Teaching Strategies, Learning Activities, and Assessments for the Adult Education Classroom

This table includes a variety of teaching strategies, learning activities, and assessments suitable for the adult education classroom.

Teaching strategy	Learning activity	Assessments
		3 – 2 – 1 An informal assessment where students identify 3 things, 2 things, and 1 thing. You can vary the topics of what students are identifying. For example, students can write 3 things they learned, 2 things they want to know more about, and 1 thing they have a question about.
	4 – 2 – 1 A summarizing strategy where students identify four main ideas. Next they narrow those 4 down to 2. Finally, they decide on the most important main idea. After evaluating the main ideas, they write a summary in paragraph form.	
	About-point A reading strategy where students pause at logical points and complete the phrase: The section is about _____ and the point is _____.	
		Admit slips and exit slips An assessment where students respond to a question, solve a problem, or summarize their understanding after a learning experience. The

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		slips are turned in to the teacher and can be used to evaluate student learning or the need to reteach.
	Anticipation guide A comprehension strategy that is used before reading to activate students' prior knowledge and build curiosity about a new topic. Before reading, students listen to or read several statements about key concepts presented in the text; they're often structured as a series of statements with which the students can choose to agree or disagree.	
		Assessment fingers An informal assessment in which students use their hands/finders to indicate understanding of concepts, content, or skill. Includes Thumbs Up-Down-Sideways and Fist-to-Five.
		Assessment-on-a-stick An informal assessment in which cards with YES on one side and NO on the other, or TRUE on one side and FALSE on the other, or ☺ on one side and ☹ on the other are taped to a popsicle stick and can be used to gauge student understanding.
	Carousel brainstorming An activity in which small groups rotate around the classroom stopping at various stations for	

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	a short amount of time (1-2 minutes). Chart paper identifying the topic or concept under consideration is posted at each station. At each station, students activate their prior knowledge of the topic or concept and share their ideas with their small group. Each group posts their ideas at each station for all groups to read.	
	Cause and effect analysis A strategy that combines brainstorming with the use of a concept map to help students think through the causes of a problem.	
	Character-o-grams A reading strategy students can use in order to understand relationships between characters in a narrative text.	
	Compare/contrast A reading strategy used to identify how two or more things are alike and/or different. It can be used by readers to understand concepts and make the information they are reading more memorable.	
	Concept map A graphic organizer used to enhance student understanding of a new concept. The concepts are enclosed in circles and the relationships between the concepts are indicated by a	

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	connecting line linking the two concepts. Students identify linking words or phrases by writing them on the line.	
Collaborative learning A method of teaching and learning in which students team together to explore a question or create a project.	**Collaborative learning** A method of teaching and learning in which students team together to explore a question or create a project.	
Concept-based teaching A method of teaching and learning that emphasizes key concept and principles to build meaning. It is driven by the "big ideas" rather than subject-specific content.	**Concept-based teaching** A method of teaching and learning that emphasizes key concept and principles to build meaning. It is driven by the "big ideas" rather than subject-specific content.	
Cooperative learning A type of collaborative learning in which students work together in small, heterogeneous groups to complete a problem, project, or other instructional goal while the teacher serves as the guide or facilitator. Students are individually accountable for their work and the work of the group is also assessed as a whole.	**Cooperative learning** A type of collaborative learning in which students work together in small, heterogeneous groups to complete a problem, project, or other instructional goal while the teacher serves as the guide or facilitator. Students are individually accountable for their work and the work of the group is also assessed as a whole.	
	Cubing A learning activity that asks students to think about content from a variety of perspectives. Cubing can be done individually or in small groups. Students are given a pre-made cube with words, phrases, or sentences to explain or	

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	answer.	
	Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) A reading comprehension strategy that guides students in asking questions about a text, making predictions, and then reading to confirm or refute their predictions.	
	Discussion web An organization tool to identify opposing points of view. Can be used during reading to identify evidence for and against a position and also used during discussion to keep students focused on evidence.	
	Do I really know it? A flowchart that helps students confirm clear understanding of concepts learned.	
Explicit instruction A method of teaching and learning in which concepts are clearly explained and skills are clearly modeled by the teacher. Oftentimes referred to as "I do, we do, you do," explicit instruction provides for the gradual release of responsibility from teacher to whole-group to student-centered.	**Explicit instruction** A method of teaching and learning in which concepts are clearly explained and skills are clearly modeled by the teacher. Oftentimes referred to as "I do, we do, you do," explicit instruction provides for the gradual release of responsibility from teacher to whole-group to student-centered.	
	Frayer model A vocabulary building strategy that uses a	

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	graphic organizer in which students define the vocabulary word, provide facts or characteristics of the word, and identify examples and nonexamples.	
	GIST A summarizing strategy where students identify the 5 Ws and 1 H – who, what, when, where, why, and how. Once identified, students use their notes to write a 20-word summary called a GIST.	
	Herringbone A graphic organizer to provide students with a framework for making decisions about main ideas and supporting details.	
Inquiry-based learning A method of teaching and learning that starts by posing questions, problems, or scenarios rather than simply presenting content or providing a smooth path to knowledge. The teacher acts as the facilitator while students identify and research issues and questions to develop their knowledge or find solutions.	**Inquiry-based learning** A method of teaching and learning that starts by posing questions, problems, or scenarios rather than simply presenting content or providing a smooth path to knowledge. The teacher acts as the facilitator while students identify and research issues and questions to develop their knowledge or find solutions.	
	Intra-act A reading strategy in which students comprehend, relate to, evaluate, and reflect upon the text being read.	

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Jigsaw A cooperative learning strategy in which students actively help each other to build reading comprehension. Each student is part of 2 groups – the expert group and the teaching group. Students build expertise in an area and are responsible for teaching it to others.	**Jigsaw** A cooperative learning strategy in which students actively help each other to build reading comprehension. Each student is part of 2 groups – the expert group and the teaching group. Students build expertise in an area and are responsible for teaching it to others.	
	K-W-L A graphic organizer used before, during, and after a lesson. Using a K-W-L graphic organizer, students fill in what they know (K), what they want to know (W), and (after instruction) what they learned (L).	
		Knowledge ratings A pre-reading assessment where students are asked how much is known about a topic and what areas need more information.
Lecture An instructional strategy used to communicate information and/or demonstrate a process.		
	List-group-label A vocabulary strategy in which students actively organize their understanding of vocabulary and concepts. It encourages students to improve their vocabulary and	

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	categorization skills and learn to organize concepts. Categorizing listed words, through grouping and labeling, helps students organize new concepts in relation to previously learned concepts.	
	Literature circles/Book clubs A collaborative and student-centered reading comprehension strategy. Small groups of students gather together to discuss a piece of literature in depth. The discussion is guided by students' response to what they have read. Literature circles provide a way for students to engage in critical thinking and reflection as they read, discuss, and respond to books.	
	Knew-new-q A reading strategy in which students identify information they already knew, information new to them, and questions they have.	
		One-minute paper An assessment where students write an answer to a teacher prompt and turn in to the teacher as evidence of learning or the need to reteach.
	Opinion-proof An organization strategy students can use to record their opinion(s) and identify the evidence they can use to support their	

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	argument. Can be used as a pre-writing or pre-discussion exercise.	
	Polya's problem solving techniques A problem-solving strategy to systematically work through the process of problem solving.	
	Question-answer relationships (QAR) A post-reading strategy to improve comprehension, understand the types of questions they are being asked, and know where to find the answers for the questions.	
	RAFT A writing strategy that helps students understand the role as writer (R), the audience they will be addressing (A), the format for writing (F), and the topic they will be writing about (T). .	
	Save the last word for me A strategy used to enhance text understanding, foster group interaction and problem-solving, provide a scaffold for challenging text, and encourage purposeful note-taking.	
	Semantic mapping A reading strategy that features a graphic organizer used to help students identify,	

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	understand, and recall vocabulary and/or concepts.	
	Sketch to stretch A learning strategy in which students produce nonlinguistic representations of vocabulary or concepts learned.	
		S-O-S summary An assessment that can be used before, during, and after a lesson. The teacher presents a statement (S), asks the student's opinion (O), and asks the student to support (S) his or her opinion with evidence.
Ten-and-two strategy A teaching and learning method in which new idea from discussion or reading is shared, pause (providing think time), then ask a strategic question, pausing again. Strategic questions need to be designed ahead of time, making sure they are specific, guiding and open-ended questions. Call on someone to "give the gist" of what was just discussed, discovered, or questioned. If the class seems stuck by the questions, provide an opportunity for students to discuss it with a neighbor. This strategy provides checks for understanding while students read a chunk of difficult text or learn a new concept or content.	**Ten-and-two strategy** A teaching and learning method in which new idea from discussion or reading is shared, pause (providing think time), then ask a strategic question, pausing again. Strategic questions need to be designed ahead of time, making sure they are specific, guiding and open-ended questions. Call on someone to "give the gist" of what was just discussed, discovered, or questioned. If the class seems stuck by the questions, provide an opportunity for students to discuss it with a neighbor. This strategy provides checks for understanding while students read a chunk of difficult text or learn a new concept or content.	
	Tic-tac-toe	

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	A menu or options arranged in a tic-tac-toe grid where students choose three activities in a row to complete. Can also be used as an assessment strategy to review content.	
Think alouds A teaching and learning strategy used to help students learn to monitor their thinking as they read. The teacher verbalizes aloud while reading a selection including describing things they're doing as they read to monitor comprehension.	**Think alouds** A teaching and learning strategy used to help students learn to monitor their thinking as they read. The teacher verbalizes aloud while reading a selection including describing things they're doing as they read to monitor comprehension.	
	Think-(ink)-pair-share A collaborative learning strategy in which students work together to answer a question or solve a problem. Students are asked to think about the problem or question, write (ink) an answer, pair up with a partner, and share their responses.	
	Turn-and-talk A student-centered activity in which students have the chance to talk about the information presented or shared and to clarify thoughts or questions. This is an effective alternate strategy to asking questions to the whole group and having the same students responding. All students have a chance to talk in a non-threatening situation for a short period of time.	

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	Venn diagram A graphic organizer students can use to make connections between concepts and encourage thoughtful reflection and categorization.	
	Word sort A small group, categorizing, and classifying activity in which students work together to sort words into pre-determined categories or student-choice categories.	