



# Volunteer Manual

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**Language ETC (Language Education & Technology Center)**

2200 California Street NW

Washington, DC 20008-3902

202-387-2222 (Main Office)

202-387-0023 (Volunteer Coordinators' Office)

[www.languageetc.org](http://www.languageetc.org)

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*"Improving the Lives of Immigrants through Education"*

“Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

Mark Twain

## ***Welcome!***

We are pleased that you have chosen to volunteer at Language ETC. We hope that this is a rewarding and enriching experience for you. LETC could not exist without the support of our volunteers who bring a diversity of interests, knowledge, expertise and caring to our organization.

We have a small salaried staff and a tremendous corps of volunteers (approximately 300 each term). Your ideas and suggestions are important to us. If you have any problems, suggestions, ideas or concerns that you would like to discuss regarding the organization or your role in it, please feel free to talk with the Volunteer Coordinators (the first line of inquiry and assistance for you), office assistants, the Program Director and the Executive Director.

If you are interested in participating in other LETC activities or committees (developing teacher/student resources, office support, public relations, fundraising, other areas), please let us know. We can always use your help!

This manual is designed to give you a brief overview of our program, our students, resources available to you at LETC, and general guidelines for volunteers. Please read it carefully and keep it for future reference.

Thank you for joining us. We cannot do our work without you. We look forward to a long and productive relationship.

Mercedes Lemp  
Executive Director





## **Language Education & Technology Center**

2200 California Street NW  
Washington, DC 20008-3906  
202-387-2222  
[www.languageetc.org](http://www.languageetc.org)

### ***“Improving the Lives of Immigrants through Education”***

Language ETC was founded in 1993 by Our Lady Queen of the Americas Church as its Education Center to meet the growing demand for English and literacy courses within the immigrant community in the Washington metropolitan area. Language ETC was incorporated in the District of Columbia as an independent nonprofit organization in January 1998.

### **Our Mission**

Our mission is to provide affordable, high quality English language instruction and other basic educational programs to foreign-born adults in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area through the involvement of community volunteer teachers and tutors.

### **Our Staff**

#### **Full Time**

Executive Director, Mercedes Lemp  
Program Director, Ashley Lipps  
Director of Volunteers, Steven White  
Volunteer Coordinator, Lee Griffith  
Office Manager, Claudia Beloso

#### **Part Time**

Weekend Office Assistant, Alejandra Lopez  
IT Coordinator, Antonio Ricci

## LANGUAGE, ETC PROGRAMS

There are three regular terms each year, each lasting 11-12 weeks and a 6-week summer session.

<b>Fall</b>	September (after Labor Day) – early December
<b>Winter</b>	January – early-April
<b>Spring</b>	April – end of June
<b>Summer</b>	mid July – end of August (6 week period)

### **ENGLISH (ESL)                      Beginning — Advanced Levels (Sequence of 11 courses)**

Monday-Thursday	7 - 9 pm
Tuesday & Thursday	10 am - 1 pm
Saturday & Sunday	2 - 5 pm
Sunday	9 - Noon

### **PREPARATION FOR THE CITIZENSHIP EXAM**

Mondays	5:30 pm – 7 pm
Tuesdays	1:30 pm – 3:30 pm
Saturdays	12 pm – 2 pm

### **SPANISH LITERACY                      Beginning – Advanced Levels (3 courses)**

Sunday	9 am – 12:00 pm
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### **COMPUTERS (IN SPANISH) – For Beginners**

Saturday	Morning and afternoon (hours vary by term)
Various days, depending on demand per term	

### **COMPUTERS (IN ENGLISH) – For Beginners**

Saturdays	11am-1pm
Tuesdays & Thursdays	6-7pm

### **Free Programs for Registered Students**

<b>Tutoring</b>	Monday-Thursday 6 - 7 pm or by appointment Tuesday and Thursdays 1-2 p.m. or by appointment
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<b>Conversation Club</b>	Days and hours vary by term
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<b>Job Skills Counseling</b>	By Appointment
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### **Open Language Lab**

Monday & Wednesday	2 - 7 pm
Tuesday & Thursday	9 - 10 am and 1 - 7 pm
Friday	Closed
Saturday	9 am - 2 pm
Sunday	12 - 2 pm

### **LETC Office Hours**

Monday & Wednesday: 1:30-8 pm
Tuesday & Thursday: 9:30 am - 8 pm
Friday: Closed
Saturday- Sunday: 9 am - 4 pm

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## GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

**Prepare a lesson** for class using the syllabus as a guide and supplementing with additional resources as needed. See the Class Materials section below for information about the syllabus.

**Please arrive on time** for class. Ideally, it is best to arrive 30 minutes early so you have time to review any notes in the class binder, read announcements and get set for teaching. If you are running late, please call your Volunteer Coordinator and/or your co-teacher as soon as possible to let them know.

**Email a class report** to your team by noon the next day and send a copy to the Director of Volunteers, [swhite@languageetc.org](mailto:swhite@languageetc.org), or the Weekend Volunteer Coordinator, [lgriffith@languageetc.org](mailto:lgriffith@languageetc.org), and the Program Director, [ahufstader@languageetc.org](mailto:ahufstader@languageetc.org).

**Take attendance** at every class! We are required to submit attendance records as part of our report to our funders. Incomplete attendance records can jeopardize future funding.

**Quizzes and Mid-Term Exams** are available in the file cabinets in the volunteer office. Masters are in notebooks on top of the cabinets. Please check the file cabinet for copies before making new ones. If you have any left over, please place the extras in the box on top of the cabinet with realia (props) in it; staff will file them periodically. (Paper and copying is expensive!) Copies of final exams will be provided for you.

**Worksheets** are on the CD-Rom in your Teacher's Edition, as well as in the notebooks on top of the window sill in the Volunteer Room. Copies may be available in the file drawer for your level. Please use the ones in the drawer before making new copies. If you have leftovers, you can put them in the box on top of the cabinet for filing.

Please be thoughtful about how you **dress** for class. We have a wide variety of students and physical appearance can be meaningful in different ways. While jeans, tennis shoes, and t-shirts are fine, please avoid any clothing that might be seen as provocative, as well as tight athletic wear.

**Cell phones** should be turned off in the classroom. We ask the same from our students, as phones can be distracting and disruptive.

Please be aware that many activities take place in the **Church building**. There may be other meetings or classes, Church services, and other activities going on in rooms adjacent to, above or below your classroom. If you are planning a class activity that may be disruptive to others, please close your door. It is helpful to remind students about other activities before they leave the room for a break.

**It is best not to rearrange the furniture.** If you must move anything, return the room to its original configuration before you leave so it is ready for the next activity. Most rooms are used for other activities between your classes and the small Church staff is not able to change room setups daily.

**No food or drinks** are allowed in the classrooms or in the language lab. Please help us enforce this.



**Please do not tape** anything to the classroom walls, as removal of the tape will mar the paint and plaster. (Resources to repaint are scarce.) You may tape maps or other materials to the blackboard.

**When you leave be sure to:**

- Leave the room exactly as you found it
- Close all windows
- Turn off the lights
- Turn off the air conditioning

## **PARKING**

Two- hour street parking is available during the day, with the rules not applying after 8:30 pm. Please do not park in the rear of the building Monday-Saturday as your car will be towed. Students and volunteers are encouraged to take the metro. Limited parking spaces in the Church parking lot may be available for regular daytime teachers. Please check with the Volunteer Coordinator regarding space availability.

## **COMMUNICATION**

With 300 volunteers per term, regular communication is very important to our program. For this reason we have several mechanisms for effective and regular communication.

All volunteer teachers work with either the weekday or weekend Volunteer Coordinator. You will receive a weekly email from your Volunteer Coordinator on Sunday afternoon or Monday afternoon to keep you posted about any events taking place in the upcoming week. If you do not receive this email, please contact your Volunteer Coordinator. Please inform him/her if there are any changes in your email address.

**Please check the white board in the volunteer lounge for important notices before going to your classroom.**

There is a mailbox for each class in the volunteer lounge. Please keep class CD sets in your mailbox. General information about LETC and upcoming events will be placed there; **please check the box each time you come to teach.**

It's important to coordinate with your team members. Each teaching duo is responsible for completing a class log and placing it in the binder or emailing your team prior to the next class.

## **ABSENCES**

**Planned Absences:** For a planned absence, please inform your Volunteer Coordinator of the date and duration of the absence as soon as possible, but no less than a week in advance. In the event of a planned absence, teachers should do as follows:

Email all the members of your team requesting a substitute (with a copy of the email sent to your Volunteer Coordinator). If one of your team members cannot substitute, ask your co-teacher if s/he can manage the class solo. If neither of the above options works, contact the Volunteer Coordinator directly to arrange a substitute.

**Unplanned Absences:** In the event of an unexpected absence, please inform the Volunteer Coordinator and your co-teacher as soon as possible by email and phone. Efforts will be made to find a substitute within your team first and then from our larger group of volunteers.

Please understand that ANY absence causes a disruption to students, teachers, and staff. If your schedule becomes such that you need to miss more than two classes in one term, we request that you speak to the Volunteer Coordinator about other arrangements.

## **DISMISSAL**

If an issue or problem pertaining to a volunteer is brought to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator or any LETC staff member, the Volunteer Coordinator will discuss the issue directly with the volunteer and other concerned parties. The Volunteer Coordinator will go over the volunteer guidelines, requirements and expectations of a LETC volunteer with the volunteer. The first time the volunteer will receive a warning. The second time the volunteer will be asked to reevaluate his/her commitment, to change placement, or to leave. Some examples of issues or problems are repeatedly arriving to class late or unprepared, being rude to students and/or co-teachers, or leaving class to check personal email or make personal calls.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

In the event of inclement weather, Language ETC follows the District of Columbia Schools cancellation policy. That is, if the District of Columbia Schools are closed, Language ETC is closed. Please see below for program-specific information.

**Morning Classes:** If DC public schools are closed, Language ETC classes are cancelled. If DC public schools indicate a late arrival policy, Language ETC morning classes are **cancelled**. If DC public schools are opening on time, Language ETC classes will be held on a regular schedule.

**Evening Classes:** Check your e-mail or the Language ETC website to know if classes are cancelled.

**Weekend Classes:** Check your e-mail or the Language ETC website to know if classes are cancelled.

**Sunday AM:** Check your e-mail or the Language ETC website to know if classes are cancelled.

# **TEACHING INFORMATION**

## **TEACHING TEAMS**

LETC uses a unique team teaching model in which a course is taught by a team of teachers and every class meeting is led by two teachers from the team. It is important to work out with your team teacher how you will present the lesson as a team (role playing or “modeling” dialogues, having one teacher present a lesson while the other helps individual students, etc.).

Every class will have two teachers assigned per day or evening. Our volunteer teachers make a commitment of one day per week, but our students come 2-4 times per week for class (except for Sunday morning students). This means our students have 2-8 teachers working with them on a weekly basis. To maintain a cohesive and consistent learning environment for our students, communication, responsibility, and reliability are very important within each team. LETC uses this approach for several reasons:

- It exposes our students to a variety of teaching styles
- It allows us to pair experienced teachers with new teachers to foster a mentoring relationship
- It ensures that there is always a teacher present who knows the students.

**IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO DIVIDE STUDENTS’ ATTENTION BY HAVING TWO TEACHERS AT THE BOARD TALKING!**

Co-Teaching and Team Teaching Tips are at the end of this manual.

## **TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is mandatory that teams (6-8 teachers) meet at least one time per term to establish a communication pattern and work collaboratively. These face-to-face meetings help teams maintain open communication and work together to help their students maximize their learning. Teachers generally find that these meetings enhance their teaching experience. (Please see volunteer support calendar for meeting date).

Some of the common agenda items for these meetings are:

- Get to know other team members and establish an effective communication system
- Review student progress and make adjustments to teaching methods as needed
- Discuss specific students’ promotion or retention and clarify any teaching and learning issues

## **TEAM LEADERS**

Teams are responsible for selecting a Team Leader with the assistance of the Volunteer Coordinator. The Team Leader will be responsible for the following tasks on a regular basis:

- Coordinate in-person and email communication for class/level team;

- Act as point person for the team with regard to the implementation of policies, procedures, new initiatives, and teaching resources;
- Delegate responsibilities in order to maintain attendance and quiz/test records or other assessment activities;
- Monitor any issues that come up in regards to the class, students, and teachers and communicate with Volunteer Coordinator or Program Director in order to find the most appropriate ways to tackle those issues;
- Suggest topics for future training sessions
- Check in with teachers on periodic basis to answer questions and suggest activities and resources.

## **TRAINING AND MEETING ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

	New Volunteers	Returning Volunteers
New Volunteer Orientation Training	yes	-
Team Meeting	yes	yes
Teacher Training Workshops – one per term (See term calendar; other opportunities posted in volunteer office)	yes	yes

# CLASS MATERIALS

## CLASS BINDERS

Binders are used to maintain information for each class so that it is readily available for all team members. The binders will be labeled for each level and will be stored in the bookshelf in the volunteer lounge. Bulky items, including the class set of audio CDs should be kept in the class mailbox.

Class binders contain the following materials:

- |  |
|--|
| <p><b>I. Class Attendance Sheet and Mid-term Student Reflection/Class Checklist</b></p> <p><b>II. Syllabus, Level Description</b></p> <p><b>III. Daily Class Log and Lesson Plan format</b></p> <p><b>IV. Procedures</b> - General information you will use during the term, such as the Student Information handout, how to administer CASAS tests, and how to read CASAS results</p> |
|--|

Please help us keep the binders organized and neat. Do not take binders home, as they are needed by other teachers and staff. If you would like a copy of materials in the binder, speak with your Volunteer Coordinator. Bulky items (such as name cards) should be kept in the class mailbox.

## SYLLABI

A syllabus is provided for each class/level. Please follow the syllabus as students will be tested based on the material the teachers are expected to cover during the term. While material listed in the syllabus must be covered, there is room for teachers to add or build upon these topics. In the event you have extra time, please do not teach future lessons but rather use supplemental materials available in the office. Your Volunteer Coordinator can help you identify appropriate materials and activities.

## DAILY CLASS LOG

After each class, one of the team teachers must quickly email a description of the class (called the Class Log) to all the other team members. For PM teachers, this means by noon of the next day. For Weekend teachers, this means by 10 pm of that day. For AM teachers, this means by 5 pm of the day after you teach for Tuesday teachers and by the following weekend if you are a Thursday teacher.\* This task can be rotated on a weekly basis or one team teacher can assume responsibility for doing this for the entire term. The Volunteer Coordinator will give you a list of email addresses for your team and the Program Director.

The Volunteer Coordinators print out the class logs and place them in the respective class binders. If you miss a log, you can always catch up by reading the entry in your binder.

The Class Log has three purposes. The first is to provide the next team of teachers with an idea of what went on in your class so that they can prepare the next lesson. The second purpose is to inform all the team members of any issues or problems in the class. If you think the students are struggling with a particular lesson this is your chance to recommend a review. If you think a particular student is in need of extra help, this is your chance to ask other team members if they have observed the same thing. The final purpose is to keep LETC staff informed so that they can provide support as well if needed.

A good Class Log entry is brief, covers key areas, and identifies the class and the date you taught in the email subject line (e.g., Basic A December 2, 2010). It will cover the following:

- Topic/ Lesson** Identify topic/lesson very briefly
- Attendance** Provide attendance numbers so that the team has a general idea of attendance patterns.
- Warm Up/Review** Every class should begin with a review of prior material. Let others on the team know what you reviewed and how you did it. (e.g., used the text, provided an outside worksheet, played a game, checked on homework if there is any, conversation)
- Introduction** Teacher reviews agenda for the lesson. Focuses learners' attention on the language, establishes the objectives of the lesson, and relates the lesson to the learner's lives and previous learning.
- Presentation** Introduce new information, checks comprehension and models what the learners need to do with the language and tasks. Provide the topics you dealt with as well as the specific pages in the text book and student work book that you used. If you used realia or other handouts/worksheets, describe them. If you did not cover all of the material in the syllabus, or you moved ahead, be sure to mention this. It will help the next team of teachers know where to pick up from.
- Practice** What did you do in order to provide opportunities for learners to practice the new language, information and material?
- Evaluation** Let the next group know if you think the students got the material and can move on after a brief review. If you think many/most struggled with the material and need a more extensive review, say this. Again, this helps the next team make their class plan.
- Follow Up** Any issues/observations that you see in the students and their learning, things that the team should know or be aware of, ask the next teacher to go over homework if you assigned homework, tutoring support, and etc.

## **MAILBOXES**

Class mailboxes are used for Volunteer Coordinators and teachers to exchange class materials such as blank quizzes/tests, graded quizzes/tests, extra supplemental materials, and progress reports. The mailboxes will provide a "communal" location for teachers to pass materials back and forth. Please do not overstuff your binders with excess papers.

## BOOKS

You will receive a Teacher's Edition before the start of the term. Please mark in this book using pencil only. These books have step-by-step instructions for teaching each lesson.

All Teacher's Editions need to be returned at the end of each term. (We are given a limited number by the publisher. Replacements are very costly for us.)

The chart below shows the textbook used for each class.

Class(es)	Schedule	Text
Basic – Levels A & B	All	Ventures (Basic level)
1 – 4 – Levels A and B	All	Ventures Series (1-4)
Advanced	Day	Various
	Evening	Various
	Saturday and Sunday pm	Various
	Sunday morning	Various

Students enrolling at LETC pay \$120 if they need books, \$100 if they already have them. There are two courses for each level (Basic – Level 4) — A and B. Students generally get the books for the A class and use them again for the B class.

## ATTENDANCE LISTS

Your binder will have an attendance list prepared just before the beginning of classes. However, many students register the day of class or during the first week, so your attendance list will be incomplete. If a student comes who is not on your list, please ask to see his/her payment receipt and make sure the student is attending the right class and the right section. If not, send the student to the main office for assistance. **Do not keep students' receipts** – they may need them. You will receive a new updated attendance list for the second month of classes.

## LETC GUIDELINES FOR USING ENGLISH IN THE CLASSROOM

In those classrooms where learners come from a variety of language backgrounds (multi-lingual class), it is important to use only the target language (English) in order to provide learners with good models of language and to give them maximum opportunity to learn by doing. Keep in mind that our students come from over 60 countries on five continents and speak many different languages. While the majority of our students are Latino, there are probably students in your classroom who do not understand Spanish. It disorients and discourages students who do not speak Spanish when the English teacher speaks in Spanish.

Collins (1993) comments that in order to motivate students, especially those of lower ability, it is essential to give them a sustained diet of the target language – **simplified, explained, used visual aids, and made comprehensible by whatever means possible.**

In general, teachers need to develop strategies to recycle language structures with which students are familiar when studying more unfamiliar topics. For example, it is possible to introduce new vocabulary using the past tense, rather than present.

Specifically, teachers should try to do the following:

- Speak slowly and simply using the structures students know.
- Create an English language ambiance in the classroom so the students feel as if they are entering a target language zone.
- Build a repertoire of instructions to use systematically.
- Use mime and gesture to complement your verbal efforts.
- Use previously taught/learned structures for genuine communication.

Teacher trainings provided during the term will help you become more adept at communicating in English with speakers of other languages.



# **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS**

## **VOLUNTEER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES**

We are very fortunate to consistently attract volunteer teachers who are committed to providing the best possible learning opportunity for adult immigrants. Our Volunteer Support Program is designed to offer ongoing learning opportunities that will support their efforts and growth as teachers. Our goal is to help our teachers increase their knowledge and skills in order to improve their instructional practice, which will then better support learner gains (Kutner, Sherman, Tibbett's & Condelli, 1997).

The LETC staff is dedicated to the ongoing development and enhancement of a program that will meet the diverse needs of our volunteers. "Learning to teach and teaching to learn" is fundamental to creating a rich lifelong learning environment.

We offer regular ESL teacher training activities, as well as briefer informal sessions on weeknights and on weekends to encourage the exchange of best practices and skills among LETC staff and teachers. We will also keep you informed about other ESL teacher enrichment activities in the DC area. All training dates will be posted on a bulletin board in the LETC volunteer lounge; volunteers will also be notified of training opportunities by email and calendar for volunteer support activity each term.

We encourage you to take advantage of as many training opportunities as you can. Volunteers are required to attend a minimum of two volunteer support activities in their first term at LETC (including orientation) and a minimum of one in each subsequent term.

## **TEACHING RESOURCE LIBRARY**

A teaching resource library is located in the Volunteer Lounge. Audiotapes and players, telephones, flashcards, maps and other materials are also available there. Please return materials after each class to their proper place. Ask your Volunteer Coordinator or Program Director for assistance in locating any additional things needed for your class.

## **LANGUAGE LAB**

The Language Lab is a key component of Language ETC's mission. The use of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) for adult language learners is invaluable not only in terms of individualized language practice but also in terms of work and technology skill enhancement. You will find a schedule for language lab time in your class syllabus. It is important that teachers coordinate with the language lab instructors in advance, either by meeting with the instructor before classes begin for the day or via email, to ensure that the language lab component is synchronized to practice the day's lesson topic and/or grammar concern.

Please stay with your class in the lab and assist the students in using the computers and programs.

Current students and volunteers are also welcome to use the language lab outside of class time. Open hours are posted on the lab door and in the student manual. There is a database of web-based learning on the desktop that the students can explore during their own time.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Many LETC classes take field trips to reinforce student learning. Since we are located in the DuPont Circle area, we are able to get to many wonderful museums that are a brief walk from the school: the National Zoo, the Phillips Gallery, the Islamic Center, the Textile Museum, Anderson House, Woodrow Wilson House, and the National Museum of American Jewish Military History, for example. Classes have also used the Metro to visit the National Archives and the US Botanical Gardens as well as Eastern Market.

Field trips can also include visiting a local realtor's office, going shopping in a neighborhood store, meeting for coffee in a local café, or having a scavenger hunt in the neighborhood to look for local sites like the Spanish steps or the local elephant statues. A field trip can also be as simple as taking students on a tour of our building to try to find fire and safety code issues,

There are several reasons why field trips are important. They can be used to reinforce particular lesson plans. The trip will help students link literacy in class to the real world. For example, all classes cover health issues. A trip to a dentist's or doctor's office can help make the lesson more real. Field trips also let students practice their new language in real-life situations. As a result, students become more comfortable knowing that they can speak to and understand a local business person, a health clinic worker, or a museum docent. Field trips also help build community as students assist one another on the trip. Moreover, students have a chance to converse while traveling to and from their destination. Soon, they are comfortable talking to one another in English in non-classroom situations as well.

In addition, field trips provide a chance to expose students to places they might not go to on their own. For example, students loved our trip to the Textile Museum although none had gone there before on their own. They just didn't feel comfortable walking in by themselves. After our visit, several said they would go back again and bring their children to take advantage of the museum's Saturday programs.

Most LETC students say their goal is to improve their listening and speaking skills. In addition to classroom work, field trips provide an excellent way to help students achieve this goal and have fun doing it.

## **REALIA**

Objects that we bring into the classroom to illustrate a lesson plan are called "realia." For example, in a basic level class you might bring in samples, pictures or models of food to give students a visual sense of what the words in the lesson plan mean. At a higher level, you might use a cookbook or a menu from a local restaurant to discuss more complicated types of food or introduce the idea of ethnic food. In learning a dialogue or doing a play, you might have the students use hats or similar articles of clothing to show how a character might dress. Other examples of realia include maps/globes, shopping brochures, household items, puzzles/games, medicine bottles, and workplace safety equipment.

There is a collection of realia on the bookcases by the table in the volunteer office. The items were assembled to coordinate with the topics in your lesson plans. They should be very helpful to you in enlivening your classroom and supplementing the materials in your textbook.

If you have items that you would like to add to our collection, please feel free to do so. Give them to the Volunteer Coordinator so we can formally add them to the collection and put them on the master list. If there are items we don't have, but you think would be useful, please let the Volunteer Coordinator know and we will try to get them for you.

## STUDENTS AT LANGUAGE ETC

Our students are from a wide variety of backgrounds. They:

- Range in age from 16 to 86. In the classroom, that means that you have students with very different life experiences and knowledge bases. This can be a great source of conversation topics as students share their thoughts at different stages of their lives.
- Come from over 60 different countries on five continents. While the majority (87%) is Latino, our student population is increasingly diverse. Both our presence near many of the embassies and changes in immigration patterns have brought us students from Central and Eastern Europe, China, Southeast Asia, and Africa. This can lead to truly mixed classes. For example, last Winter's 3A daytime class had one student from Guinea, one from Nigeria, one from Poland, one from Thailand, one from Vietnam, two from Mexico, two from Peru, and five from different countries in Central America. This makes teaching a very rich experience as you have lots of different traditions and experiences to draw on. As a teacher, you are likely to learn something new in every class.
- Despite this diversity, Spanish is still the predominant first language of our students. This can present a challenge in terms of keeping the students speaking English not Spanish. The teachers have to establish early on that English is the classroom language and that is what the students are expected to use.
- Have various levels of education. Almost half our students (44%) have less than 7 years of education. Some grew up in counties where there was no public school system while others had their education interrupted by war or civil unrest. These students may be only barely literate in their native tongue. Another group of students (38%) were able to attend middle or high school. They generally have basic literacy skills that are transferable to English. However, some are fluent in languages that use a different alphabet (e.g., Chinese, Amharic). This makes learning English even more complicated for them. In addition, there are students (18%) who have attended or even finished college. Many of these students studied English in their native counties and have the ability to read and write English. However, they may struggle with listening/speaking. LETC classes focus on reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, you may want to emphasize one aspect if that is more important to your students. It is also very important to remember the range of levels in your classroom when you are preparing a lesson plan. The KISS Principle (Keep it simple, stupid) is a good guide.
- Are very hard working. (85% have one or more jobs) They also have the kinds of jobs in which hours may change suddenly or where unexpected overtime may be required. This affects attendance. There are always a few students on your class roster who never appear. Some students will attend irregularly. Others will drop out. Most classes are smaller at the end of the term than at the beginning. Don't take this personally. The students appreciate your efforts and they may have to drop out for work-related reasons beyond their control. If you are concerned about a particular student's attendance, you can ask one of the staff in the front office to contact that student to see what the problem is. Sometimes a student will experience a change of hours and need to transfer to the day program from evenings or from evenings to weekends and vice versa: the student may not realize he/she can do this, and the front office people can help him/her make the change..

- Work commitments (as well as the vagaries of public transportation) can also affect timeliness. Changes in work hours can also affect timeliness: a student, who thought he could easily be here by 7, may have to work an extra hour, causing tardiness. A student who takes two buses to get here from work may also have trouble being on time. However, the teacher should start class on time so that the students who are in class get the benefit of the full lesson plan. Nonetheless, you should always welcome those who are late – it is usually for reasons beyond their control. The teacher should also consider starting every class with a review so that those who arrive after class starts can easily pick up the lesson.
- Many students are also parents. Sick children or responsibilities for elders can interfere with class attendance. Again, don't take it personally. A teacher might be able to help by reminding the student that he/she can use their workbook/ CD at home to keep up with the class when they can't be here. Welcome people back when they can make it again. If you create a warm environment in which the students feel they are learning, they will be there as much as possible.

## **STUDENT POLICIES**

See the Student Information handout in the “Instructions” section of your class notebook.

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

Student attendance is one of a key area for the students to maximize their opportunity to practice using English. **Volunteers must record attendance DAILY.** At the end of the month, student hours are totaled for the LETC database. (These must be tracked as part of our funding requirements.) Please remind students about this attendance policy, and check in with those who have missed several classes. Teachers can work out make-up periods or work with students to make up work. Tutors are also available to help students who need additional help.

Occasionally a student informs staff when they register that s/he might not be able to attend class on a regular basis due to her/his life situation. LETC will try to inform the teachers so that some extra support can be arranged for the student.

## **STUDENT CLASS CHANGE POLICY**

During the first week of the term, teachers are responsible for identifying and communicating with students that are considered misplaced in their level (higher or lower). Teachers should discuss the student with other teachers on their team to come to a consensus as there are different teachers each night. Level changes need to be evaluated as soon as possible; a change in level can only be made in the first two weeks of class. However, the change is optional for the student. Please discuss any level changes with the Admission Coordinator. There is a Student Class Change Form for both the teacher and student to complete. Students may not change levels or classes without the change being processed through and approved by the LETC office. Students who make changes without consulting the LETC office may not be able to receive credit for taking a class.

## **GRADUATION**

Graduation parties are held in the church auditorium on the last day of classes each term (except summer term). (There are three parties, one for daytime classes, one for weeknight, and one for weekends.) Graduation is very meaningful to our students and is a rewarding experience for volunteers; all students and volunteers are encouraged to attend. LETC staff provides beverages and paper products for a buffet lunch or dinner; students bring food to share with other students and classes. Your Volunteer Coordinator will include information about graduation in a weekly email near the end of the semester.

## CASAS TESTING

Twice each term teachers are required to administer a standardized exam to their students. It is extremely important that all students be tested appropriately, as our funding can be affected if students do not take the tests. In some cases, such as students who have already taken a particular test in the testing period, your Volunteer Coordinator will give you a list of who is excused from taking the test and will discuss how this affects your class on test day. Students who are required to take a test at the beginning of the term but are absent on test administration day will have to take a make-up exam. **Please send any student who missed the CASAS test to the front office for a make-up test.** After the tests are scored, you will receive a class profile summarizing your students' results, as well as individual score sheets to distribute to your students.

### WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE ADULT STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (CASAS)?

CASAS is a system that provides learner-center curriculum management, assessment and evaluation systems in education and training programs. CASAS is used nationwide in many different adult learning programs: adult basic education (ABE), English as a second language (ESL), workplace literacy, family literacy, employment and training, welfare reform/TANF, citizenship, and correctional programs, and meets the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)\* requirements. CASAS assessment is a standardized competency-based assessment.

### WHY DO WE ADMINISTER THE CASAS EXAM?

Language, ETC has been awarded federal grants for Adult Basic Education Services through the District of Columbia since 1999. In order to comply with the terms of the grants we are required to demonstrate – in an objective, quantifiable, and measurable form – improvements in literacy skill levels in “reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English-language acquisition, and other literacy skills.” We are required to use the CASAS system for this purpose. These results are reported to the DC government, which in turn reports them to the Federal Department of Education. In order to comply with the conditions of our grants, we must administer CASAS examinations to our students twice during each term. A pre-test is administered during the first two weeks of class and a post-test is given during the last two weeks. (If a student took a post test at the end of the Fall or Winter term, that score serves as the required pre-test.)

### TRAINING

Instructions will be provided for teachers before each exam and staff will be available to assist during testing. Specific dates of the testing are provided in your class folder. **Please do not tell your students what day the testing will take place in advance, as some may choose not to come that day and will have to make up the exam.** All CASAS materials will be labeled and organized in brown folders with cd's/tapes, pencils, and Scantron sheets on the day of the exam. Many of your students will not be familiar with standardized testing protocols, so it is important to give thorough instructions before administering the tests. Students should not write in test booklets. Please watch for this during the exam; this will save our staff many hours of erasing.

## **APPENDICES**





## CO-TEACHING TIPS

This guide reflects the thoughts of experienced teachers from the Language ETC AM, PM and Weekend programs. If you have additional questions, or other ideas to share speak to the Program Director. We would also encourage you to talk to other teachers about their experiences and techniques.

### 1. *What is co-teaching?*

Co-teaching occurs when two or more teachers jointly instruct a class. Co-teaching is the classroom model used at LETC. Two teachers are assigned to almost every class. Using the syllabus as a guide, teachers prepare and deliver a lesson plan for the class and decide which lessons will be led by which teacher. It is important that students' attention is not divided among teachers, which causes confusion and the break down of learning.

### 2. *Why does LETC have co-teachers?*

Co-teachers bring more energy and often different styles to the classroom. They bring a second set of eyes and hands to the classroom and lower student-teacher ratios. All of this can be very beneficial to the students. This method also allows the program to pair new volunteers with more experienced teachers providing mentoring as well as on-the-job training. In addition, if one teacher becomes ill or has an emergency which makes it impossible to come to class, the class does not have to be cancelled. The other teacher can run the class or a substitute can come in to work with the regular teacher.

### 3. *Are there different ways of co-teaching?*

There is no one way of teaching. You can use different models for different lesson plans. You can also experiment with several models to see if there is one that is particularly good for you and your co-teacher. The basic models are:

- ***One teaches, one supports.*** One teacher has primary responsibility for delivering instruction while the other observes/assists specific students or moves about the classroom stopping to help any student who needs extra help. This can be a good model for the first few classes when there is an experienced teacher paired with an inexperienced one.
- ***Station teaching.*** The co-teachers divide the instructional content and each takes responsibility for his/her part. This works well if one teacher is stronger/more interested in a particular area and the other is not. For example, some people love to teach grammar while others do not. The teacher who loves to do grammar can teach that part of the lesson plan while the other teacher covers the material more to her/his liking.

- **Parallel teaching.** The co-teachers jointly plan the lesson. Then they divide the class in two and each teaches a different group. This model might work well for co-teachers who have very different teaching styles or philosophies. The students cover the same material but it may be taught in different ways. For example, if one teacher loves using visuals while another likes students to do pairs work, each can teach using her/his individual style. This can also be useful in very large classes.
- **Alternative teaching.** One teacher works with a small group of students to teach/reinforce material on which they need practice. The other teacher works with the larger group on different material. This can be useful in classes where there is a large spread in ability. The less-prepared students can get extra help, while the more-prepared can move ahead.
- **Team teaching.** Here the teachers work together to deliver the entire lesson plan. They may role play, debate, simulate and model the material. They can alternate taking the lead on activities and exercises. This works very well for teachers with similar teaching styles and in fairly homogeneous classrooms.
- **Timed teaching.** Here the teachers divide the class time in half and each teaches for one-half of the class period. One teacher is the leader for each half, while the other observes /assists. Teachers decide which half each will cover before class begins and then proceed through the lesson plan.

#### 4. *How do I get started?*

Remember to relax and have fun! Every teacher has something valuable to contribute to the classroom. You and your co-teacher will soon find out how the motivated and friendly students at LETC make teaching a pleasure!

##### Step 1. Prior to the Start of the Term

- **Contact your co-teacher.** The LETC Volunteer Coordinator will assign you a co-teacher and give on his/her name and email address to you. You will also receive the names and email addresses of the other members of your team. Connect with your co-teacher right away, exchange phone and cell numbers so you can reach each other quickly and set up a time to meet. If you can't meet in the week or two before the term begins, meet during the hour before your first class.
- **Introduce yourself.** Let your co-teacher know what brought you to LETC. If you are a returning teacher, tell your co-teacher what classes you have taught. If you are new to LETC but have other teaching experiences, let your co-teacher know. What are your hobbies or interests? What kind of work do you do or have you done in the past? What languages do you speak? Is English your first or second language? Think of things that may be relevant to what you bring to the classroom as well as how you approach the class.
- **Talk about your approach to teaching.** Chat with your co-teacher about what you think your teaching style is, what your strengths are, and what areas you find the most challenging about teaching. Be open to the idea that you and your co-teacher can learn from one another.

- **Explore your differences and interests.** Perhaps English is your second language and you have an accent. Maybe your co-teacher has a regional American accent. You might want to be sure that you both pronounce all new vocabulary words so the students can get used to different forms of pronunciation. Maybe you love art or photography. You can volunteer to be the one who brings in pictures to illustrate a lesson. Think about ways to use your background and experiences to make the lessons more interesting.

### **Step 2.** Think About Your First Class

- **Prepare an introductory activity.** One thing that every first class has in common, regardless of level or teaching style, is that teachers must introduce themselves to students and students must introduce themselves to one another and the teacher. The first concrete activity you and your co-teacher can plan together is an introductory activity. Use this activity to take advantage of your teaching strengths, and help set the tone for communication and cooperation among the students and teachers for the term.

### Step 3. Prepare Your Lesson Plan

- **Decide together which co-teaching approach you'll try in the first class Based on your discussions, what do you think will work best for you? Remember you can use a different approach in subsequent classes if you want.**
- Develop a lesson plan Once you have a co-teaching model in mind, you can work on the overall lesson plan. You will start with the syllabus, but each teacher may have ideas for extra activities, games, or real life objects (realia) to use to make the lesson more interesting. Resources for these supplemental activities can be found in the teacher's lounge. You can also bring in objects from home. The Volunteer Coordinator and other teachers can also offer suggestions. However, this can take time. To best utilize the materials outside of the textbook, we recommend that you meet a few days before your first class or plan to meet at least one hour before your first class.

### Step 4. Assessment

- **Reflect on how the evening went.** You and your co-teacher should spend a few minutes immediately after class talking about how things went. Did you learn anything about yourself or your co-teacher that might help you plan a better class next time? Did your team teaching approach work well or would another model work better for you?

### **Step 5.** Class Log

- **Determine how you will handle the class log.** After every class, one of you must prepare a class log and email it to all the teachers who have your class. (This group is your "team") This class log must be emailed by noon of the day following the day you taught. (The Volunteer Coordinator will give you the email list.) Your class log will briefly explain what you covered in class and how, describe any problems the students are having with the material, tell whether you gave homework to the class, and recommend what should be reviewed at the beginning of the next class. This is also an opportunity to describe success/failure with a particular approach and to identify students you think may need a tutor. You and your co-teacher can alternate doing this task or one of you can do it every week while the other takes on some other responsibility.

## 5. *What other things should we think about in designing our approach to co-teaching?*

After the first few classes, you will have a better idea of who your students are and how you and your co-teacher are working together. At that point, you may want to consider some other factors in deciding how to best meet your students' needs. Here are some suggestions:

- **Take a look at your class roster to see how large your class is.** If the class is very large, you may want to divide it early on to maximize the amount of small group time students have with a teacher. In that case the parallel or alternative teaching models may be best for your students.
- **Check ability levels.** You can look at the students' profiles and their scores on the CASAS test that is given during the second week of class. If a student has attended LETC before, you might also talk to one of their previous teachers or look at their evaluation from last term. These sources can help you determine the ability levels of your students. While this may take some extra time, it will help you tailor your instruction and team teaching approach to better meet the student's needs.
- **Note student performance.** Test scores and profiles won't give you the whole picture. In most classes, there are students who lag behind and those who race ahead. You may be able to take advantage of this situation by pairing the more advanced students with those that struggle. In a sense, you make them co-teachers. How could they help you in whatever model you use?

Student files are kept in the front office and contain records from past terms. You are welcome to review them. See an office staff member for access.

## 6. *What are the best ways to keep communication open?*

The key to co-teaching is communication.

- **Talk/email regularly with your co-teacher to discuss what/how you will teach.** Ideally, you and your co-teacher will meet for an hour before class to develop your plan for that day. Which teaching model will you use? What is covered in the syllabus for that day? How will you supplement the syllabus? This also gives you enough time to copy supplemental materials if you need to. However, this is not always possible. You may only have 30 minutes (or less) to meet. In that case, you can communicate by email so that before you get to LETC you already have a lesson plan and supplemental materials decided on or prepared.
- **Experiment with different styles of co-teaching.** Co-teachers need to be honest with one another about what is working well and what is not. Experiment with different ways of co-teaching to see what works best for you and your class. Every class is different and will respond differently to different styles of teaching.
- **Read all the class logs from your team.** In addition to you and your co-teacher, your class also has lessons with other teachers. Each set of teachers prepares a class log after their class. These logs can be very helpful to you. Others may have observed things that work well and things that don't. Your fellow teachers may also have useful observations about your students. So be sure you read *all* of the class logs, even if you are not co-teaching the next class.

- ***Evaluate your experience.*** Periodically, think about how things are going. Are you speaking up about how the classroom lessons are planned? Have you learned a different way of doing things thanks to your co-teacher? Are you using your skills to make the class interesting to the students? If you think that you could do things differently, communicate with your co-teacher.

Co-teaching is an ongoing process. Done thoughtfully, it can benefit you and your students.

Written by Paula Roberts, Gigi Jones, Carlos LaTorre and Eleanor Shirley

Updated 7/2011



## TEAM TEACHING TIPS

### 1. *What is a team?*

A team is all of the teachers involved with a particular class. For example, if you teach Basic A-I on Monday night, your team is you and your co-teacher plus those who teach this same class on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. If you teach 1B on Saturday, your team is you and your co-teacher plus the Sunday 1-B teachers.

### 2. *How will I know who is on my team?*

A few days before class starts, the Volunteer Coordinator will give you a list of your team members and their email addresses.

### 3. *What are my responsibilities as a member of the team?*

Team members should:

- **Work cooperatively with everyone on the team to make sure the students have as consistent an experience as possible.** While every teaching pair will be a little different in its style and approach, it is important to try to keep the classes as similar as you can. One way to do that is to be sure you always follow the basic format (Warm-up, Review, New Material, Practice, Application, Evaluation ). Then the students will know what to expect.
- **Write the class log for the class and get it to the other team members ASAP.** For PM and Saturday teachers, this means no later than noon of the day after you teach. For AM teachers, this means by 5 pm of the day after you teach if you are a Tuesday teacher and by the following weekend if you are a Thursday teacher. If you are a Sunday teacher, have your class log done no later than 5 pm the following Wednesday.

The Volunteer Coordinator Manual will give you the format for the class log. There are also examples in your class binder. It is important to cover all of the basic points as briefly as possible. Your log should be readable so the next team can scan it quickly and know what adjustments (if any) they need to make to their lesson plan.

- **Stick to the syllabus.** While you cannot always begin and end where the syllabus tells you to, try to stay as close to the syllabus as possible. If you are too far behind or too far ahead, those teaching the next class will have to adjust their lesson plans. Remember, except for AM teachers, the next pair of teachers will get your class log only a few hours before they have to teach. They may already have a lesson plan prepared based on the syllabus and will be inconvenienced if they have to make a lot of last minute adjustments. If you have extra time, review old material rather than moving ahead.
- **Read all of the class logs.** Even if you are not teaching the next class, read the logs. This way you will know ahead of time if there has been some change from the syllabus affecting your class. For example, if the Monday evening class didn't cover the whole lesson plan for that day, the Tuesday teachers will have to make adjustments in their plans to teach the uncovered material. Those adjustments might well affect the Wednesday and Thursday

teachers. By reading the Monday log, the Wednesday teacher can anticipate possibly making adjustments to their lesson plan.

Class logs are also used to raise questions about which students are having difficulty with the material and who might need a tutor. Since you may want to weigh in on these issues, you should stay up to date on what is going on in your class.

- **Attend team meetings.** As noted below, most teams will meet twice a term and every effort should be made to attend those meetings.
- **Participate in end of term activities such as grading tests and conducting student evaluations.**

#### 4. ***Does the team have meetings?***

Every team meets together during the second week of the term. This gives the team members a chance to meet one another and talk about the upcoming class. Some team members may have taught the same students before; others may have previous experience with the particular class level. At the meeting, they can share their insights about the students and/or the curriculum.

Most teams also meet at the end of the term to grade the final exams, fill out the student reports, and make decisions about moving the students to the next level or having them repeat the class. While some teams parcel out these responsibilities and use email rather than a meeting to make decisions, this is not ideal. Often, this approach leaves one team member with all of the work and responsibility. This is unfair to the teacher in terms of workload and to students who may not get as thorough an evaluation as they should. For this reason, LETC strongly encourages teams to have an end of term meeting.

#### 5. ***Who organizes the team?***

Every weekday PM team will have a Team Leader. Because they have fewer members to coordinate, the AM and Weekend teams may select a Team Leader or they may choose to function without one.

At its first meeting, the PM team selects its Team Leader. Ideally, this is an experienced teacher who is familiar with basic LETC procedures. The Team Leader organizes team meetings and makes sure that all of the end-of-the-term team duties are met. The Team Leader also makes sure that each pair of co-teachers is preparing its class logs and submitting them on time.

#### 6. ***How does the team communicate between meetings?***

As discussed above, the daily class log is the primary means of communication for the team. In addition to the lesson itself, class logs are used to identify student needs or classroom issues. Is there a student who has been misplaced and should be moved ahead or back a level? Would a student benefit from a tutor? What if a student is disruptive in your class and you would like to know if others on the team are also having problems with that student? These are all typical issues than can be discussed in a class log.

#### 7. ***What other things does the team do?***

At the end of each term, the students take both an oral and a written test. The syllabus will tell you which team members will be administering these tests. The oral tests are graded on the spot, but the written tests *are* graded later. Each student also receives an individual evaluation

sheet (aka a Classroom Checklist). It tells the student how they did on the tests and also gives the teachers' sense of how they are doing on reading, writing, speaking and listening. Ideally, all team members should help with grading and filling out the Classroom Checklist. The Team Leader will organize this process and make sure that all team members have a say in evaluating the students.

Written by Paula Roberts, Gigi Jones, Carlos LaTorre and Eleanor Shirley