

## 3.2 Health Literacy Curriculum Considerations: Curriculum Design Checklist

**Designing a health literacy curriculum can be an exciting and creative process because of:**

- High interest and high relevance of health to ESOL learners
- The possibility of making a positive contribution to addressing U.S. health care challenges through health literacy instruction
- The instructional versatility possible within a health focus (Health literacy instruction lends itself to a number of rich teaching approaches.)
- The opportunities inherent in health literacy instruction for learner engagement and participation in the classroom and community
- The potential for partnering with community organizations to enrich the health instruction (Community partners can in turn learn from English language learners.)

As you approach designing a health literacy curriculum, you will need to consider the following **ten important issues**.

### 1. Time

**TIME is a very important factor!**

- ✓ How much time can you realistically allot to covering health literacy in your classes?
  - Parts of classes? Full classes?
  - A week? Two weeks? Longer?

Knowing how much time you can give to health literacy while still meeting other learner and funder needs will help you determine content, structure, and implementation priorities for your health literacy curriculum.



## 2. Identifying Objective(s)

- ✓ What do you want your health literacy curriculum to accomplish? (See below for information on needs assessment.)

To provide learners with knowledge/language/additional skills:

- For accessing and navigating U.S. health care?
- For paying for health care in the U.S.?
- For communicating with health care providers effectively?
- For practicing preventive care?
- For taking medications safely?
- For understanding illnesses they are at high risk for?
- For understanding health disparities in the U.S.?
- A combination of these?
- Other?

## 3. Needs Assessment

- ✓ How will learners' needs be assessed to assure that curriculum content is relevant and appropriate for them?
  - In-class discussions?
  - Surveys?
  - Interviews?
  - Focus groups?
  - Consultation with community health care and social service providers?
  - A combination of these?
- ✓ Will learner needs be assessed as part of implementing the curriculum? If so, how will they be assessed?
- ✓ Will learners be expected to complete all curriculum content, or just parts of it? If parts, how will these parts be selected?



#### 4. Curriculum Focus

A health literacy curriculum can take many possible directions.

- ✓ Will your health literacy curriculum stand alone, or will it be part of a larger life skills curriculum?
- ✓ Will you focus on individual health issues (e.g., diabetes, cancer, or heart disease), preventive care practices, using the health care system, or a blend of these?
- ✓ What language/literacy/numeracy/GED® skills will be integrated with the health content?
- ✓ How can the curriculum incorporate *reliable* Internet health literacy resources?

#### 5. Structure

- ✓ What structure of curriculum would work best for your learners and program?
  - A loose, flexible structure such as a framework?
  - A highly formatted structure with detailed lesson plans, scripts, and handouts?
  - Something in between?
  - Would it be preferable to specify language and other basic skills to integrate into health lessons or to let instructors decide?

#### 6. Choosing an Instructional Approach

- ✓ What teaching approach best suits your learners' needs?
  - Language Experience Approach?
  - Life skills, content-based instruction?
  - Narrative approach?
  - Participatory approach?
  - Problem-solving approach?
  - A combination of the above?



- ✓ What approach(es) do program time and resources allow for? Is one approach better for higher levels and another approach better for lower levels?

## **7. Writing the Curriculum**

- ✓ Who will write the curriculum?
  - An individual?
  - A team? If a team, how will work be divided?
  - A collaboration between adult educators and health care providers/educators? If a collaboration, what aspects will each collaborator contribute? How will priorities of each collaborator be balanced and met in the curriculum? How will communication be structured between collaborators?

## **8. Getting Feedback**

- ✓ How will writers get feedback on their work throughout the writing process?
- ✓ If the curriculum is to provide specific health information, how will information be obtained and verified by curriculum writers?
- ✓ What is the best way to pilot the curriculum in your program?
- ✓ How will feedback from piloting be incorporated into the final product?
- ✓ Will you build an evaluation stage into the curriculum's implementation so that you can collect and share quantitative and qualitative data on how well the curriculum achieves health literacy objectives or what kinds of health literacy gains are observed in learners who use it? How can community partners help in designing and implementing a curriculum evaluation?



## 9. Preparing Instructors

- ✓ What introduction to health literacy instruction do teachers in your program need?
- ✓ If you are collaborating with health care educators/providers, what introduction to adult education and your learner populations do your collaborators need?
- ✓ Do you want to design trainings to accompany your curriculum?
- ✓ Do you want to write a training manual to accompany it?

## 10. Instructional Supports

- ✓ What instructional supports do you want to provide within the curriculum?
  - Reproducible handouts?
  - Online guide and online activities?
  - Guest speaker ideas?
  - Field trip ideas?
  - Learner project ideas?
  - Community affordable care resource list?
  - Other?

