

Program Planning Elements
Designing a Faith-based English Language Learning program
to impact your neighborhood

Janice GT Penner

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This document and a few other Christian ESL/ELL materials can be found on my website www.AACE-English.com

(AACE = All About Communicating in English)

I live in metro-Vancouver, BC Canada, so I can also meet with you locally to discuss program ideas, share our lending library, etc. I can also meet you via Zoom.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly through the AACE site or email: janicegtpenner@gmail.com

Why? Some Scriptural Motivation

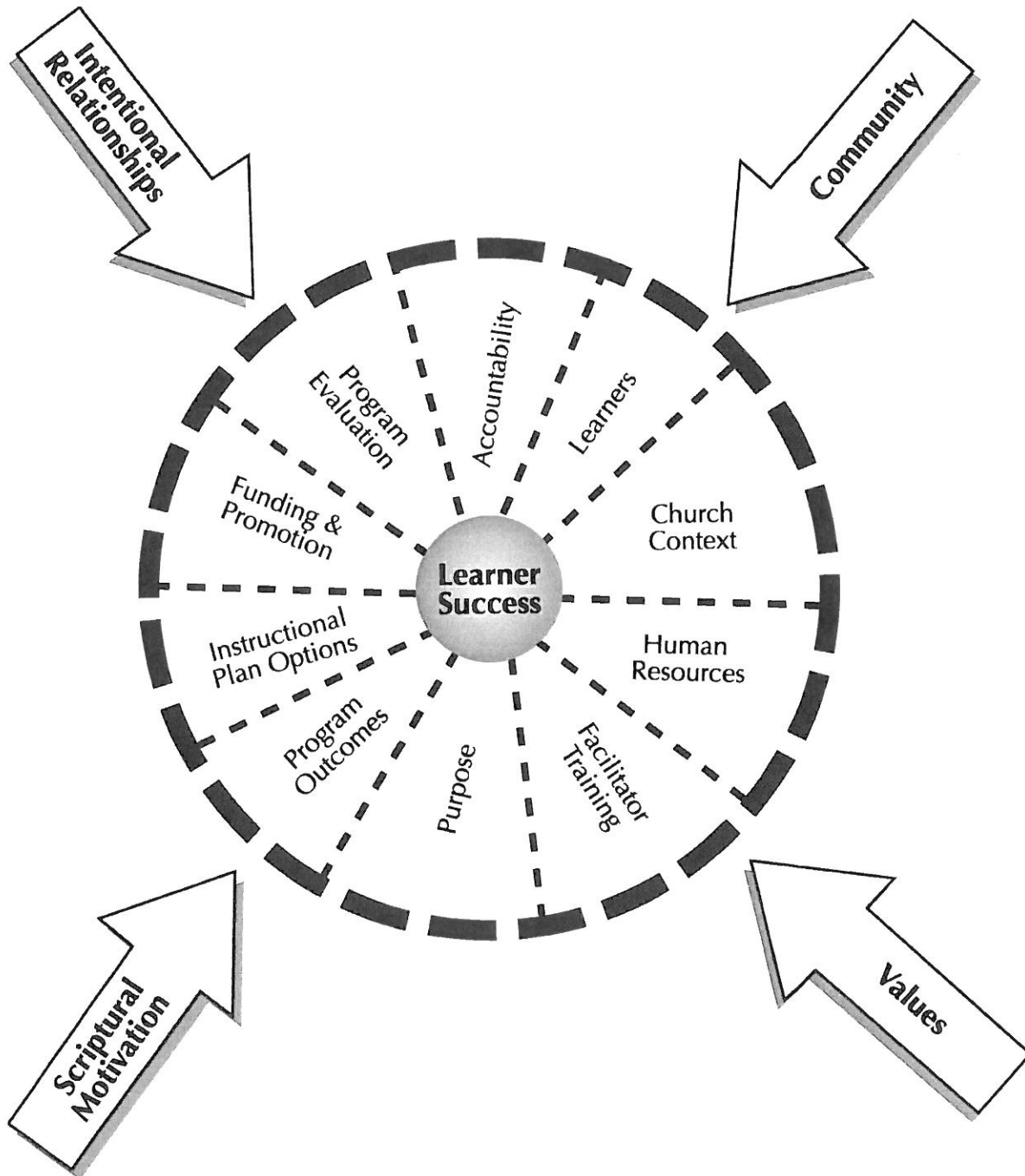
Note: Simpler versions of the Bible should be used for English Language Learners.

- For example, the writers of the *Easy English Bible*.
<https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible/easy/> only used 1200 common English words, so even beginners can understand it.
- The verses below are from the *Contemporary English Version* (CEV) which can be found at <https://www.biblegateway.com/>. This site has numerous versions you can explore.

Your Turn Match the Scripture verse with the “Bible address”

_____ For now there are faith, hope, and love. But of these three, the greatest is love.	Acts 4:20
_____ Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples.	Matthew 5:13
_____ I do everything I can to win everyone I possibly can.	Matthew 25:35
_____ No one can have faith without hearing the message about Christ.	Matthew 28:19 a
_____ Then Jesus asked, “Which one of these three people was a real neighbor to the man who was beaten up by robbers?”	Luke 10:36
_____ We cannot keep quiet about what we have seen and heard.	Luke 14: 12 – 14
_____ Welcome people into your home and don’t grumble about it.	Romans 10:17
_____ When I am with people whose faith is weak, I live as they do to win them.	1 Corinthians 9:22a
_____ When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.	1 Corinthians 9:22b
_____ When you give a feast invite (people who) cannot pay you back.	1 Corinthians 13:13
_____ You are the salt for everyone on the earth. ...	1 Peter 4:9

Faith - Based English Language Learning Program Planning Elements



Source : Janice GT Penner (c) 2023
Metro Vancouver ESL Ministry Network
janicegtpenner@gmail.com

What kind of program does God want you to lead?

- There is no “best program.”
- These questions are meant to focus your leadership team.
- Some questions may not apply, or they may generate even more for you!

Some questions to guide your planning

Purpose /Mission Statement What is your focus?

- Bible Study only
- Citizenship preparation
- Completing visa applications [foreign farm workers]
- Conversation skills
- Equipping of non-English speaking Christians [ex: Coquitlam Christian Center, Janice & members of the English congregation led ALPHA for ESOL with Korean & Persian congregation members who shared the building with CCC.]
- Evangelism
- Family ministry (Parenting 3rd culture kids, Reading to your children [ex: Broadway - Janice taught day care parents about reading to children, discipline scenarios, etc.]
- Income Tax workshops (or other free services)
- Job finding workshops / clubs
- Music (choir for special seasons)
- One-to-one Senior & international Student matches
- Reviewing the sermon materials after the service
- Workplace focus (specific field, safety training for construction, etc).

Learners

- Who lives in your neighborhood?
- Are there enough people that need and have time for English services?
- Who do you want to serve?
 - People in your immediate neighborhood?
 - A particular language group?
 - Believers or seekers who are familiar with your church?
 - Believers in an ethnic language church to help them express their beliefs
 - What are their native languages? [This may influence if you seek L1 language/translations for PR or during sessions.]
 - Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW -nannies, caregivers, etc)? or Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) ?
- How old are the majority of your target group? Retired? Working adults? Homework club? [This will affect your scheduling (time of day) and number of hours per week.]

- What are their needs?
 - English language only? Tax preparation? Health info?
 - How do you know this information? How can you find out?
- Does it appear that people in your neighborhood want to learn English?
- Is it okay with everyone if the learners are there more for “social interaction” and not really working hard to learn English? [social club for seniors; a lot of L 1 used]

Church Context

A) Church's Mission & engagement

- How does this program fit into the DNA of your church? Is it part of missions? Outreach? A totally new division?
- Where will funding come from to cover expenses?
- How can the wider congregation be involved? [(prayer team, food team, “adopt a family,” Lunar New Year’s party guests, cultural variety show guests, etc.)]

B) Other ESL support programs?

- What other faith-based programs exist in your area?
 - How long have they operated? How is it going?
- Can your church cooperate with a nearby/ existing programs somehow?
- Are there enough learners in the area to maintain another viable program?
- Are there government funded English programs (LINC) or private schools nearby?
- Will your program be seen as a competitor to any of the above?

C) Facilities

- How much space do you have for individual breakout/classrooms?
- When is space available during the week?
- Is there enough adult furniture for these rooms?
 - If necessary, who will move the furniture before/ after classes?
 - If this is added to the custodial duties, how much extra will this cost per month?
- Is there a large space nearby for larger groups sessions if this is desired?
- Is there comfortable space for beverage and food consumption?

Human Resources [Facilitator & Facilitator training]

- Who is available to capably coordinate or lead the program?
 - [preferably someone with an education or TESOL background]
- What special skills / knowledge can people in your church share with learners?
- Are you able to pay a coordinator/director? How much?
- Who is able to facilitate (teach)?

[It’s best to consider ourselves as **facilitators** instead of teachers. The term is less daunting for volunteers, professionals won’t get as upset, and might help leaders talk less. The common concept that a teacher’s role is to “impart knowledge” is hard to break]

- How will volunteer facilitators be recruited?

- Are all the facilitators required to be believers if the program does not have a Christian/Biblical content focus?
- Are there enough facilitators to sustain the program longer than 1 or 2 “terms”?
[Issue: Do most of the seniors go south during the winter?]
- What are the benefits for the volunteer facilitators?
- What support will your program offer to prevent “burn out”?
- How will you screen the willing facilitators?
- Are they good communicators with people who don’t speak English perfectly?

[Facilitators will need to be able to speak in basic English skills instead of using baby talk/incomplete sentences, speaking louder, or slowing down. It is not impossible. They can learn to express ideas in simple English with frequently used words.]

- Will you be using curriculum that requires special skills? [internet search skills, re-writing published materials, word-processing skills]
- Do you want the facilitators to take something similar to the “Plan to Protect” training or undergo a criminal record check?

[The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada has a protection plan for churches. www.winningkidsinc.ca]

Program Outcomes

- How can you measure the success of your program?
- Does your church leadership and membership expect the learners to attend services?
- Will accommodations be made if they do come to services? [translation, etc.]
- Will pastoral staff insist that the learners and their families attend religious events?

[A sad example is a pastor who required the learners (predominately enthusiastic female Muslims) to attend an Easter event with their families. The Muslim husbands were so upset because of whatever was said that they refused to allow their wives to attend any future conversation classes.]

Instructional Plan Options

A) Learner placement

- How will you decide the level of the learners? Self report? Mini one-to-one interview? Observation of 4 people discussing a picture? Online evaluation test
- How will learners “progress” to another level?

B) Instructional Materials

- Will you be using mainstream ESL textbooks?
- Will you adapt existing Bible Study materials?
- Where can you find out about Christian English language learning materials?
- Will you choose material from the internet?
- How will topics be chosen for the sessions?
- Will all levels be discussing the same topic but in different ways?
- Will all levels use similar texts?

- Which version of the Bible should be used? Can you get free ones?

C) Time Considerations

- How long will your terms be?
- How long will the sessions/ classes be? 45 min? 60 min? 90 min?
- Will there be a beverage and snack break?
 - Will all classes have a break at the same time? Where?
 - Who will purchase, distribute, oversee the food items?
 - How will you know about dietary restrictions for individuals or specific ethnic/religious groups?

D) Group format: Large group and break out groups

- Will everyone meet as a large group and then break out into smaller groups (levels)?
- What will happen in large group? Singing? Object lessons? Devotional? Bible verse discussion? Bible verse memorization challenges?
- Will the large group session be before or after small groups?
- If the large group session includes Christian content, will it be optional?

Funding and Promotion

A) Funding

- What are the fixed and variable costs?
- Where will funding come from to cover expenses?
- Will your program be competing with other ministries in the church for funds?
- **Note:** As a non-profit institution, churches cannot legally charge learners for the ESL program. They may charge for textbooks or supplies (photocopies) or coffee break items. [The BC government has disciplined one church that I know of because the church charged individuals for classes while claiming it was a “church program.”]
- Which part of the church budget will cover the expenses?
- If necessary, who pays for paper and photocopying?
- Will the program be charged for utilities? (heating/electricity)
- Will resource books be purchased for the facilitators for reference? [Helpful items include a few grammar texts; language learner dictionaries]
- Will a class set of picture dictionaries be made available for students?
- Can an informal lending library be set up with graded readers or book donations?
- Will a “class reservation fee” be charged with most of the money returned if learners have excellent attendance?

B) Promotion

Note: If there is Biblical or Christian life content, it is imperative that this is noted on the promotion materials. It’s about integrity, and this is the first criticism from the professional English Teaching profession. I have often heard, “Those free lessons in church basements are a ‘bait and switch scam!’”.

- How will non-native English speakers in your area be alerted of this opportunity?
- What types of media will you use? English only? L2 as well?

- How much time will there be between the announcement(s), registration and start of classes? How many learners do you want in your first term?
 - If things go well, word of mouth is all that is needed.

Accountability/ Evaluation

- Who is the program team accountable to? Pastor? Board? A committee?
- Will the program team meet regularly for planning and prayer sessions?
- What happens if a volunteer misses several sessions in a row?
- Will a program review be completed? What format? How often? By whom? Will the learners be included in a program review?

ANSWERS

Why? Some Scriptural Motivation

1 Corinthians 13:13 For now there are faith, hope, and love. But of these three, the greatest is love

Matthew 28:19 a Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples.

1 Corinthians 9:22b No I do everything I can to win everyone I possibly can.

Romans 10:17 No one can have faith without hearing the message about Christ.

Luke 10:36 Then Jesus asked, "Which one of these three people was a real neighbor to the man who was beaten up by robbers?"

Acts 4:20 We cannot keep quiet about what we have seen and heard.

1 Peter 4:9 Welcome people into your home and don't grumble about it.

1 Corinthians 9:22a When I am with people whose faith is weak, I live as they do to win them.

Matt 25:35 When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.

Luke 14: 12 – 14 When you give a feast invite (people who) cannot pay you back.

Matt 5:13 You are the salt for everyone on the earth. ...

Thank you! Cam On Xie Xie Domo Arigato

Merci Spaciba Rahmet Danke Grazie Gracias Salamat Kamsahamnida