and are interested in—instruction in [a] the pronunciation of vowel sounds in accented syllables / æ, ɛ, ɪ, ɑ, ɔ, ʌ, ʊ, ɜ, e^y, i^y, a^y, o^w, u^w, ɑ^u, ɔ^y/ and [b] syllable-stress patterns in multi-syllable words and phrases (1 = ●, 2a = ●●, 2b = ●●, 3a = ●●●, 3b = ●●●, 3c = ●●●, 4b = ●●●●, etc. As a preliminary activity, groups of learners can work together to classify geographical place names according to one or both of these pronunciation categories. The same list of words can be used for both of these and then other activities.

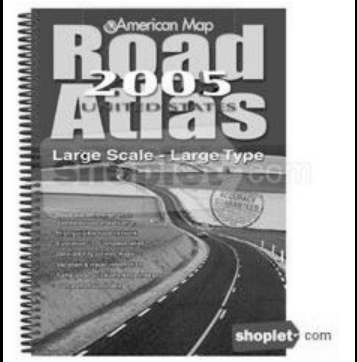
| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. æ | 2. ɛ | 3. ɪ |
| Alaba <u>ma</u> | Tex <u>as</u> | Missis <u>si</u> ppi |
| 1. ● | 2a. ●● | 2b. ●● |
| Maine | Tex <u>as</u> | New York |
| 3a. ●●● | 5c. ●●●● | |
| Flo <u>ri</u> da | North Carolina | |
| and so on and so on and so on . . . | | |

4 PUTTING INFO TOGETHER IN PUZZLES. Each group of learners receives a U.S. or related map in the form of a jigsaw puzzle. If necessary, the whole group can collaborate in putting the puzzle "frame" (the outside lines) together. The remaining pieces (at least 40 or 50) are "shuffled" and distributed to participants. As the first "player" puts the piece of the puzzle representing the learners' state in its appropriate place, s/he tells its location. (*EXAMPLE: California borders the Pacific Ocean north of Mexico.*) The next player gets to place a puzzle piece only if s/he has one that fits next to a piece already on the surface; s/he names it in a location sentence. (*EXAMPLE: The state of Oregon also borders the Pacific Ocean. It's north of California, south of Washington State, and west of Idaho.*) The groups continue in this way until the puzzle has been completed.

More advanced learners can then write a description of the place they have put together in their puzzle. For example, many kinds of U.S. map puzzles include pictures of tourist attractions, products, etc. Groups can trade puzzles to repeat the activity as time permits; they can compare the various maps.



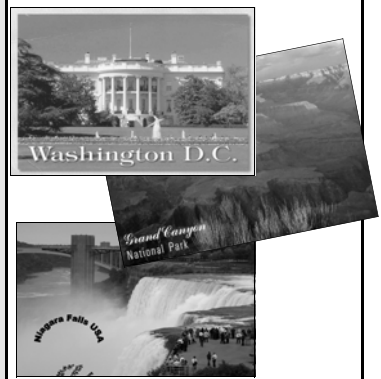
5 GIVING & FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS. Road maps of the United States or any portion of it (a region, a state, a national park, etc.) and city street maps for many learning purposes: to practice the grammar of imperative forms (directive sentences); to acquire the vocabulary of prepositional phrases of direction; to learn the social conventions of asking and giving directions, asking for repetition, checking comprehension, etc; to learn and practice the names of places; and to learn about a place and how to get around it. One speaker in each pair, a group, or the whole class can give directions from “You are Here” to any other place on the map. Listeners can trace the route on their copies of the map and tell where they end up. Then they can repeat the same directions in even clearer language.



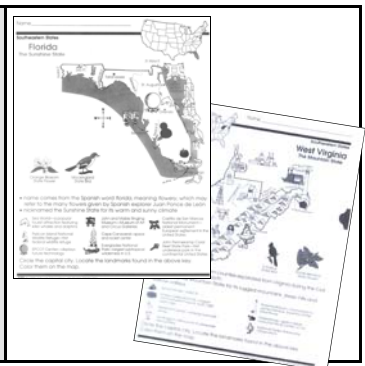
6 RANKING OR SEQUENCING. Lessons that include basic info, such as facts about the fifty U.S. states, lend themselves to ranked or sequenced list making. Working with a set of “United States Flash Cards,” for example, learners can put them in alphabetical order and then list the names of the states. Then they can list the same state names in descending order of size, both population and land area. They can do the same with the largest cities, longest rivers, or highest mountains, listing them with their locations in the country. The states can even be listed in chronological order, according to their dates of admission to the union (the nation). In other words, there are a large variety of co-operative tasks that can be completed with a set of Americana learning cards, available at low prices at Dollar Stores, garage sales, thrift shops, etc.



7 MAIN-IDEA STATEMENTS, CAPTIONS, & SUMMARIES. For both language acquisition and critical-thinking purposes, most reading and writing lessons involve getting and stating main ideas, analyzing and writing topic sentences that give general ideas, and finding or creating supporting details (examples, reasons, facts, etc.) to support the point the writer wants to make or the message s/he intends to convey. Visuals with captions, such as photos of famous places, are easily obtained, useful material for teaching and learning these skills. For instance, learners can receive a list of the real or rewritten explanations from the other side of picture postcards with Americana images. When the numbered postcards are passed around the room, they try to match the numbered images with the pictures. Or they can try writing main-idea statements and captions of their own for the pictures.



8 THE “EXPERT GAME.” Any material that can be broken up into equal or equivalent parts is useful for an “Expert Game,” in which each participant becomes responsible for learning and teaching everyone else about a different subtopic within a subject. For instance, each learner can receive a different page from an educational children’s book about “The U.S. States.” After studying his/her material, he can “present” the significant points in a short “mini-lesson” to the class. Listeners can take notes, ask for clarification and repetition, and then take an “oral quiz” on the info while referring to their notes. Alternatively, the “Expert Game” can be a co-operative learning activity in which each participant contributes his or her specialized knowledge to the completion of a printed quiz.



Of course, there are many more generic teaching and learning ideas of this kind that not only “teach the content” but also contribute to solutions to the identified challenges in helping newcomers to this country to succeed. Some examples are quiz games (perhaps based on TV quiz show formats, another element of American culture), card games (with specially prepared or purchased “content cards”), activities based on the reading and understanding of authentic materials (newspapers, magazines, Internet articles, etc.), group projects (such as using travel brochures and maps to plan trips to significant places), online activities (including going to pre-prepared ESL or English-learning sites, chatrooms, etc.), and so on and so on and so on and so on

Just be sure to *enjoy* the planning, preparation, baking, eating, and improvement of the “pizza”!