Formation of functional literacy of 12-year school students in English

Methodological instructions
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Theoretical and methodological basis for the formation of functional literacy of 12-year school students are presented in these methodological instructions. The given methodological recommendations are addressed to English school teachers.
Kazakhstan develops rapidly and places stake on the intellectual potential of the nation. In this regard, one of the important things is to provide the younger generation with quality education. Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan Bakytzhan Zhumagulov told about the process of modernization of the education system based on optimization of the higher education universities and advantages of the dual system of vocational and technical education in his interview for Primeminister.kz site.

In the recent article “Social Modernization of Kazakhstan: 20 Steps towards the Society of Universal Labor” the President of Kazakhstan emphasizes that social modernization requires reforming all spheres including education system. What is modernization of the education process aimed at?

President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev gave a new impetus to the country’s social development in his article “Social Modernization of Kazakhstan: 20 Steps toward Society of Universal Labor”.

It is a commonly known fact that universal highly-qualified and responsible labor is one of the bases for sustainable economic and social system in the context of the upcoming economic crisis.

The education system is passing through comprehensive and gradual strategic modernization taking into consideration internal and external challenges. Studies and pedagogical work is a core and basis of the educational process, therefore, its modernization is of special importance.

It is worth noting that the main efforts are taken to modernize the secondary education sphere.

The process of implementation of the National Action Plan on Development of Functional Literacy of School Students for 2012-2016 was reviewed at a session of the Government on 11 September, 2012. The Action Plan was developed and adopted on the instruction of the President that was given in his annual Address to the Nation.

Implementation of the National Plan gains special importance in the context of fulfillment of tasks set in the article of the President "Social Modernization of Kazakhstan: 20 Steps toward Society of Universal Labor".

"The National Action Plan sets a specific task - application of knowledge in practice and it is also one of the bases for fundamental change of the paradigm of secondary education. This is a transfer from the traditional model of school to a rational and later a modern one - phenomenal model based on the role of a child's personality," the Minister emphasized.

The National Plan outlines mechanisms of development of the functional literacy of Kazakhstani school students.

The first mechanism implies fundamental update of methodologies and content of education. It includes preparation and professional development of teachers, introduction of e-learning and innovative technologies of education that will be provided by means of spread of the experience of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools.

Functional illiteracy is reading and writing skills that are inadequate "to manage daily living and employment tasks that require reading skills beyond a basic
level."[1] Functional illiteracy is contrasted with illiteracy in the strict sense, meaning the inability to read or write simple sentences in any language.

Foreigners who cannot read and write in the native language where they live may also be considered functionally illiterate.

Functional illiteracy is imprecisely defined, with different criteria from nation to nation, and study to study [2]. However, a useful distinction can be made between pure illiteracy and functional illiteracy. Purely illiterate persons cannot read or write in any capacity, for all practical purposes. In contrast, functionally illiterate persons can read and possibly write simple sentences with a limited vocabulary, but cannot read or write well enough to deal with the everyday requirements of life in their own society.

For example, an illiterate person may not understand the written words cat or dog, may not recognize the letters of the alphabet, and may be unable to write their own name. In contrast, a functionally illiterate person may well understand these words and more, but might be incapable of reading and comprehending job advertisements, past-due notices, newspaper articles, banking paperwork, complex signs and posters, and so on.

The characteristics of functional illiteracy vary from one culture to another, as some cultures require better reading and writing skills than others. A reading level that might be sufficient to make a farmer functionally literate in a rural area of a developing country might qualify as functional illiteracy in an urban area of a technologically advanced country. In languages with regular spelling, functional illiteracy is usually defined simply as reading too slow for practical use, inability to effectively use dictionaries and written manuals, etc.
1 Theoretical bases of forming 12-year school students’ functional literacy in English

Significant changes in the socio-economic life of the community put forward new requirements for the modern education system. It is necessary to alter the content and approaches to the educational process, and the education system itself. Before now, mostly the method of direct teaching was used widely, but today focus is made on formation of functional literacy of pupils via the implementation of principles of democratization and humanization of teaching, that is based on student-oriented approach, taking into account his wishes and abilities. The purpose of forming and developing functional literacy is to give opportunity to every pupil to develop personal abilities, capabilities and needs that are intended to make him ready to make his own decision quickly in certain study and life situations, to search for relevant data concerning doing homework, projects, etc…

Former, teaching process based on only the method of transferring knowledge from teacher to pupils demanded to perform teacher’s instructions correctly with little creativity. After having explained the new material, teacher gave directions to students to do some practical exercises to check whether they have understood the material. And throughout teacher used to keep controlling the content of subject, make decisions about what kind of work to choose, in other words «orchestrated what students should do» [3]. In this way teacher was the one who did most of the talking and thus being so far the most active person at the lesson. As for students they had to listen, concentrate and take some notes to understand the information. And language learning should not of course include long explanations that might present certain difficulties to pupils. Whereas, ability to use a language seems to be more of a skill you learn and try to use it. Students need a number of other things besides listening to teacher’s explanations. They have to gain exposure to comprehensible examples of language (except teacher’s monologues) and they need to use and communicate with the English language themselves by interacting with class mates, do a variety of different language-related tasks; they need feedback on how successful or not their attempts at communication have been. In this way pupils are more expected to be involved into classroom activity. An approach based on developing creative abilities within the teaching process encourages pupils to form public skills, critical thinking, develop imagination, attention, memory, thus having a strong impact on emotional culture and culture of interaction. Furthermore, a personality-based way of teaching English is oriented to help a teacher to combine optimal ways to accommodate needs of young generation to get education of good quality, to give methodological help in tackling problems of student development. Student-centered education implies an organization of the educational process, which "runs" the internal mechanisms of personality development [4]. So, the role of modern English teacher is to help learning to happen.

No one would deny that the objective of learning English is an urgent necessity of the modern society. Pupils and their parents are eager to master the target language to have a chance to enter a wide range of higher educational institutions both at home and abroad. Moreover, they want to become in future highly qualified specialists and
be promoted in career. This has a great effect on cognitive ability of pupils, they are highly motivated to know English well. To conclude, personal fulfillment is "the ratio of the motif to the goal." [5]. But if the goal set by someone from the outside, and the motive for various reasons is rather weak, then there is no meaning to learn. This will bring to contradiction and unwillingness of pupils to learn a language. To avoid this contradiction a teacher should follow student’s personal interests, widely use innovative communicative method of teaching English, and what is more a teacher needs to be an expert in his area.

Undoubtedly, teacher’s high qualification and capacity to teach children by using modern teaching technologies that tend to form all skills of the language system, particularly emphasizing listening and speaking as in everyday life we often do far more speaking and listening than reading and writing.

And in case when a pupil feels that the whole system work is focused on his personality and constructed in the way that directs his activity, taking into consideration his experience, philosophy, educational and extracurricular interests and his feelings. The growing influence of the Common European Framework has encouraged scientists, course designers, university lectures and school teachers to admit successful communication in real-world tasks as a more important goal than that of accurate language use.

What is more, there should be balance between education system and skills to make teaching process more effective and productive. It is important to remember that there is no one area of skills or language systems exists in isolation: there can be no speaking if you don’t have the vocabulary to speak with; there is no use of learning English words unless you can do something with them in particular speech situation.

The purpose of forming functional literacy is to enable a pupil to participate in exchanges of different information that requires e.g. talking with peers, reading instructions on food packages, understanding directions, writing an application to university, work, etc…

Functional literacy of pupils is supposed to give learners a chance to gain a realistic experience both at study and life activity. So many students in our country left schools after learning the English language, but still unable to speak it. The process of studying foreign language often involves five steps:
1. doing something;
2. recalling what happened;
3. reflecting on that;
4. drawing conclusions from that reflection;
5. using those conclusions to use in further practice.

It is essential that during these steps of work information, feedback, guidance and support from teacher, peers and even parents may come in, but what is crucial in forming functional literacy of pupils is that they must do most of the tasks by themselves.

Main fundamental assumption on this issue is that students are able to learn more by doing things themselves rather than being told about them or how to do them. Another thing is that students come to be fully functioning young people with their
own life experience, their wishes and desires, their dreams, their worries, their home background, their moods, but not simply receptacles for passed-on – knowledge. Given the opportunities, they will be able to make own decisions, become more responsible for their learning.

Priorities of new approaches in teaching English are the possibility that students can use their early learning experience with the use while studying new.

Let’s make some discourse in existing teaching methods. Generally, a method is the way teachers’ activity. They may choose methods on the base of what approach they follow.

According to Jim Scrivener, there is a range of well-known methods and approaches:

- the grammar-translation method;
- the audio-lingual method;
- communicative language teaching;
- total physical response;
- community language learning;
- the natural approach;
- task-based learning;
- the silent way;
- person-centred approaches.

From the given list of methods the audio-lingual method, communicative language teaching, total physical response, task-based learning, the silent way, person-centred approaches come to be most popular and widely used by teacher for effective teaching nowadays. Let’s consider in brief the advantages of the mentioned methods and approaches.

The audio-lingual method enables to form good pronunciation and speaking habits through listening to models dialogue with repetition and drilling with little help or teacher explanation. This method seems to be very helpful in the local conditions where there are nearly no native speakers for our pupils to practice the language.

Communicative language teaching is one of the most popular way of teaching English, but teachers should remember the fact that students will be more confident successful in speaking if they take part in meaningful communication. This will help us to distinguish between strong and weak communicative language teaching. The former implies to teach students through their communication, that is doing communication tasks with a limited role for explicit teaching and traditional practical exercises. The latter implies learning though a wide variety of teaching, exercises, activities and study, with a bias towards speaking and listening work.

Total physical response is a method devised by Dr J. Asher, mainly useful with early learners mostly in primary school, or students with weak level of knowledge. Students listen to instructions from the teacher, understand and do things in response, without being required to speak until, they are ready.

Task-based learning is similar to method of communicative language teaching as it bases work cycles around the preparation for, doing of, and reflective analysis of tasks that reflect real-life needs and skills.
The silent way was devised by Caleb Gattegno and requires the student to take active ownership of their language learning and be careful while talking paying great attention to what they are saying. This method of course does not minimize the function of the teacher, but welcomes the use of different visual teaching aids, e.g. specially designed wall charts.

Person - centred approaches places first learners and their needs first. This method enables to take into account students’ interests and make the teaching process more fun and productive.

Surely, there are other teaching methods that teachers use and implement elements of innovative pedagogical technologies. It is worth to mention ICT that is very efficient in teaching English nowadays.

Generally speaking, what skills are considered to be functional?

The DES defined functional skills as: ‘the core elements of English that provide an individual with the essential knowledge level, competences that will enable them to operate confidently and effectively and independently in life and at work.’

The implications for teaching and learning come to be significant and are to be introduced gradually and thoughtfully, but they do not threaten aspects of existing good practice. Helping learners to become more ‘functional’ is supported by existing practices including:

• learning through application
• learner-centred approaches
• active learning and a problem-centred approach
• partnership learning
• assessment for learning.

Another reasonable question arises. Are functional skills really necessary to be developed? Why? According to the National plan ‘Employers and educators have identified these skills as vital for enabling young people and adults to have the practical skills to succeed in further learning, employment and life in the modern society.’

2 Useful tips on how to organize classroom activities to form students’ functional literacy at English classes

A critical teaching skill is to prepare thoroughly, set up and run a single classroom activity or task. The basic building block of any lesson is the activity or task that is according to Jim Scrivener «something that learners do that involves them using or working with language to achieve some specific outcome». [6]. The result of students’ work may reflect a «real-world» outcome (learners role play buying food or clothes in the supermarket, etc…). Here are some examples of tasks or activities learners can do at the English class:

− do a grammar exercise individually then compare answers with each other with the purpose to better understand how a particular item of language is formed;
− listen to a recorded conversation in order to answer some questions (to improve listening skills);
write a formal letter requesting information about something (e.g. college, or the latest model of computer/laptop/mobile phone, etc…);

- discuss and write some questions in order to make a questionnaire about different social issues (e.g. about people’s eating habits, quality of teaching at school, etc…);

- read a newspaper article to prepare it for discussion;

- play a vocabulary game in order to help learn words connected with some particular topic;

- repeat sentences you say in order to improve their pronunciation of them;

- role play any situation (e.g. buying bus /theatre/cinema tickets, etc…).

Teacher should turn series of things students do at the lesson and focus much more on what they are doing that will help to create a lesson more genuinely useful. When planning a lesson be careful about the activities and outcomes they are leading to. Think of a complete lesson as being a coherent sequence of such learner-targeted tasks.

Sometimes teachers operate their classes just simply copying the content of course books without using necessary techniques to make the learning more effective and this will produce predictable results. Consequently, this approach may not lead to much learning that is significant or useful for many of the pupils in the class. Ineffective, unhelpful teaching is teaching that proceeds forward without reference to what impact it is having on the learners. The essential way of a more productive learning environment is communication, two-way feedback from students to teacher and vice versa. It is as follows:

Don’t keep teaching and teaching

Teach- then get feedback

And let the feedback affect what you do and say.

Some teachers never practice feedback with their students at the lessons; some ask students for it from time to time. The reason is that they might be afraid to hear the students’ comments of their work. What is more skilled teacher should practice it every time and encourage learners to be honest and give a real evaluation of their mutual activity with the purpose to avoid possible misunderstanding and gaps in teaching.

Really, feedback is one of the most useful ways while teaching students a target language, especially, when the atmosphere is open and warm that differs much from the traditional way of teaching. An experienced British methodologist Jim Scrivener suggests following useful tips for starting useful feedback:

1. Don’t think of feedback as a once –a-term thing or just as a formal requirement from your school. Visualise it as moment –by-moment need to find out whether you and the class are on track.
2. Clearly, you can overdo it- you don’t want the class to groan at being asked “How useful was that activity?” again and again – but don’t let this worry prevent you from even starting to explore their reactions and responses.

3. Whether you go for oral or written feedback, vary it. Don’t turn it into a ritual.

4. Some common feedback opportunities: feedback at the start of the lesson, at the end of the lesson, at the end of the week, at the start of a new coursebook unit, at the end of the unit, before the class does an activity, after an activity, as the core topic of an activity, written at home.

5. Ask small questions (e.g. Which activity today was most difficult for you?) as well as big ones (e.g. “How useful is the course for you?”). They are easier to answer.

6. Ask simple, factual questions as well as evaluative questions, e.g. “How many words today were new for you?” as well as “Which activity did you enjoy most?”

7. Design a simple feedback form. Photocopy and hand it out it (or dictate it to students). You could allow them class time to discuss the questions before they write, or ask them to fill it out at home.

8. Ask students to write you a letter about the course. Specify exactly what you’d like them to discuss, or leave it open for students to raise any issues that they want to.

9. Set aside some time, ask open questions that enable them to say what hey want to say, and gear yourself simply to listen and learn (rather than to defend yourself, argue or contradict). Ask them what they really think. If your intention is only to hear “nice things”, then that is probably all you will get.

10. From the personal work experience of this leading English scholar, practicing feedback of various sorts may come difficult at first, but later your students will get used to more sincere, open and mutual respect that of course will affect on the productivity of teaching. And what is more, the results are not only for short-time period, but they will have a long-term benefit.

To increase student’s awareness about their progress in learning and to give them efficient help and find more effective ways to teach them English it seems crucial to include these as strands throughout a course.

1. Integrate study-skills work.

   Include study-skills work as an integrated feature of your lessons, e.g. when introducing new vocabulary, include a short exercise to involve learners to look up words in the dictionary. Also, when learners have found words to learn, you can offer them a variety of ways to memorize them better. If we could train students to record their new lexis in a more useful manner, we can do much to help their success in studying English.

   The most efficient way of recording new words is that not only writing the English ones and give equivalents in the first language, as most students do it, or at least write the transcription, but to provide more information to guarantee better remembering. Figure shows an alternative way of making a list of unknown vocabulary.
Another way to memorize the words better is to group words so that a set is learned together. It is more effective than studying unrelated individual words. For example, you can give a student a picture according to the new topic you want to present and a list of words that students are to match with the objects and write them on the picture.

One more helpful way to make the process of learning words is to build a word web (or memory map or mind map, as it is sometimes called) where connections in meaning or use between different words are visually shown in the form of a diagram. This way is shown in figure 2.

![Word web](image)

Fat, healthy, junk, fat, tasty, buy, cook, store, consume
Spicy, expensive, organic, Food
Genetically modified, home made

Overweight, food shop, demand, vegetables, fruit, drinks, bread, meat, fish

Teachers should encourage students to record words they already know, but pay attention to them and write out of the text with a new combination, e.g. close relatives, distant relatives.

Encourage learners to sometimes to reorganize, reclassify, and redesign their memory maps, adding some more new words. This kind of mental work will be very helpful in learning activity.

It happens that both students and teachers may be satisfied with approximate knowledge of vocabulary that of course is not bad and doesn’t prevent communication. But on other hand, it is worth challenging students to improving. They are to know words that best fit with the combination with other words that is they are to learn fixed expressions to avoid making mistakes while speaking (e.g.: you can’t say like this: My sister and her husband are waiting for a baby. The correct way will be: They are expecting a baby).
When a student wants to know the difference between confused words it is better for him to memorize collocations, because there are certain collocations and chunks that one is more likely to fit into than the other. And when a learner wants to make a sentence, knowing typical collocations it will be more of greater practical value than trying to choose between two very similar meanings.

There are many games and activities to practice use collocations and chunks at English lessons. Here are some of them:

**Quick choices**

Choose two or three nouns, e.g. family, relationship and friend that have a number of collocations. A list of different words must be included into a list: distant, close, large, small, warm, start, nuclear, extended, close-knit, immediate, working, for, develop, establish, make. Teacher tells students that he will read out the list item by item and they must indicate which of two or three words are best collocate, or if the item goes with more than one word. Teacher can individually decide how students will indicate their choices. Whether they will write their answers in a list, or they will call out their choice of words; physical ways, e.g. students point at the words written on wall notices; action ways, e.g. designate different parts of the room for different words and students run to the right part of the room (or between parts).

**Guess the collocation**

Divide the class into three or more teams. In each team, students are given a common word (e.g. travel) and are to prepare a list of five common collocations (wonderful, nice, long, short, agent, business, arrangements, etc.). Each team has a different starter word. When everyone is ready, students read from their list one item at a time and the other try to guess the original word. If the word is guessed immediately on the first clue, both teams (list-makers and word-guessers) get high number of marks; for each extra word students get additional point. This scoring scheme encourages list-makers to find the most likely and distinctive collocation.

**Chunk watching**

Students work in small groups (three/four students). The teacher gives them a topic to talk about and they discuss it for some minutes in a natural way. One student sits aside and does not participate in the talk. He or she is just listening to those who are speaking and taking notes of as many “chunks” as he or she can catch. At the end of the time, the listener shows her or his list to the speakers and they go through and discuss the items.

Language practice activities are arguably the most important part of any grammar lesson. Although teachers often spend a lot of time on “input” stages – for example, in giving explanations – the real learning experience is when learners try to use the language themselves.

In order to give students intensive oral or written practice of specific language points, you can use activities carefully designed to restrict the language needed and require the use of English items. Restricted output activities are defined by their focus on (a) limited option for use of the language; (b) limited options for communication; (c) a focus on accuracy. Typical restricted activities are oral drills, written exercises, elicited dialogues, and grammar practice activities.
Drills are necessary to use as it seems reasonably clear from day-to-day experience that we become better at doing certain things through practice. Drilling is important for “getting your tongue around it” problems [5]. They are also the one which can be most productively demanding on accuracy.

When students speak English, the teacher is listening attentively. Try to give precise, honest feedback rather than praise them more. In case the teacher overpraises students the latter will find the activity boring and dull. There is little use of doing a drill if the teacher and students are prepared to accept sloppy of half-good production. Honest feedback is important.

Literacy principles
To be more effective literacy trainer it is necessary to abandon the notion that there is one correct way to do things, and that way is to be found in the standard course books. If you devise your own methods and your own content, based upon local needs, interests, characteristics and conditions, (functional) your approach will be more meaningful to both you and learners. the principles listed here rather than copy what others have done: both content and method.

The principle invoked by orthodoxy is "This is the way it has always been done," or "This is the ‘proper’ way to do it," is merely that it is based upon tradition rather than on function. In your search for identifying words and sentences that are immediately useful, you must abandon standard text books which list words and sentences that may have been relevant to other communities.

As for methods of learning, most of those have been devised for school children.

Look at the module on training methods. It is aimed at training mobilisers. Many of the principles listed in it are applicable here. Avoid setting up an imitation school. Emphasize "doing" rather than "listening" as the most important way of learning. Encourage discovery rather than conformity. Encourage exploration rather than discipline.

Let your learners struggle a little bit; what they learn they will memorize better. Do not force them to struggle so hard that they will give up; but find ways to let them say, "We did it ourselves."

Develop Your Own Methods and Content Based on Empowerment Principles:
The two main questions you must ask when planning, devising or designing a literacy curricula, are "What is to be taught (content)?" and "How is it to be taught (method)?"

The content of your training should be words, phrases and sentences that are relevant to the situation of the students. Knowing how to write the names and prices of various sea fish may be very relevant to people in a community next to the ocean which is mainly engaged in fishing, but not so useful to a nomadic cattle community on the savannah. That community would be more interested in names of different kinds of camels or cattle, depending upon what is in their herds. Residents of an urban slum would be interested in local markets, costs of local transport, or inexpensive entertainment, rather than the details of either fishing or herding.

Since we all learn better by doing than listening, find ways to get your students to participate in an activity in identifying words that are most relevant to their lives and conditions.
In a farming community, for example, a good exercise, with four to eight participants, might be to make a field trip to the farm where agricultural products are brought in and sold, and prepare a list of different names of vegetables, meat, sizes, and prices. This could be made into a poster or booklet by the group, and it could have obviously practical uses. Use your imagination.

An urban group might make a different type of field trip, identifying different signs: store front signs, traffic signs, directional signs, street name signs.

Note that the method here is a form of "doing," where the participants participate in doing something practical or useful, rather than listening to lecture or watching a presentation. As in the gym, exercise (doing) produces strength.

Comfortable learning environment:

We must make sure we do not give them the impression, by our body movements, tone of voice, or phrasing of our sentences, that we are somehow better (senior, superior, more powerful) than they are. To do so will "turn them off" (discourage them) so that we might lose them, and fail in teaching literacy.

Children are learning many more things better than the subject matter; they are learning about power, about getting along in the world, about community, and how to discipline their random desires. Much of the effort, time and thought of the teacher at school is spent to ensure the children are well behaved, and that they listen to the teacher.

When we do things, like teaching, we often use models of behaviour. Sometimes we deliberately obtain these models from role models, older or other people we respect and consciously want to emulate. Other times we are not even conscious that we are using models, and just do things that intuitively seem "right" to do. These are based upon our and other people's assumptions about what is, and what we should do.

There is a danger, therefore, if our only experience with learning, and especially with learning how to read and to write, is school. The danger is that we may be using school as our only source of models for teaching literacy.

We need to make an effort to recall how things are done at school, and carefully discard those things which are not appropriate to adults, and those things which will hinder adults from learning literacy. These include but are not limited to: insisting upon discipline, ordering students about, assuming that the teacher is always right, acting as fountains of wisdom and knowledge.

In some, but not all, schools, teachers insult students in front of other students, they verbally punish students, they speak in an arrogant and superior manner to students, they criticise students, and they belittle students. Consider alternative ways of interacting with the literacy participants. Do not hold classes; instead hold workshops for discussing suggestions and planning activities, and organise field trips and projects for carrying out those activities. The pattern suggested here is to have two types of sessions.

The first kind would be like a meeting. It should not be called a class, although you may be using a classroom as a venue. A "meeting" can be used to identify needs, to identify levels of literacy already attained by the participants, to generate ideas for learning projects, to plan those project, and to follow up with activities after the field trips for those projects.
The second kind of session would be a "field trip" or "project" that the participants designed in a group in the first kind of session. This could be a trip to the shore to write names and prices of agricultural products as they are brought in. It could be a trip to a market to do the same with items sold in the marketplace. It could be a trip to a cattle farm to identify cattle. It could be a trip to a farm to identify crops. It could be a trip to a kitchen to identify utensils or recipes. It could be a trip to a building site to identify tools, workers or the building process.

Encourage your participants to be creative, remembering that the content should be appropriate to their situations.

All of this requires a high degree of participation among your participants. Their "doing" of these things – ie planning, implementing, and following up of an activity (field trip, project) – is the effort (they must make) needed to empower them. Do not make decisions for them; when they make decisions, they become stronger in making decisions. They become more empowered, stronger.

Your participants are not pupils and are not children; they are equals and partners in an honourable and challenging endeavour. Never forget that, and always behave towards them like that.

Teachers should respect their students. Consider the life experiences of a person who can not read and write. That person may have been teased and/or insulted for not knowing how to read and write in English. She or he may be tempted to hide her/his illiteracy. By attending your workshops and field trips, she or he is admitting to the world that she or he can not read or write. If she or he does not find rewards and benefits in attending, and is not respected when attending, s/he will drop out. It takes courage, therefore, to attend your literacy sessions, and you would be wise to acknowledge and praise that courage.

Again, you must consciously avoid behaviours that may be practised in school towards pupils, and respect your participants. Also insist on their respecting each other and each themselves. Build self respect.

You should not only respect every participant, you should go out of your way to ensure that every participant knows you respect her or him.

Learning by Doing is more effective than learning by watching or listening:

We learn skills in many ways, listening to lectures, listening to recordings, watching videos and films, watching live presentations or performances, and by doing. See the training methods module. Many methods that are effective for training mobilisers are also effective for training in literacy.

Note that "doing" covers a wide range of activities, from practice and simulation sessions in the class room, through supervised and unsupervised activities in the field. Generating interesting, relevant and useful ways for the participants to learn by doing is an important responsibility for teachers. Planning such sessions will benefit by involving students in designing and setting them up.

For example. You do not have classroom teaching. You have planning sessions and field trips. In the planning sessions you have done a needs assessment with the participants and it is a cattle farm. As a group, you decide on a project to prepare a booklet listing all the types of cattle, and their sizes, and their prices, brought in to the village. You set aside two hours for a field trip and, as a group, go to the farm where
the animals are brought in, and write down the names of the meat and their prices. You take the list back to the planning room, and from the list, you prepare a booklet listing all the prices. The members of the group are given an opportunity to write the name or some fish, and their prices, thus having practical experience in writing, with a meaningful purpose in doing so. You use the booklet with each participant in reading the list.

In the various phases of the project, you identify how recording and reporting are helped by writing and reading, and how the participants are doing it, not you.

Teachers should not aim for high levels of sophisticated literacy:
To be highly literate, able to analyse complicated grammar, sure of spelling, able to appreciate fine poetry and prose, may be a nice end in itself. Surely if one of two participants indicate a desire to reach that level, you encourage them to find ways to do so. Your literacy programme, however, should not aim for such goals.

You are not teaching literacy for the sake of members becoming literate. You are helping a community to become more empowered by allowing its members to do practical things in and by reading and writing in English.

Perfectly correct spelling or grammar are not necessary. The ability to identify commonly used words that are written down, and the ability to make symbols on paper that can be read by others—that is the level of literacy towards which you strive. An interesting example of presentation is the popular situational presentation, in which language is introduced via a context that the teacher has created. The teacher can use different visual aids to present any situation and ask learners to tell about what they see. It is better to use interactive board, where pictures can be shown one by one. So, it would be effective to involve all students of the group into this activity that can be both oral and written.

Limit your topics to those which are immediate, relevant. Some individuals may go on to discover those joys (encourage them to do so), but not in your literacy programme.

Do not worry if your participants can not spell correctly or can not write with correct English grammar. If you can understand what they intend when they write a word, then they have succeeded. Praise them for that.

Let them seek perfection elsewhere.

Teachers should pursue practical communication and not only just grammar accuracy.

The two main practical purposes of writing are (1) recording and (2) reporting. Both those can be done verbally, but you can demonstrate how participants can be more accurate and easy when using the written word. See the module on monitoring. There are advantages to written recording and reporting.

If you and your participants make a field trip to the market and write down the names of different kinds of products and the prices for each, you are making a record. A month later, if you look again at prices, you have an accurate record of the prices as they were the first time. It is more reliable than memory. If you take the booklet or poster listing the names of agricultural products and their prices, and forward that to someone who was not with the group on the field trip, then you are making a written report.
Likewise, it is more reliable than memory. That reliability is a practical and useful result of writing and reading.

That is why that field trip would be more relevant to a rural community. To be practical, you must first (and best if it were done as a group task with the participants) make an assessment of what topics are most relevant to the lives of the participants.

They will be more likely to see the value of learning how to write and read in the target language, and they will be more likely to retain what they learn.

Combine Written Words with Simple Pictures:

You learned to identify pictures, perhaps unconsciously, as part of your learning to read. If you are literate – and you are if you are reading this – you may be surprised to discover that many illiterate people can not identify line drawings like the ones used throughout this web site.

One project, for example, would be to prepare a booklet, or a set of posters, where a commonly used and well known object, appropriate to the specific community, is drawn as a sketch by the participants, and a written word, identifying the same object, is written below it.

The word "numeracy" is not often found in dictionaries. It means to have the elementary skills needed to recognize numbers, to write them, and to use them for counting and measuring.

Many individuals who have not learned to read and write prose, have somehow learned basic numeracy. This is good, and should be used as a foundation for learning how to read and write. Include numbers in your literacy programme. Do not teach arithmetic; teach recognition of numbers, and how to write, pronounce them.

What is learned must be practical, immediate, and useful:

There are many similarities (to learning literacy) with the aural method of learning an oral language, described in another document of this site: Aural.

One important element these methods share is that what is learned should not be learned by rote and in isolation from every day activities. If you are thirsty, learn how to say "Give me water," and it will stick better (be retained). Especially if, by saying it, someone gives you a glass of water. What about learning to write the sentence, "Give me water," and by doing so you receive a glass of water?

Positive reinforcement.

Learning should be existential. That is why you, as a mobiliser, should become very knowledgeable about the community, and what things are important to its members. Those things should be the basis for generating content in the learning projects that you organise.

Learn and use what is useful and interesting in the specific area of future profession of learners:

First you must learn much about the professional interests, and the things and activities that are most essential in it. Then you must draw your participants into doing the same thing, becoming more conscious of the details of what is happening around them.

When they are learning basic literacy, they should not be burdened with a large vocabulary, or with learning the shapes of a large number of characters in the
alphabets you are using. You must therefore be selective, and should select words that identify things that are most commonly used by them.

The vocabulary, the content of your literacy programme, needs to be functional. That means it must be practical and relevant. That differs from community to community. That is why you, as a mobiliser, needs to be very familiar with the details of daily life to plan a literacy programme. You do not do it yourself; you draw it out of the participants — but you need to know what to draw out of the participants.

Avoid Curricula (Content) borrowed from traditional schooling — make your own:

It is so tempting, especially when you are just starting out to run a literacy programme, to borrow an elementary reading book from a nearby school, and start teaching words out of it

Be strong; avoid this approach.

Look carefully at such a book. What are the words in it? How many of them relate to what is important to your participants?

Although many efforts are now being made to make national text books more relevant to national images and ideas, no text book can reflect the wide variety of activities, things and ideas throughout the nation; communities differ so much from each other. Furthermore, making up your own vocabulary lists, as a group activity with your participants, helps them in becoming more empowered, and helps them to identify more closely with the chosen words (i.e. that they have chosen).

The criteria for your methods and content should not be whether they are orthodox or unorthodox, but whether they genuinely cause the number of literate people in the community to increase.

In a school setting, it is common to teach the whole alphabet to the pupils. But what is an alphabet? It is a collection of characters, each with a different shape, and each representing a different sound or set of sounds.

The alphabet and the letters in it do not represent anything practical or useful in the lives of your literacy participants. They are awkward to memorise, and they are not directly connected to daily life.

Do not teach the alphabet. Teach only those letters in it which are in the words you have chosen as practical and useful to learn (differing from community to community, and differing between various groups in the same community). Eventually, perhaps the literacy participants will learn every letter of the alphabet, or at least all of those to be used.

And what is poetry? The poetry taught in schools has been screened to be "suitable" for pupils. It is usually very sophisticated, and always highly impractical. What practical use would a poem be to illiterates learning basic literacy? What about other forms of literature? Yes, these may be pleasurable to read — at least for some people. If they are not immediately practical, relevant and useful to your literacy participants, do not teach them in your programme.

If one of the participants shows interest, give encouragement and support, and suggest that they study the poetry, drama, prose or other literate arts, in other settings.

See the module on participatory management: Positive Attitude. It explains that, when we criticise someone, they will not easily or automatically correct a mistake;
they will put more effort on defending it, and on becoming less willing to follow your leadership. This principle, which is applied there to managing staff and volunteers, also applies here to leading participants towards literacy.

Expect your literacy participants to make mistakes; it is an important human characteristic. How you respond to their mistakes will make a big difference to how well they will earn literacy from you. Stay calm, be tolerant, focus on the achievements.

Let us use a hypothetical example. Pretend that one of your literacy participants was trying to write: "The cat sat." Perhaps they have printed out: "The kat sot." Acknowledge that the participant has made progress; it is indeed a very difficult job to get even that far. Let your trainee know that more people will recognise the sat in the sentence if she or he wrote: "sat." (Do not even mention the "k" in "kat").

In general, the pattern of response you should make is: "Very good, and you can make it even better by ..." (the dot, dot, dot, differs according to what improvement you are suggesting). Without criticising, you can suggest an improvement.

In a rare case, the trainee might ask outright, "Is ‘sot’ wrong?" In basic literacy training, there is nothing that is wrong. Tell him or her that. It is merely that more people will understand what you want to say if you write it "sat" rather than "sot."

Praise achievements. Do not use superficial, insincere praise. Acknowledge truthfully the achievements. It is no easy thing to recognise a character, and to be able to print it so that others will also recognise it. That is a big achievement.

Rather than criticise to say something is wrong, gently point how something can be improved. See Sandwich: you sandwich (insert) the suggestion for improvement (not acriticism) in between praises (the bread).

An important slogan in management training is, "You do not have to be bad to get better." Remember that your trainees will make mistakes; do not point out the mistakes, show them that they are not bad and that they can get better.

Give opportunities to participants to teach what they want to learn:
You may have noticed it. When we learn something, and then we must teach it, we learn it better. We retain it longer. We understand it more deeply. By making an effort to teach it to someone else, we help ourselves to understand more about something.

Put this phenomena into the methodology of your literacy programme. Find ways for your literacy participants to teach, demonstrate, or illustrate the things they are learning. Their fellow participants can temporarily become their clients. Perhaps it is something elementary such as how to make the shape of a letter such as "P." Perhaps it is something related to a field trip of project, such as how to set up a pamphlet that will list names of fish and their sizes and prices.

If you are using these documents to help train mobilisers in setting up a literacy programme, give the participant mobilisers tasks of teaching each other the principles of practical and functional literacy. See Training Methods.

Whether your participants are literacy trainees, or mobiliser trainees, the principle of "learning by doing" can (and should) be extended to finding ways of the participants to teach others the skills and principles that they are learning. When they do, they will learn better.
Guide learners into the awe and enjoyment of discovery:

Your students will not have you forever to teach them everything they will want or need to know about reading and writing. It would be productive, therefore, if you can prepare them to continue to teach themselves, and to explore the joys of seeking to learn more.

There is no "once-and-for-all" in functional literacy. People can become more and more literate, or they can stop the process at any level. You have started them off at the most elementary level. That should be a foundation for them to continue learning more (such as spelling and grammar which should not have been an important part of your curriculum).

One way of improving learners skills that seems to be successful is to see if students want to organise themselves into a reading/speaking English club or association out of class time. As a club, they would have their own executive, make decisions as to what they wanted to do, and how they would govern themselves. They might choose to invite volunteers, or other representatives of native speakers to work with them and make a presentation or two on a specific topic. They may grow into a book review club, or a newspaper reading club, depending upon how well they have learned to read, and at what level.

When you are showing literacy participants for the first time how certain squiggles of pen on a paper can communicate meaning, they will likely display joy and awe that this can be done. That is a good time to suggest that the new things to discover are endless, and that they can be learning more new things until the ends of their lives – if they so choose.

If you encourage a sense of wonder and awe in the joy of learning, you will have done a great service to the participant – and to the community because the community becomes more empowered as more of its members become more literate.

If a student leaves school without the ability to use the target language in any of the life situations, it pales compared to the consequences of a one not being able to read their credit card agreement.

Why does that not seem more obvious to people who wield power over the directions of our school curriculum?

Teach basic day-to-day functional document interpretation. That’s not for English teachers who teach reading, is it?

When we teach reading . A functional illiterate, on the other hand, is someone who may have spent up to 12 years in public schools and learned to recognize some words as whole configurations, like Chinese characters, but is incapable of decoding the written language.

Wikipedia states: “A useful distinction can be made between pure illiteracy and functional illiteracy. Purely illiterate persons cannot read or write in any capacity, for all practical purposes. In contrast, functionally illiterate persons can read and possibly write simple sentences with a limited vocabulary, but cannot read or write well enough to deal with the everyday requirements of life in their own society.”

Study of the target language must start from primary classes as according to the research in the field of early learning, children are able to learn to speak, read and write not only his own language but one of the foreign languages.
Pupil makes sure that foreign language classes are classes when he or she will have an opportunity to communicate in the target language. Students learn communication techniques, master speech etiquette, strategy and tactics of the dialogue and group communication, learn to solve a variety of communicative tasks to be speech partners.

Consequently, the conditions for improving communication culture of each student. And if it means that his personal success (otherwise and should not be), then the culture of communication, self communicating with the teacher and fellow students becomes his personal value. There is a motif that "that is shifted to the target," that is, a common goal of mastering foreign languages.

The path to the personal sense of student satisfaction lies through his diverse interests. Personality-concept of orientation in terms of content affects all spheres of life, all of reality, fed through the prism of issues and subjects of discussion, and in situations of moral relations. Thus, the student passes a second-encompassing school life where he finds one that fits his personal interests, whether it interests related to his hobby or future profession.

Pupil gradually realizes (and the teacher helps him in this), that all the work projected on a more long-term results that affect the appearance of personal meaning in learning activities. Such, for example, the results of the development of thought, culture, intellectuals, etc. The development of thinking is carried out mainly by addressing the increasingly complex tasks of different levels speech thinking problematic.

Pupil feels that they performed tasks are making a significant contribution to the culture of mental labor. He has developed the ability to use dictionaries, reference books, reminders for rational implementation of educational tasks. All this teaches us to work independently, a prerequisite for the development of the need for self-education.

Students understand that the mastery of a foreign language - it's always work, mental and physical, systematic and persistent. Working actively in class regularly and faithfully fulfilling their homework, the student develops the habit of work, it is difficult to overestimate.

The lesson was and still is the main element of the educational process. The most important issue of concern to all teachers, is to increase the effectiveness of the lesson as the main form of training and education of students. The reasons for the fall of the level of students' knowledge of a foreign language is, without a doubt, the imperfection of provisioning methodology lesson, the student is a passive viewer, and central point of the monologue of the teacher. The so-called poll of some more advanced students is also not particularly active individual students class, although it is known that the lesson of a foreign language provides for communication in the classroom. We are talking about the ability of teachers to communicate with their students in a foreign language in such a way as to make every lesson interesting and informative. On the ability of teachers to communicate with students in the classroom and outside of it depends moral and psychological climate in the classroom, students' assimilation of spiritual values and moral standards, passion for science, the mood of
teachers and students, their mental health, the level of individual creative development.

Discipline in the modern educational process acts as the subject of self-development and a variety of activities. To implement the learner-centered approach to teaching and teacher education students must learn to stimulate the activity of students, to inspire them to not only understand what was expected of them, but took the position of the teacher, agreed with her, could put forward their own ideas, defend their opinions and to act as full partners in communication.

Given all the above, note that a positive change in many students' attitudes to learning can be a creative approach to teacher training and teach. The proposed lower class continues to study traditional topics "Family affairs" non-traditional manner, so as to the organization of the lesson involved every student and teacher activities inherent creative nature. Such a student-centered approach to the lesson allows students to encourage the revitalization of mental activity of original creation to the latent possibilities of each student, making it a co-author in the design of the lesson. Presented a lesson plan can be recommended for use as an English teacher in high school or a freshman language high school in the course of the study of educational topics "Family affairs".

Let's consider how this can be introduced and implemented into teaching process on the example of one lesson.

Theme of the lesson: Love makes the world better.

Integrated Purpose: To establish and develop the skills and abilities of speech activity, a focus on students mastering the language aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, phonetics, learning to communicate in a foreign language.

Comprehensive lesson objectives: developing, cognitive, formation of linguistic thought.

Educational aim: developing a culture of thinking, communication and feelings.

Educational methods Lesson plan: repetition and intensification of foreign language material.

Type of lesson: a lesson to consolidate the material under study and development of practical skills.

Facilities lesson: Using TME, demonstrative materials, a poster with pictures of the family, crayons, chocolate dragees or any other candy.

I step tutorial. Communicative workout. It is designed to provide an emotional connection, openness, confidence in the relationship, because is based on a series of special issues of health, mood, about the affairs of the family. The teacher should ask questions so that they do not occur, and the responses of students should be varied and should not be duplicated. Next, the teacher finds out what day and month of the year. Students should be aware of the origin of the word, for example, in October or any other month, and share information with their classmates. Then you can see how they prepared their homework, asking who of famous people was born on this day, and what important events occurred on this day in history. This type of setting allows you to test self-training students for the lesson, and allows them to actively participate in the discussion of the events, asking questions and being guided in a variety of specific issues.
II phase of the lesson. Familiarize students with the lesson, phonetic warm-up. In the center of the board is the keyword lesson "LOVE", under the title "What does love mean?". It will launch the whole scheme, which in the lesson will gradually take shape. Along the way, there is an accumulation of vocabulary related to the realization of such great values as love. Attention is invited pupils grammar chants called "Mutual admiration". Drawing attention to the accent and rhythm, the students listen to chants first time.

MUTUAL ADMIRATION.

She thinks he's the best.
She thinks he's the greatest.
She thinks he's the smartest man in the world.

He thinks she's the nicest.
He thinks she's the brightest.
He thinks she's the kindest woman in the world.
She thinks he's the most remarkable man in the whole wide world, in the whole wide world.
He thinks she's the most wonderful woman in the whole wide world.

The teacher draws attention to the adjectives, which are abundant in the text. He asked to name all the superlatives and adjectives to form a chain of positive and comparative degree. Pupils listen to the tape for the second time, saying the words of the announcer. You can ask students to work in groups on pronunciation. You should also ask the question, when people say to each other such words, especially in superlatives. From the responses of students to be charting presented in the beginning of the lesson, the teacher crayons enter every word in this table. We should pay attention to the fact that a keyword is a noun, therefore, it is necessary to call the words that belong only to this part of the speech. These might include such words as: "admiration", "respect", "romantic relation", "passion".

III phase of the lesson. Work on the text.
The teacher encourages students to read the contents of the proposed text below.
WHAT DOES LOVE MEAN?
What do you first think of when you hear the word "love"? Having a girlfriend or boyfriend?
There are many kinds of love. Love between parents and children, love within families, between friends, for example.

When a baby is born, parents love it. How do they show this? They feed it, keep it warm, keep it away from danger. This is love. Caring for someone, being helpful, being friendly, being tolerant. Everybody needs love. This poem is about people who need love. But ...

After the introductory reading teacher should ask questions that would test the extent to which the text was understood by students. It is necessary to consider what might be love, to whom it can be tested. Should not be limited to the information
gleaned from the text. The result of the discussion supports the work of the scheme and its complement the words "help", "tolerance" and "friendship".

As the meaning of the word "love" is very extensive, you should pay attention to one text. This poem "Sympathy". Students read new words, and then the whole poem, translate it and answer questions.

SYMPATHY
Now when you climb into your bed tonight,
And when you lock and bolt the door,
Just think of those out in the cold and dark
'Cause there's not enough love to go round.
And sympathy is what we need my friend,
And sympathy is what we need my friend,
'Cause there's not enough love to go round.
No, there's not enough love to go round.
Now half the world buns the other half,
And half the world has all the food,
And half the world lies down and quietly starves
'Cause there's not enough love to go round.
And sympathy is what we need my friend.

Do you agree with verse three? Are there any people "those out in the cold and dark"? Can we do anything to help them? If everyone loves or likes everyone else, does the world get better?

IV phase of the lesson. Letter. At this stage, the lesson may be offered to students to write a poem of their own love object, using the proposed model below.

Poets and lyricists have always been inspired by love. The Scottish poet Robert Burns wrote "My love is like a red, red rose", and Shakespeare wrote "The course of true love never did run smooth". The Beatles sang "She loves you, yeah yeah yeah". Now you have a chance to join the long list of poets who have written poems about love. Here is a poem that you can complete yourself! All you have to do is insert some words and phrases of your own, following the guide. Try to be as poetic and romantic as you can!

For (name)
When I look into your eyes
I see (colour) (season) skies.
When I see you walking past
My (part of the body) starts (verb) fast.
You are like sunshine in the (opposite of sun-shine),
The (noun) that soothes the pain.
I love the way you (action)
And the (noun) that you wear.
Your (noun) is like (noun)
Your lips taste like (drink).
You make me (verb or adjective), you make me (verb or adjective).
Please say you'll be mine.
V phase of the lesson. Group work. To discuss various issues relating to the theme "Family Matters" and what takes place in the family of love, should be invited to the next type of job. The teacher gives students the attention of pre-prepared a poster with pictures of the same family. Photos must show the following: the composition of the family, a place where the family lives, what it owns, what are the immediate and extended family. The class is divided into groups of four or five people that discuss these issues.

Look at the photographs of the family. The house and the objects they own tell you a lot about their lives and personalities. In groups think about the subjects below. Use them to speak about the family and the place where they live. Use your imagination! Names: Who are they? Who is the youngest member of the family (the baby of the family)? Who is the eldest in their family? How old are they? Is there an adopted child in the family? Who is it?

Work: Do the parents work? What does father do? What is mother?

Place: What country do they live in? Where are they from? Is it a quite village or a busy city? Do they live in a cottage or in a block of flats? What is there address? What is there telephone number?

School: What kind of school do the children go to? What are their favourite subjects? Do they go in for sports? What kinds of sport are they good at?

Holidays: Where do they like to go? What do they do on holidays?

Relations: Do they look like a happy family? Do they spend a lot of time together? Do they love each other? What does the word "love" mean to them?

Social life: Do they have lots of friends? Do they like to stay at home or go out? Do they enjoy inviting friends and having home parties?

Money: Is money a problem? What do they like to spend their money on? What things do they own? Do they spend much on their hobbies?

After the group discussion is finished, you can invite students to relax a little and treat them candy, cookies or chocolate dragees, by their number according to taste. After the guys rested and tried to treat it is necessary to offer everyone in the chain to begin the story of this family and say, at least as many proposals as they took the candy.

VI phase of the lesson. The final part of the lesson, summing up the message and explanation of homework. As a work at home can offer students the following:

Read a love letter. After reading it, guess the secret of this letter.

THE LOVE LETTER.
The great love I said I had for you
is gone, and I find my dislike for you,
I do not even like the way you look;
the one thing I want to do is to
look the other way. I never wanted to
marry you. Our last conversation
was very dull and in no way has
made me anxious to see you again.
You think only of yourself.
If we were married I know that I would find
Generally speaking, what skills are considered to be functional skills?

The DES defined functional skills as: ‘the core elements of English that provide an individual with the essential knowledge level, competences that will enable them to operate confidently and effectively and independently in life and at work.’

The implications for teaching and learning come to be significant and are to be introduced gradually and thoughtfully, but they do not threaten aspects of existing good practice. Helping learners to become more ‘functional’ is supported by existing practices including:

- learning through application
- learner-centred approaches
- active learning and a problem-centred approach
- partnership learning
- assessment for learning.

Another reasonable question arises. Are functional skills really necessary to be developed? Why? According to the National plan ‘Employers and educators have identified these skills as vital for enabling young people and adults to have the practical skills to succeed in further learning, employment and life in the modern society.’

The National Plan clarifies that the "functional literacy" term first appeared in the late 60s of last century in UNESCO documents and later became an everyday term of researches. Functional literacy in the broadest definition serves as a means of social orientation of the individual, which integrates education (primarily general education) with a multi-faceted human activity.

One of the most well-known international assessment studies based on the concept of functional literacy, is the international assessment program of academic achievements of 15-year-old students (Program for International Student Assessment - PISA), conducted under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In 2009, Kazakhstan participated in the study of PISA for the first time. According to the results, the percentage of Kazakhstani students who are ready to do certain task is as follows:

1) to use adequately more or less complex educational texts and use them to navigate in everyday situations is 5% of the reading literacy research participants (average for OECD countries - 28.6%);

2) to work effectively with specific models for specific situations, to develop and integrate different tasks is 4.2% of the mathematical literacy research participants (the average for OECD countries - 16% of participants);

3) to work effectively with a situation that requires to draw conclusions about the role of science, select and integrate explanations from different scientific disciplines and apply those explanations directly to aspects of life situations, is 3.6% of the scientific literacy research participants (the average for OECD countries - 20.5%).
At the same time in the research of TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, international comparative monitoring of quality of mathematics and science education) Kazakh school students demonstrate good results.

The purpose of the National Plan is to create conditions for the development of functional literacy of school students of Kazakhstan. The National Plan identifies the following goals:

- to study national and international practice of developing functional literacy of students;
- to define mechanisms to implementing measures for the development of functional literacy of students;
- to ensure the modernization of educational content: standards, curriculum and programs;
- to work out training and methodological support of educational process;
- to create an assessment system to monitor the quality of students’ knowledge;
- to strengthen material-technical base of schools and institutions of further education.

Therefore, to develop and improve functional literacy of schoolchildren in English is necessary to do much not only at classes, but involve them in extra classes activity.

Facilitators of functional literacy

The facilitators of functional literacy in our school system will therefore include:-

- Availability of standard class rooms
- Availability of a comfortable staff room
- Availability of integrated science laboratories
- Availability of well equipped introductory technology laboratories
- Availability of computer laboratories for ICT (information and communication technology)
- Availability of adequate number of teachers
- Availability of well qualified and experienced teachers
- Availability of well equipped libraries

A few interviews with the staff of the schools management board and the state universal basic education in Owerri revealed that all the facilitators above are inadequate in all the Junior secondary school. Which means a lot of work still needed to be done by the government of Imo State and the state universal basic education. Also the government has promised free universal basic education and free books, which means that books will be bought for the pupils or the students by the government. To what extent is it achieved? The real situation on ground is that books are not bought for the students. Most parents have relaxed and are not buying books for their children. Without relevant and approved text books, how can functional literacy be realized. It is like going to farm without farm implements.

The available classroom in the junior secondary school are inadequate, hence a single class that should be 25 to 30 students takes about 60 to 80 students. Some students stay outside the classroom, by the widow side. Most class rooms do not have
window nor ceiling and in some cases the roofs are leaking. The classrooms are not comfortable for learning purposes.

Laboratories like the introductory technology laboratory and science laboratory are not existing. Coupled with the lack of technical teachers. Imo State has no department of technical education in the universities. Hence teachers of introductory technology are not being produced in the state this is the major reason for lack of technical Teachers in the state.

The use of teaching aid and literacy materials are not being maximized. Information and communication technology through ICT programmes is lacking. Computer literacy is only available in a few schools.

The teachers in primary and junior secondary school do not have adequate remuneration, regular payment and good welfare facilitate to encourage and motivate them to put in their best. Because, salary is not regular most teachers look for a second job or private practice to meet up with challenges of life.

Experts in several countries give different interpretation to the phenomenon. A US national commission report gives following details: This means a large number of these have no several intellectual skills that could be expected from them: make conclusions from a text, write the biography correctly and do simple mathematical calculations.

By training children to read thoughtfully and regularly it is possible to get rid of functional illiteracy that draws back a person and the society as a whole. If this advice is not realized it will be a problematic for students to pass the examinations to enter the philology faculty owing to making inadmissible orthographic and stylist mistakes in essay.

Lyudmila Ilyushina says: “It is quite dangerous that children do not read much. This impoverishes the growing generation. This is disastrous for a cultured person. If a person is linguistically educated he thinks thoroughly about the origin of a word and what words are close to its meaning and write the word correctly even he does not know the spelling correctly. Lingual feeling helps avoiding one or the other mistake. To this end there is a need for reading attentively and as much as possible. In fact, one must read attentively trying to grasp the meaning of words and scrutinize words and syntactical construction.

Successful teaching primarily is based on teacher’s attitude to work, ability to organize learning atmosphere. In general, many factors constitute the distinctive friendly atmosphere in the classroom. On the other hand, “friendly atmosphere” doesn’t only mean ‘being generally friendly to students’ as a much wider definition should be given involving more aspects to do with the quality of how teacher and learners relate [8]. Undoubtedly, positive learning atmosphere is a good start but still it is more crucial to master all methods of successful teaching.

To gain good relationships within the classroom and communication between people be more open and honest a teacher should have three qualities: respect (a positive and non-judgmental regard for another person), empathy (being able to see things from the other person’s perspective, as if looking through their eyes) and authenticity (being oneself without hiding behind job titles, roles or masks). The educational climate becomes positive, forward looking and supportive.
There are obviously many ways of teaching, and part of the enjoyment of being a student in a good classroom is in sharing the unique personal identity, style, skills and techniques that a teacher brings to a lesson. According to Adrian Underhill, there are three broad categories of teaching styles: the explainer, the involver, the enabler. And of course, one cannot categorise all teaching under three headings, many teachers will find elements of each category that are true of them, or that they combine these categories depending on the day, the class and the aims of a lesson. The most beneficial way of teaching is the third one as the teacher knows about the subject matter and about methodology, but also has an awareness of how individuals and groups are thinking and feeling within her class. She actively responds to this in her planning and methods and in building effective working relationships and a good classroom atmosphere. Her own personality and attitude are in active encouragement to this learning. Many teachers are eager to move from ‘explainer’ and become ‘involver’ then ‘enabler’. The aim of this article is to show ideas, options and starting points that may be helpful.

We’ll focus on improving writing skills as the role of it in our life has changed quite dramatically. With growing popularity of e-mail, web forums, Internet messenger services and text messaging, when people can instantly communicate across the world and use a little picture of cartoon to express their attitude to something written by their friends thus the need for longer, formal written work seems to be less important than it used to be. Though there may be some reasons to involve students into this kind of activity:

− Many students have specific needs that require them to work on writing skills: academic study both at home and abroad (trying to get scholarships under the programme Bolashak, Nazarbayev university etc.), examination preparation and Business English are three common areas where written work is still very important.
− Writing involves a different kind of mental process. There is more time to think, to reflect, to prepare, to rehearse, to make mistakes and to find alternative and better solutions.

Many teachers struggle the questions whether it is possible to teach the ‘skill of writing’, what is the best way to do it. For many of them the answer is to mainly set a writing task, leaving the students to do it (perhaps as homework) then collecting it in and marking it. However, there are certain useful tips for them to organize effective in-class work on writing. The following preparation steps will definitely help students to become much better writers and feel more confident when they are given writing tasks:

− choose a topic;
− choose a genre;
− get ideas;
− discuss ideas with others to get new perspectives;
− select between ideas;
− make notes, diagrams, etc. to help organize ideas;
− find grammar and lexis suitable for the text;
− do practice exercises on language items that will be useful;
– study sample and model texts similar to what they want to write;
– plan the organization of their text;
– draft a rough text;
– get feedback on content;
– get feedback on language use;
– co-write sections of text in groups;
– make alternations and rewrites;
– write a final version;
– find appropriate readers.

One essential point is that teachers should make sure whether students do understand what they have to write about, try to avoid bland, ‘genre-free text for no particular audience’ writing tasks.

Many students find it very difficult to simply start writing. The longer they fail to write, the harder that first sentence becomes. To overcome this problem ask students to:

– start writing about the topic;
– not stop writing;
– not put their pen down at all;
– -not worry about accuracy;
– write anything if they can’t think of what to write; not stop to go back and read what they have written;
– keep writing till you stop them (length of the activity is up to the teacher to decide, actually it is appropriate for your group).

At the end, they will have a page or more of writing. Much of it will be nonsense! But there will also be some good ideas and ways of saying that are well worth retrieving. Give them some time for proof-reading, asking to be ruthless and cross out most of the writing leaving only reasonable points. Then they can use them as starting point for the new writing. It is very useful task. This approach is called as Fast-writing and is one of the effective ways to start that finding-out process.

Very often students may have a lot of ideas and it comes really difficult for them to organise them. In this case simple strategies will help to find an order for their ideas. Ask them to write ideas on separate cards. Then they arrange these cards in various order until they get a logical sequence that seems to work. Or they can draw a sketch diagram showing how their text will be put together, using lines and arrows to link separate items.

Another useful way is to give samples on the kind of text they are working on and is likely to be viewed as a kind of model on which to base their own work. The purpose of this is that students can study:
– The layout
– The overall message;
– How the items are organised
– Specific phrases and sentences used
– Distinctive grammatical features
The style and tone
The effect on the reader
You can use computer based writing as most students may find it more enjoyable than writing over pen and paper. It can have some advantages such as:
- It is readable (no handwriting jungles)
- Multiple copies can be printed out for as many readers as needed.
- It is much easier to edit, no necessity to rewrite from the beginning.
- It can be e-mailed directly to other students or to you.
These are some tips on how to encourage students to write and become better writers.

In order to make students better readers it is not essential to read and understand every word, of course this strategy is good enough to improve grammar and vocabulary. When teaching students try to give practical oriented reading tasks.

There are 5 types of modest instructional enhancements that teachers can integrate into their teaching to help students become better, more confident readers. But before we turn to these easily adoptable instructional ideas, we juxtapose what we perceive to be common approaches to teaching reading with key elements of comprehensive reading curricula.

American teachers of English Frederica L. Stoller, Neil J Anderson, William Grabe, and Reiko Komiyama state that the typical EFL reading class revolves around a textbook reading passage. The lesson may start out with prereading questions, during which the teacher taps into students’ background knowledge and teaches some key vocabulary. Sometimes students are asked to preview the passage at this point and predict its contents. Students often preview by looking at the title, the photo and caption accompanying the passage, and section headings, if they exit. Students are asked then to read the passage, students always answer a set of postreading comprehension questions (often in true/false, multiple blanks, fill-in-the-blank, or short answer formats); complete vocabulary and/or grammar exercises; and engage in what we might call “personalization” activities in written or spoken form, during which they state an opinion about the reading or connect some aspect of the passage to their own lives.

**Comprehensive reading curricula**

Good readers, at a minimum, need to be able to identify main ideas and details; distinguish between facts and opinions; draw inferences; determine author intent, stance and bias; summarize; synthesize two or more passages; and extend textual information to new tasks, such as class projects, oral presentations and written assignments (Grabe and Stoller 2013). Furthermore, capable readers need a repertoire of reading strategies and ability to apply them in meaningful combinations, at the right times, to achieve their reading goals (Anderson 2009). Skilled readers also need to be able to read fluently, though at different rates for different reading goals, while maintaining comprehension.

A comprehensive reading approach to reading instruction not only gives students plenty of opportunities to read but it also addresses the various aspects of reading that
must coalesce for students to become good readers. In an ideal world, reading curricular built on the following overreaching curricular goals:

1. Extensive practice and exposure to print:

   In comprehensive reading curricular, students read a lot and often. The read level – appropriate texts, with the expectation that reading occurs in every class. Students also read at home, where feasible. Typically students are read at home, where feasible. Typically, students are held accountable for more than answers to post-reading comprehension questions. Ideally, students are also exposed to additional print posted on classroom walls, in school corridors, and in the school library or recourse center.

2. Commitment to building student motivation: In ideal reading curricula, we see a commitment to building student motivation for reading. Motivated students are more engaged as active members of the classroom community and more willing to tackle challenging texts. They also read in and out of class because want to, not because they are told to do so.

3. Attention to reading fluency: Comprehensive reading curricula recognize the importance of reading fluency. A slow reader, who reads one word at a time, simply cannot be a good reader. A commitment to reading – fluency practice – at word, phrase, and passage levels – is the hallmark of curricular that reflect not only the nature of good reading but also respond to the needs of developing readers.

4. Vocabulary buildings: Proficient reading requires a large recognition vocabulary. The most effective reading curricula make a commitment to building and recycling vocabulary.

5. Comprehension skills practice and discussion: The overarching goal of reading, of course, is comprehension. Yet comprehension is not achieved easily. It requires a reasonable knowledge of grammar, the ability to identify main idea, an awareness of discourse structure (i.e. how textual information is organized and the signals that provide cues to that organization), and the use of multiple strategies to achieve comprehension goals (Hedgecock and Ferris 2009; Hudson 2007). Teaching students how to comprehend texts and discussions of how comprehension is achieved are important elements of a wide – ranging reading curriculum.

**Commitment to building student motivation for reading.**

It is not unusual, in many classroom contexts, for students to be assigned passages that are simply to difficult for them, uninteresting, or both. Such reading experiences are frustrating and, sadly, oftentimes demotivate students. Furthermore, many students enter classrooms without many reading role models; thus they do not appreciate the enjoyment associated with reading. The pleasure of reading is even harder for students to achieve when they are overly concerned about their grades and/or competition with each other. Such students’ primary reason for reading could simply become obligation – an extrinsic, rather than *intrinsic*, type of motivation that is unlikely to promote a deeper understanding of text. (Deci and Ryan 1985).

*1. Strive to make required reading passages interesting.* In the ideal reading classroom, student read passages that are of interest to them. When required texts are not inherently interesting to students, teachers should try to connect reading to
students live, experiences, communities, immediate goals, future plans, or to text
read earlier. When such connections are planned before class, making these linkages
during a reading lesson does not require much class time. When a topic is unfamiliar
to students, showing pictures or audiovisual materials related to the topic can
stimulate student interest. Nowadays, the Internet allows us to access video and audio
clips on a wide range of topics. If teachers can locate such materials ahead of time,
showing them in class may only take a few minutes.

2. Give students some degree of choice. Provide student with opportunities to
select some of their own readings, for either in-class reading. Students can be given
the option on choose from among several passages in the mandated textbook, select a
text, of interest, in the library, or choose from among three text resources on the
Internet. Another way to provide choice is to let students choose a select number of
post-reading questions that they want to answer. When students have some degree of
choice, even minimal, it serves as an excellent motivator.

3. Promote cooperation among students. Include opportunities for students to
work together without the pressure of competing with each other. Almost anything
related to reading can be shared in pairs or small groups in a few minutes, including
answers to comprehension questions, reactions to the day’s reading, and reflections
on readings completed at home.

4. Set students up for success. When students experience reading success and
can see their progress, they become motivated and engaged. They also begin to self-
identify as capable target language readers.
Conclusion

A learner who is ‘functional’ in English is able to consider a problem or task, identify the functional English skills that will help them to tackle it, select from the range of skills in which they are competent (or know what help they need and who to ask), and apply them appropriately. This interplay of the four factors means, for example, that tackling a complex problem in a situation with which a learner is unfamiliar but that requires relatively undemanding English skills may involve a higher level of ‘functionality’ than a relatively straightforward task in a familiar context that requires more advanced ‘subject’ skills. It is the combination of the four factors that confirms the functional skill level.

The purpose of education is not to produce knowledge, and to teach students to use those tools that will help them to generate the knowledge needed to solve a variety of problem situations in personal, social and professional activities.

The success of the educational process depends largely on the personal qualities of teachers, professionalism, skills and competencies. Therefore, the key terms in the work of teachers, it is self-education, self-development, ICT competence, professional competence diagnosis.
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