Adult Education Lesson Plan
for
Zack’s Alligator by Shirley Mozelle

**Name of Activities:** Five-Finger Rule

**Students Participating; size of group:** Book Discussion Adults- individuals or small groups

**Lesson Goal:** Learners will learn the Five-Finger Rule and how to apply it. They will understand characteristics of different leveled texts.

**Learning Objectives/Skills:** The learners will be able to:

a) Learn the steps of the Five-Finger Rule for selecting books
b) Discuss how to implement the Five-Finger Rule with their child
c) Identify characteristics of leveled books

**Environmental Adaptations, Time and Materials Needed:** These activities can be adapted to almost any environment; however a library or classroom with different leveled texts would be ideal. The activities will take approximately 20-25 minutes, depending on students. The following materials will be needed:

- A variety of different leveled texts
- Five Finger Rule Bookmarks
- “My Just Right Book!” Bookmarks
- Pencils and paper

**Procedure/Description of the Activity**

1. Instructor begins by explaining the importance of choosing appropriate level books for children to read. In order for a child to practice reading skills they need a book that will support their development. Difficult texts for beginning readers can cause frustration and have too many advanced words.

2. Explain that many publishers have created “Leveled Text” series where they rank each title according to its reading level. However, learners should understand that these levels are not always appropriate ways to judge a book’s difficulty. There can be many differences between the amount of text, vocabulary difficulty and length of books within a single level.

3. In small groups or pairs, have learners look at different books within the same level of a series (ex. Level 1 of the I Can Read series). Prompt them to pay attention to the text size, amount of text on each page, differences in the amount of illustrations and the length of the books. After discussion, have groups share some examples of variations they found.

4. Introduce learners to the Five-Finger Rule for choosing appropriate books to read independently. Explain to learners that this strategy helps determine if a book is at an individual’s reading level. Pass out the Five Finger Rule Bookmarks for each person to refer to and take home. The Five Finger Rule begins with the reader choosing a book. The reader opens the book to any page and begins reading to the bottom of the page. The reader puts up one finger
for each word they encounter that they don’t know. At the end of the page, if the reader has no fingers or one finger up, the book is too easy for the reader. If the reader has four or five fingers up, the book is too difficult and should be saved for later reading. If the reader has two or three fingers up, the book is just right and is a great choice to keep reading. The goal is to find a book where the reader will encounter some new words, but are familiar with most of them.

5. Have learners practice role-playing in pairs how to apply the Five Finger Rule with different books. Have them also practice how they might explain it to their own children. Explain to parents that they should teach this rule to their children and practice it together in libraries and bookstores with books of varying difficulty. Pass out extra Five-Finger Rule Bookmarks and Just Right Bookmarks to parents to give to their children. After some practice, children will be able to complete this rule independently when choosing books for themselves.

Assessment:

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<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Participants’ Names</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Learn steps of the Five-Finger Rule for selecting books</td>
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Reflect on the Activity:

1. What worked well?

2. What didn’t work?

3. What might have made the activity more successful?

4. Did you notice any potential for follow-up activities based on what the students said or did?

Transfer Home/Extension Ideas: a) Have parents use the Five-Finger Rule bookmarks to teach and demonstrate the rule to children. Then practice by selecting appropriate books. b.) Parents
can give their children the “Just Right Bookmarks” to record the books they find and draw an illustration after they read the story.

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<th>Literacy Area(s)* Addressed (check all that apply):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Power and Pleasure of Literacy</td>
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<td>Phonological Awareness</td>
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<td>X Letters and Words</td>
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<td>X Building Knowledge and Comprehension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
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* from National Center for Family Literacy’s *Building Strong Readers* and *Learning to Read and Write*