



VOLUNTEERING WITH ESL LEARNERS

## **The Language Experience Approach (LEA)**

- was first used to develop early literacy among underprivileged L1 learners
- promotes reading and writing through the use of personally lived experiences that are told and re-told orally
- is particularly powerful in the adult ESL context with language learners from more orally-based cultural backgrounds acquiring their first functional literacy
- can inspire lessons at all levels of ESL teaching and tutoring

## **The LEA Method**

- Learners have a personal or shared experience.
- Learners recall, tell and re-tell the experience to their classmates, a teacher, or a volunteer, often supported by visuals or realia.
- The teacher or volunteer, acting as a “scribe”, records the experience, often supported by visuals or realia.
- Scribed pieces, visual supports and realia are then used as content for additional learning activities.
- LEA is a balanced approach to literacy and language acquisition, used most effectively in whole – part – whole sequences.