

3.3 Bringing Health Lessons to Life: Instructional Supports

ESOL health instruction can be brought to life with a variety of resources and activities, including:

- Realia
- Print information
- Web-based information
- Video
- Projects
- Field trips
- Guest speakers
- Service learning

Read on for examples each of these kinds of instructional support.

Realia

- Doctor's kit equipment: stethoscope, thermometer, blood pressure cuff, bandages, etc.
- Empty over-the-counter medication containers and their boxes
- Prescription warning stickers and labels
- Medical history, new patient, hospital registration, and insurance forms
- Telephones
- Nutrition labels

Print Information

- Health education brochures in "plain English"
- Clinic flyers
- Health department program flyers
- Pharmacy drug information printouts
- Medical and insurance forms
- Textbooks: Look for (and request from publishers) textbooks that offer **realistic, up-to-date health care communication practice and cultural information** for learners.



Web-based Health Information

- **For higher level ESOL learners**, the Web now offers a wide variety of *reliable* health information. *Reliable* indicates here that information has been verified through scientific research and posted on a government, academic, public health, or medical non-commercial website.

Health information websites in most cases need previewing by the instructor to find level-appropriate material in chunks learners can manage.

The following websites contain basic, reliable health information in “plain English” and in other languages as well. They contain text and video formats. You can select small chunks of text or video for learners to focus on in an activity or lesson:

- [Medline Plus](#)
- [Healthy Roads Media](#)

- **Have learners look up and locate information on websites of local care provider websites**, such as clinics, hospitals, urgent care centers, and health departments.
- **Have learners compare *reliable* and *unreliable* health information** on the web and brainstorm ways to identify which is which.
- **Some web-based health literacy curricula may be appropriate** for your learners to access on their own. Most work best when printed out and used with teacher guidance. For examples, see [5.13, ESOL and Health Literacy Teaching Materials](#) in [Section 5](#) of this toolkit.
- **For beginning ESOL learners**, [Virginia’s REEP Program](#) has created a clean and simple web program to for learners to practice basic health vocabulary and listening independently.



Learner Project Ideas

Students can:

- Prepare a personal or family health history log.
- Create a personal preventive care plan, including healthy behaviors and local health care resources they can use.
- Research a health topic to share new knowledge with other learners.
- Create brochures, posters, presentations, videos, a newsletter, or blogs exploring a health topic, preventive care practices, community care resources, health care communication strategies, or health tips for newcomers to the U.S.
- Evaluate commercials for medications and report on what they find.

Class Field Trip Ideas

- Visit a **community health fair** (or arrange one at your school).
- Tour a **local hospital or clinic**.
- Visit a **health sciences library**. Have a librarian share helpful resources for learners.
- Visit a **pharmacy**. Have a scavenger hunt in the store and speak with a pharmacist.
- Arrange a **meeting of health professionals or medical/nursing students and adult ESOL learners** for an exchange of health care experiences and perspectives.

Guest Speaker Ideas

- Invite a local public health nurse to speak about preventive care, local affordable care resources, or current community health concerns.
- Invite a health educator from a health department or nongovernmental organization to speak about a condition learners may be at high risk for (for example, diabetes, high blood pressure, breast cancer, or cardiovascular disease).
- Invite a nutrition expert to speak about how to maintain a healthy diet when you come to the United States.



- Invite someone from a local hospital to speak about the interpreter law and how to access interpreter services in the hospital and community.
- Invite a health care professional to speak about important questions to ask a doctor.

Guest Speaker Caveats

Many ESOL teachers share anecdotes of how their learners were traumatized by a guest speaker who did not “get” how to present effectively to ELLs. There are many benefits to be had from exposing ELLs to guest speakers, so don’t let the potential trauma deter you from inviting speakers.

To ensure a good outcome for your learners and a guest speaker:

- Invite the speaker to visit a class first to get a sense of what class communication is like and ask the teacher questions about it afterwards.
- Let the speaker know (even though it may seem obvious!) that they will need to speak slowly in simple words, *without any technical jargon*.
- Remind them to keep topics to a minimum. Sometimes less is more!
- Let them know that you can be their ESOL interpreter. After they present some information to learners, you can repeat it to learners in even simpler ESOL English. Remind the speaker that repetition is an important part of language learning.
- Encourage the speaker to use clear visuals or props in their presentation.
- Offer to go over the presentation beforehand with the speaker to help them keep it simple enough.

For more recommendations on effective use of guest speakers in your ESOL class, see [3.4.7-8](#) in this toolkit.



Service Learning Partnerships

Invite nearby medical or nursing programs to partner with your program. Medical and nursing students can be placed in your program to work with your learners around their health and health care needs. The medical and nursing students, while helping your learners, will strengthen their own practice skills by applying clinical skills with LEP populations. Read more on health care service learning in ESOL programs in [Section 4 of this toolkit](#).