

Learning Challenges Assessment Tool for Adult Literacy Learners  
**Supplemental Examples - Direct Instruction**

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Adult Basic Education Association



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### **Direct Instruction of Learning Strategies and Accommodations**

Most of us use learning strategies automatically to fit our needs. We use verbal rehearsal to remember someone's telephone number, or we remember musical notes by saying "Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge". However, people with learning difficulties do not necessarily use these strategies automatically. Direct instruction is the explicit teaching of a learning strategy or accommodation. It involves six steps:

1. **Explanation** - what is the intention of the strategy or accommodation?
2. **Modeling** - how is the strategy used effectively? (use the learner's current work)
3. **Self-instruction** - have the learner explain the strategy and how he/she uses it
4. **Practice** - provide various opportunities to practice the strategy on different tasks
5. Provide and get **feedback** - provide affirmative, constructive feedback and ask the learner if the strategy is working well and how he/she is using it - changes needed?
6. **Implementation** - encourage the learner to report independent and routine use of the strategy

**This method is also very good for teaching new academic skills.**

<b>Challenge Area</b>	<b>Visual Processing</b>
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Breaking Words into Syllables to Spell in Chunks</b>

1. Explanation - To the learner...

The intention of this strategy is to help you hear the chunks in words and be able to spell words by putting these chunks together. Spelling in syllables makes it easier to spell longer words like “com-pu-ter”.

Here is a list of the common ways we break up words (hand out a list of the syllable rules and go over). The easiest way to hear syllables in words is to put your hand on your chin and count how many times your chin drops down in a word – that is how many syllables are in the word. Another key point to remember is that every syllable must have at least one vowel. That is a good way to check your spelling – make sure each chunk that you spell has a vowel in it.

2. Modelling

When looking at the learner’s written work you could model this strategy by working through his/her spelling mistakes and dividing the words up into syllables to spell each syllable at a time.

3. Self-instruction

For the last couple of spelling mistakes in the learner’s writing, have him/her explain how to divide the word into syllables and try to spell it in chunks. Have the learner explain how this might make spelling easier for him.

#### 4. Practice

Provide some specific syllable activities (various) that ask the learner to break words up and to spell out individual syllables.

Ask the learner to use syllables as a strategy when working on free writing activities.

#### 5. Feedback

Ask the learner to circle words in his next writing sample where he used syllables to spell. Go over this sample with him. Ask how the strategy is working for him. Does it make spelling easier? Are you able to spell longer words by breaking it up into chunks? If it is not working, go over the strategy again and return to more bookwork for reinforcement.

#### 6. Implementation

Encourage the learner to tell you when the strategy worked for him/her independently – possibly when writing alone in class or at home. This helps validate the use of the strategy for the learner. If he/she sees that it is successful, he is more apt to use it more often.

<b>Challenge Area:</b> <b>Auditory Processing</b>
<b>Strategy:</b> <b>Paraphrasing Directions</b>

1.     Explanation - To the learner...

Paraphrasing is when you repeat what you have heard in your own words. By paraphrasing instructions that I have given you we can make sure that you have understood the instructions. By paraphrasing you can also find out if you need to ask more questions about the directions.

2.     Modelling

Ask the learner to explain to you what his/her favourite hobbies are and why. Then, paraphrase what the learner has said. Ask him/her if you understood the main points. Then, explain how you came up with the summary (listened to the entire story, picked out the main points and the main details, etc.).

3.     Self-instruction

After you have modelled this strategy, ask the learner to describe the strategy in his/her own words. This is her first attempt at paraphrasing!

4.     Practice

Ask the learner to go home and paraphrase 3 conversations that he/she has with family members or friends. Instruct the learner to ask the speaker whether the main points of the conversation were understood.

For ongoing usage and practice, always have the learner paraphrase your directions for assignments or activities. Be sure to encourage him/her to get approval from the speaker that he/she understood the main points, and encourage the learner to ask for clarification if he/she didn't.

## 5. Feedback

Ask the learner if this strategy is helping to understand and clarify directions and other conversations. If so, provide positive enforcement to keep using the strategy. If not, review the strategy to see if more success can be gained.

## 6. Implementation

Encourage the learner to report when he/she has used this strategy successfully outside of class. This strategy works in a variety of situations and helps learners attune to what they are hearing. It helps to make the learner less anxious when receiving oral directions or information and also makes for great conversation practice.

<b>Challenge Area:</b> <b>Organizational Processing</b>
<b>Strategy:</b> <b>Using a Timetable for Lessons</b>

1.      Explanation - To the learner...

We are going to set up a timetable for your lessons so we can break up the class into times for different activities. For example, we can use the first 15 minutes of the day for review of what you worked on last day. Then, we can use the next 30 minutes for reading, etc. It will be in a chart to make it easy to read and understand. This strategy will help you get to all of the types of activities you are working on. By having specific time to review your work, you will be able to figure out what you need more work on and what you are confident with.

2.      Modelling

At this point you could show him your day timer and how you organize your day. Explain why you give more time to some activities over others. This is a good way to discuss priorities. You could also make a timetable with the entire class.

3.      Self-instruction

Work with the learner to build his/her own timetable for class time. Have the learner explain why he/she thinks it's important to break his/her time into sections and work with the learner to find appropriate lengths of time for each activity.

4.      Practice

Have the learner take out the timetable every day when he/she gets to class and set it on his/her desk for reference. At the beginning, check in to ensure that the learner is using the timetable at the beginning and at the end of the day. He/she could also build the evening into his timetable by scheduling time to work on homework.

## 5. Feedback

After about a week – ask the learner if he/she is using the strategy consistently. Is it helping to keep on track? Is he/she getting to each type of activity during lesson time? Is his/her homework being completed? If not, see if the timetable needs to be modified or if extra supports need to be put in place for a while (e.g., a family member or friend reminds him of his timetable at home).

## 6. Implementation

Once he is comfortable working with a lesson timetable, he may want to create other timetables outside of the classroom (for example: a timetable for his weekly errand-running to ensure everything gets done by Saturday at noon).

### **Remember**

Not all strategies will work for all learners. Strategy development needs to be individual and ongoing. If a strategy doesn't work, even after review and repetition, it's time to find another one.