

3. Teaching Approaches

Teaching health lends itself to a variety of widely-used instructional approaches. Health instruction can be infused with varied skills practice, such as critical thinking, personal decision-making and goal-setting, and language and communication development. A needs-based, learner-centered approach is encouraged to maximize learner gains from instruction.

In adult literacy and ESOL instruction, health is often taught via:

- **Life skills, content-based instruction**, with frequent use of dialogue, role play, and realia to support second language learning. Target language skills are integrated into the health topic rather than taught separately.
- **The Language Experience Approach (LEA)**, which allows beginning literacy learners to draw upon their own experiences, interpretations and language as they create and manipulate stories on topics and prompts germane to health education.
- **A problem-solving approach** promoting critical evaluation of the world around the learners, who must use language authentically to communicate and negotiate.
- **A participatory approach (project-based learning)** integrating skills and making students the designers and implementers of their own learning. This promotes a sense of ownership and mastery over target material. Note that this approach is more successful beyond beginning levels.
- **A narrative approach** that lends itself to health education because it facilitates personal connection with learning, self-awareness, and self-development.

For additional information on these approaches, see:

Moss, D., & Van Duzer, C. (1998). *Project-based learning for adult English language learners*. ERIC Digest. Washington, D.C.: National Center for ESL Literacy Education. (ERIC document no. EDO-LE-98-07). Available:

<http://www.cal.org/nclle/digests/ProjBase.htm>

Payne, E. M. (n.d.). The adult learner in a participatory learning environment. Center for Initiatives in Education online new teacher toolkit. Available:

<http://cie.ci.swt.edu/newteacher/section2-2.htm>

- Rossiter, M. (2002). *Narrative and stories in adult teaching and learning*. ERIC Digest. Washington, D.C.: Educational Resources Information Center. (ERIC Digest No. 241). Available: <http://ericacve.org/docgen.asp?tbl=digests&ID=126>
- Sticht, T. (1997). The theory behind content-based instruction. *Focus on Basics, 1(D)*. Available: <http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/fob/1997/sticht.htm>
- Taylor, M. (1992). *The Language Experience Approach and adult learners*. ERIC Digest. Washington, D.C.: National Center for ESL Literacy Education. (ERIC document no. EDO-LE-92-01). Available: http://www.cal.org/nclle/digests/LANG_EXPER.HTML
- Wrigley, H. S. (1998). The promise of project-based learning. *Focus on Basics, 2(D)*. Available: <http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/fob/1998/wrigley.htm>