Teaching Tips for Tutors

Best practices for working with adult learners

As you review this slide show, think about your student from the case study. Which of these techniques might you use in a tutoring session?

Don't forget to record these techniques and how to use them in your Tutoring Toolbox.

Contextualizing Instruction

Contextualizing instruction is an educational term that means making the education relevant to the student's goals and experiences.

How can you do that when you tutor?

Contextualizing Instruction

Here are three tips for contextualizing instruction:

Tip #1: Use examples that the student can relate to in their personal lives and/or work experiences.

Contextualizing Instruction

Example:

When teaching fractions, use examples of fractions in real-life terms, such as pizza (eating 4 out of the 8 slices is eating half a pizza) and cooking.

Contextualizing Instruction

Tip #2: Use real-life materials from work, life, and school to show how the skills you are teaching are used in different settings (contexts).

Contextualizing Instruction

Example:

Have the adult learner bring in a note from their child's school. Teach reading skills using this note. Teach writing skills by having the student write a response back to the school.

Ask the student how these reading and writing skills could be used at work. How would it be the same? How would it be different?

Contextualizing Instruction

Tip #3: Relate the skills to how the learner will use the skills in the future.

Contextualizing Instruction

Example:

If the student wants to pass the GED Tests® so he/she can go to college, have him/her practice writing a "term paper." The student could find two or three resources and write a one-page paper citing these resources. This will help the learner with the GED Writing Test as well as build skills needed for college writing.

Learning by Doing

As a tutor, you can actively involve the students in the learning. What does this look like?

Consider the following example...

Learning by Doing

Imagine you are tutoring a learner on the major events in US history. One way to teach him or her is to create a PowerPoint® of major events and describe the events to the student as he or she takes notes while you talk.

Learning by Doing

While this might work for some learners, what are some ways that students can be more actively involved in their learning?

Learning by Doing - Examples

Here are some examples of how students learn by doing while studying U.S. history.

- Students go online and research a specific event. They develop a brief PowerPoint® presentation and share it with other learners.
- Students create a timeline that shows major events on a large sheet of paper or computer.
- Students create flash cards that include the event, what caused it and the outcome (effect). Then the flash cards are put in chronological order.

Using Graphic Organizers

- Graphic organizers are visual representations of ideas and processes.

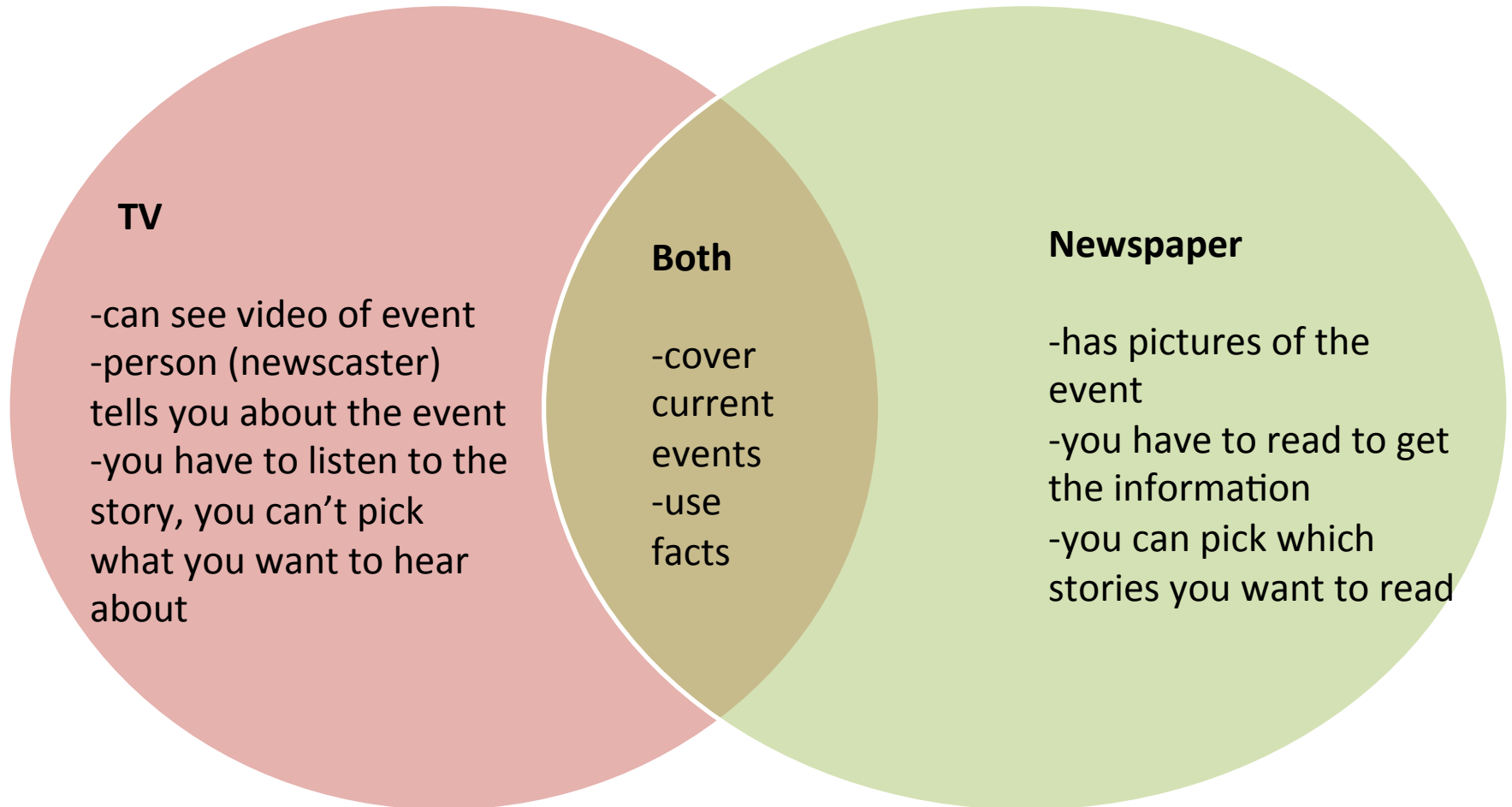- They're useful in organizing ideas and/or showing how ideas are related.
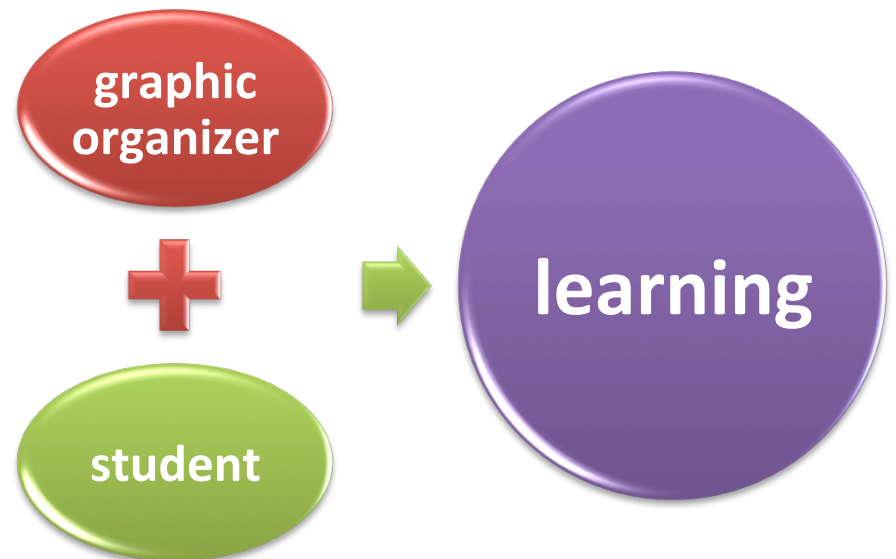
Using Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers can be simple or complex. You could create the format, or your student could create a format. The next slides will show some examples.

More online examples of graphic organizers are available on the [tutor resource website](#).

Graphic Organizer – compare & contrast

Similarities and differences between reading a newspaper and watching the news on TV

TV

-can see video of event
-person (newscaster) tells you about the event
-you have to listen to the story, you can't pick what you want to hear about

Both

-cover current events
-use facts

Newspaper

-has pictures of the event
-you have to read to get the information
-you can pick which stories you want to read

Graphic Organizer – cause & effect

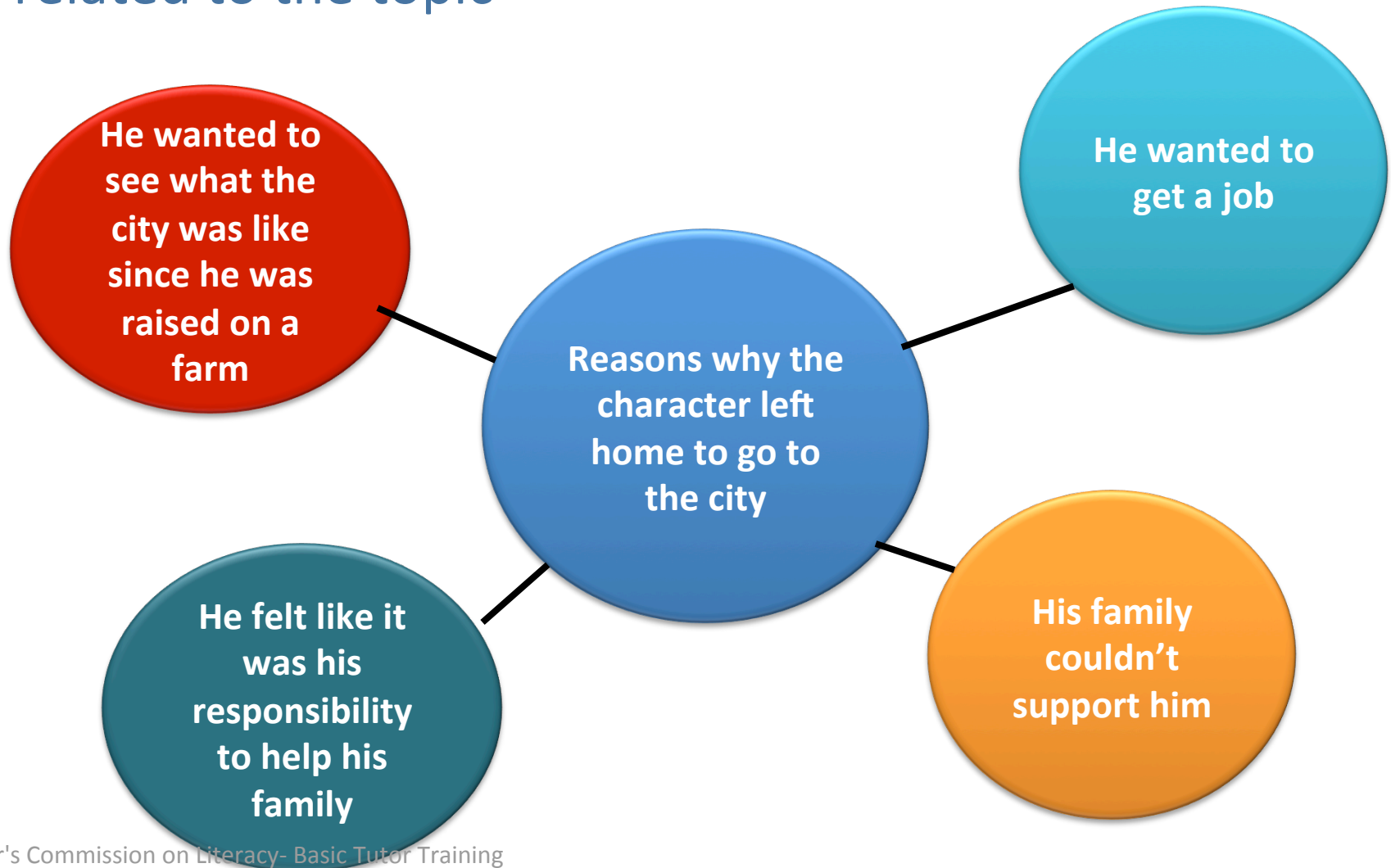Shows the cause and effect of an action

Cause	Effect
The children were so caught up in their game on the playground that they lost track of time.	Their mom started walking down to the playground because she was worried since the children were late for dinner.

Graphic organizer – Brainstorm ideas

The center is the main idea and the others are ideas related to the topic

He wanted to see what the city was like since he was raised on a farm

He wanted to get a job

Reasons why the character left home to go to the city

He felt like it was his responsibility to help his family

His family couldn't support him

Graphic Organizer – 5 paragraph essay

A visual representation of the ideas used in a 5 paragraph essay

Introduction paragraph:				
Idea 1		Idea 2		Idea 3
Closing paragraph				

Keep in mind...

You don't need to create elaborate graphic organizers on a computer. You or your student can create them using paper and pencil.

Scaffolding

In construction, scaffolding is the framework that allows workers to reach higher levels to do the work. It can also provide support to the structure.

Scaffolding

In teaching, scaffolding is the support you provide to a student to help him/her learn a new skill. Often you will teach this new skill by building on what he/she already knows. After a student becomes more confident with the new skill, you can take away some of the supports and allow him/her to become more independent.

The next slide includes some tips for scaffolding instruction.

Scaffolding

Here are some ways you can scaffold instruction:

- Have the current lesson build off of skills used in the previous lesson. (e.g. Go from decimals to fractions.)

- Begin by modeling how to solve the problem or use the skills. → Then have the student work on the problem with you offering support as needed. → Once the student feels more comfortable, have the student work independently.

- Use tools (e.g. formula sheet, word bank, etc.) or offer support to the student as he/she works to solve the problem.

Some Tips for Scaffolding Instruction:

- Begin with what the students can do.

- Help students achieve success quickly.

- Create opportunities for all students to participate.

- Know when it is time to stop.

- Help students to be independent when they have command of the activity.

Source: Ryan Miller, Tutor Trainer

Scaffolding - example

Imagine that you are teaching ways to use prefixes to find the meanings of new words. This will help the learner improve his/her reading. The student that you are working with wants to go to nursing school. How could you scaffold your instruction?

Scaffolding - example

Begin the lesson by asking what medical terms the student already knows. (Building on what he/she already knows). Write down the words or have the student write down the words.

Find a word that has a prefix that can be used in other words (ex. cardio). Ask the student what cardio means. (Help the student to achieve success quickly.) Describe what a prefix is and how it can be used to help find the meaning of new words.

Scaffolding - example

Write other words that begin with cardio. Ask the student to predict the meaning. Provide definitions so the student can match the word with the definition. (Provide tools to help the student master the skill.)Provide help to the student as needed.

Ask the student to find another prefix he/she recognizes (e.g. optic-). Have the student match the words that begin with optic- on his/her own. (Help students to be independent when they have command of the activity.)
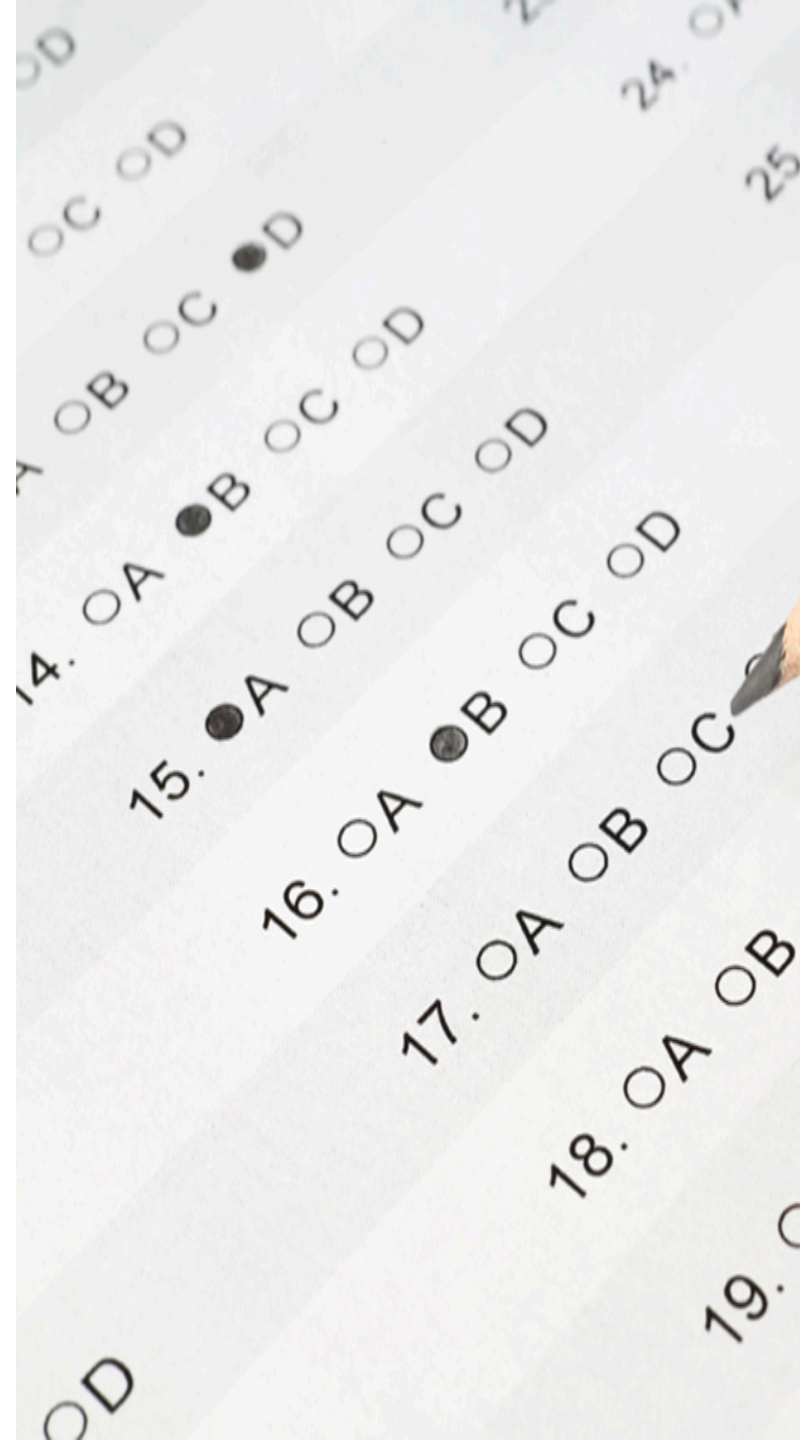
Using Guiding Questions

These questions can be used at the beginning of your tutoring session or before you begin an activity. The goal of these questions is to help learners focus their attention on the skill or goal you are teaching.

Using Guiding Questions

The GED Tests® often use these questions as headings for reading passages to help guide learners' focus as they are reading the passage.

Tips for Asking Guiding Questions

- Think about what skill you are asking students to learn.

- Develop a question that would give students something to think about as they complete the activity, read the passage, watch the video, etc.

- If you want to generate discussion, ask an open-ended, thinking question.

Building Learning Communities

A learning community is a group of people who are learning and teaching each other using discussion, sharing resources, completing activities together, and problem solving.

This tutor training is an example of a learning community. You and your fellow tutors are learning together by sharing your thoughts and ideas, completing activities together, and teaching each other.

Building Learning Communities

As a tutor, you may have the opportunity to work with a small group of students. If you work one-on-one with a student, he/she may also be part of a learning community if they participate in online activities with other adult learners.

Tips for Building Learning Communities

In face-to-face settings:

• Use a **common goal** such solving a specific problem to solve which will create a shared purpose.

• **Create an atmosphere of trust** by working as a group to set expectations for behavior (ground rules), develop activities where groups can experience success and monitor individual's behaviors.

Tips for Building Learning Communities

In face-to-face settings:

• **Be inclusive in your learning communities** by making sure different ideas and experiences are represented and all voices are heard.

• **Allow enough time** for the learning community to develop – it takes time to create a sense of trust and teamwork.

Tips for Building Learning Communities

In face-to-face settings:

• **Use positive peer pressure** to your advantage by encouraging learners to support each other and allowing the group to help solve other students' problems, when appropriate

• **Celebrate successes** as a group by encouraging people to share their accomplishments, allowing learners to help other students, and offering praise often.

Source: Originally published 12/23/29 © Edutopia.org; The George Lucas Educational Foundation."

Tips for Building Learning Communities

In online settings:

• Use **open-ended, thinking questions** to generate online discussion amongst the participants.

• Provide **opportunities for participants to work collaboratively online** using web 2.0 tools such as blogs, wikis, and webinar software.

• Develop activities **that allow participants' personalities to show** through (ex. upload a photo of themselves, projects where they can be creative).

• Develop **activities where learners need to interact with each other** to maximize learning.