into the box, out of the box grids, graphs and ESL literacy

Janet Isserlis
Heide Spruck Wrigley
**who, when, why**

Using grids as basic graphic organizers provides opportunities for basic level literacy learners (in any language) to contribute content/information and to raise topics and questions of interest as part of the process of developing oral and written language.

(e.g. getting to know one another, listing languages spoken, favourite activities)

Use of grids can accommodate multiple levels of ability, fluency/comfort with reading and writing

- draws on learner input: knowledge, experience, interest
**who, when, why**

- can be used anytime - developing predictable format[s] and predictable, recurrent classroom events
- expandable/extendable: multiple possibilities for building varied kinds of language/literacy practice and use
- enables learners to see spoken language in print
- enables learners to take on multiple roles - as scribes, readers and generators of information.
for example, using grids to:

• assess learners’ knowledge of [key] vocabulary

• engage learners actively in reading and writing processes through active participation in development/completion of grid

• enable basic learners to have time to read, copy, practice

• enable more advanced learners to use key vocabulary to develop (oral and written) sentences, questions, paragraphs
Examples of Grids

Early Community Building
One Question Surveys
Introducing a Basic Grid

• Model the concept and language of question asking and question answering by engaging some of the more proficient students.
  – Hi, My name is Heide? And you? I’m from Germany, and you? I really like lemon ice-cream. And you?
• Draw a basic grid and fill in the information for a couple of the students so everyone sees the connections.
• Invite individual students to ask others. Model if someone is stuck.
Introducing the Basic Grid (2)

• Vary your language and your rate of speaking to challenge more proficient students (no need to change the grid)
  – Hi, I’m Heide; what’s your name? I just love lemon ice-cream; how about you? What do you like?

• To keep everyone engaged, ask students to repeat key info
  – What was her name again? And where is she from? Does she like coffee?

• NOTE: Resist the temptation to explain “do” and “does” at this point; wait until the grammar portion of the lesson
Introducing the Basic Grid (3)

• If a person seems overwhelmed or anxious, allow the person to say “pass” but come back later and offer gentle encouragement to give it a try.

• If you have a multi-level class invite students to expand and explain on basic information by saying “please tell me more”.

• Encourage students to do the same as they ask questions of each other.
  
  – NOTE: Saying “tell me more” is easier than asking questions in English and less intrusive but builds the concept of “Small Talk” as part of community building.
## basic information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>comes from</th>
<th>likes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heide</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>ice cream</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>coffee</td>
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building community

safe questions:

learners control information to be shared
Follow Up to Basic Grid

• Use the grid as a basis to tell your own story and those of your students
• Add details as the class progresses
• Consider **Chalk Talk** (= drawing stick figures to illustrate the person and what (s)he likes.
• Write the story of the people in the class and use as a **Language Experience Story**
Follow Up to Basic Grid (2)

- Bring in pictures of your family and tell your story (use overhead or scan into PowerPoint)
- Invite students to do the same and tell their story in pairs or small groups
- Model the language for students to use
  - *And this is? Tell me more? Where is this? Etc*
- Consider a class project that includes everyone’s story
One Question Surveys

Involving Students in Asking Questions, Collecting Information and Reporting Results
Where’s a good place to take kids in this town?

Date:    Class:    Interviewer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Places</th>
<th>Why?</th>
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Where’s a good place to take kids in this town?

Date: Class: Interviewer:

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- follow up: tally votes, work on numeracy (what % of the group likes x, y or z?)
- use online mapping to create a walking tour
- develop a handbook of local resources
### How Did You Get Your Job?

Date:  | Class: | Interviewer:
---|---|---

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>How?</th>
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- Students ask other students
- Create a project: Teams of students practice doing a survey in class and then ask non-instructional staff
- Students report findings to others inside and outside of class
Lesson Plan for the How Did You Get Your Job Project

www.bordercivics.org

Go to “Tools” –
Look under Susan Zenker
Car Survey

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<th>Color</th>
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<th>Comments</th>
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Car Survey Follow-Up Ideas

• Line up and discussion on oldest cars, newest cars; vote on “coolest cars”
• Discussion and survey on “car trouble” and who in the class can fix what
• Discussion and survey on “Best and most honest mechanics in town”
• Ditto on worst (another grid?)
• Project and Student Guide: What to do when your car won’t start
Speaking of Cars ctd

- Information Exchange on car insurance
  - What it is
  - What the law says
  - How to compare prices

- What to do in an accident and how to report it
  - NOTE: Listen to students to see where their interests lie and then go in that direction. Use "idea maps" to illustrate all the ideas around cars, driving, transportation that come up in your discussions and then work with your students to decide where to dig deeper. Then move back to grids and surveys as appropriate
building student participation: routines/recurrent events

- who decides what questions to ask?
- how?
- who does the asking?
- who does the answering?
- who does the writing?
- who does the reading?

- white board, newsprint, post-its
and then?

- determining focus - eg:
- question formation
- particular grammar form (tenses, pronouns, word order)
- information gaps (grid/text)

- follow up - typing, recycling, reusing...
resources

1. Teaching Adult ESL Literacy Study Circle

2. ESOL resources: http://www.brown.edu/lrri/esol.html

3. Lessons and ideas on sites developed by Literacywork International
   • Bright Ideas: A Curriculum for Low Literate Refugees
     www.clese.org
     See also the “People and Places” Unit that offers ideas as to how to integrate grids into Community ESL
   • Community Civics and Project-based Learning
     www.bordercivics.org
Write Us!

• For ideas, questions and comments, contact

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