

# REEP ESL Curriculum for Adults

## Digital Literacy Skills Development

Updated May 2019

In this section, you will learn about:

1. principles of teaching digital literacy within a learner-centered, whole language, life skills instructional system
2. how digital literacy is integrated into the REEP Curriculum
3. resources for teaching and assessing digital literacy

The technologies of our modern world present many opportunities to adult English language learners to participate more fully in their community. The extent to which they've developed their digital literacy skills can determine if those technologies bridge a gap or create an obstacle. The activities of our lives – keeping up with family, communicating with a child's teacher, submitting a job application, issuing a complaint – largely happen on digital platforms. Digital literacy skills integration is, therefore, crucial to helping students achieve their learning goals.

### What is digital literacy?

In digital literacy instruction, students are actively engaged in developing their computer skills and applying them towards achieving a learning objective. "Digital literacy is defined as the skills associated with using technology to enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information (Museum and Library Services Act of 2010, p. 3) and the ability to use those skills to solve problems in technology-rich environments (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, & Henry, 2013)."<sup>1</sup> For example, students do a reading activity with a printed handout on recycling rules of the local county. The students then complete a website information hunt – in pairs – on the same topic. While the printed text gets them familiar with the topic, the website activity is the real-world way they will most likely encounter that information. Prior to the website activity, the teacher assesses the students' ability to navigate online and models the tasks. The teacher has planned it so that the information the students find online is relevant for their next language activity. It's woven into the lesson plan.

Basic digital literacy skills are those that students need to use digital devices, such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets -- *turn them on and off, tap on an icon to launch a program, select from a drop-down menu, share a photo between phones, and type keywords for a search*. Basic digital literacy skills also include the necessary language to follow instructions that use the vocabulary for parts of the device – *power button, screen, earbuds, port* – and for icons and functions of the task – *browser, link, home, and click, tap, search*.

The planning section in this overview will discuss how to use a combination of language and digital literacy skills instruction to achieve learning objectives. Planning requires knowledge of standards, identifying the steps and tasks involved, assessing the students' ability and the relevance of the objective, and using the contextualized language.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jenkins, R. (Year). Integrating Digital Literacy Into English Language Instruction: Companion Learning Resource. Retrieved from [https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/LINCS\\_CLR-2\\_508.pdf](https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/LINCS_CLR-2_508.pdf)

## REEP ESL Curriculum for Adults

An excellent resource for teacher professional development on digital literacy skills integration can be found at the federally funded ESL Pro Project in the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), which includes a topic overview, online self-paced training, a practical guide to planning and implementing digital literacy instruction, additional resources, and more.<sup>2</sup>

### How much digital literacy should I teach?

Digital literacy skills development in adult ESL instruction can be taught effectively within the framework of an activity, a lesson plan, a project, a class routine, and an individual's goal. A few examples, at varying levels, include:

- building awareness of basic skills to develop during needs assessment activities
- learning vocabulary for computer hardware as students help with lab set up and wrap up
- explicit instruction of basic Internet navigation for a website info hunt
- explicit instruction of basic word processing to compose and send an email
- applying critical thinking skills to search and vet Internet sources for a research project
- collaborating on a group presentation with multimedia

Learning within these frameworks may help students to understand how the digital literacy skills are relevant to their lives, and how to describe their abilities as they reflect on their learning.

### How should digital literacy be taught?

Digital literacy lessons and activities should be learner-centered, based on learner needs and priorities. They should be meaningful and practiced in context, using multiple language skills and a variety of activity types. Not all students benefit from direct skills instruction, so a teacher may need to model tasks a few times, and provide contextual examples, before doing a language-focus activity, so that the students have a point of reference.

Just like language and life skill teaching, students should have an opportunity to reflect on their digital literacy learning. Again, framing the digital literacy skills instruction in a project or routine is effective for students to see their progress.

Also keep in mind that while students in the same class may have similar language abilities, they may have a wide range of digital literacy skills. Plan for groupings that encourage support among students. The Unit Objectives and Lesson Plans of this curriculum provide examples of these points. Also, the planning section in this overview explains how to recognize digital literacy instruction in the curriculum.

Finally, the teacher's attitude about technology needs to set the right tone for the instruction. Remember that in this day and age, everyone is a learning when it comes to technology. If your students can teach you something or support other students, let them.

---

<sup>2</sup> The LINCS teacher professional development module for Integrating Digital Literacy into English Language Instruction can be found at at: <https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/esl-pro/integrating-digital-literacy-into-english-language-instruction>

# REEP ESL Curriculum for Adults

## How is digital literacy assessed?

(See also Learner Assessment section for ideas on assessing learners.)

Digital literacy instruction should begin and end with the real-world application clear for the students. Students should be assessed on their ability to use their skills effectively within the context of real-life tasks, and on the digital platform or in the technology tool they are most likely to need to achieve a learning objective.

Students should only be assessed on their ability to use skills identified for their instructional level and should match the instructional focus. The Digital Literacy Skills Chart, Unit Objectives, and lesson plans of the curriculum will provide guidance on this.

Teachers need to be encouraging, and instruction should be empowering, to the learner, no matter their digital literacy ability.

## Digital literacy Integration in the REEP Curriculum

### How do I know what digital literacy to teach?

REEP uses widely adopted digital literacy standards to priority skills instruction<sup>3</sup>. The digital literacy instructional planning section offers a Skills Chart of general technology and media literacy knowledge that are foundational to the activities and lesson plans found in the digital literacy integration columns of the Unit Objectives pages. Consult the details of the lesson plan, the Unit Objectives chart, and the Skills Chart to understand which skills are needed for the activity. Needs assessment with the students would also provide important information for planning.

### How do I plan for digital literacy integration?

The REEP instructional levels are organized around life skills topics such as work, health, consumerism, etc. Digital literacy skills are integrated in each life skills topic. The digital literacy skills to be taught, practiced, and assessed are driven by the language needed to communicate effectively within the topic areas and how the life skill is achieved. Ask yourself, ***in the technology-rich environment that we live in, what digital literacy skills are needed for students to successfully achieve the objectives of this lesson?***

As noted above, you can consult the details of the lesson plan, the Unit Objectives Chart, and the digital literacy Skills Chart to understand which skills are needed for the activity. If you are starting in the Unit Objectives, see the Digital Literacy Integration column. It offers resources for digital literacy skills development, such as lesson plans and activities, websites, or devices. In this way, the digital literacy to be taught, practiced, and assessed is directly related to the life skill. A resource preceded by “REEP” has been created by REEP teachers.

---

<sup>3</sup> Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment - <https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/assessment-info>

# REEP ESL Curriculum for Adults

LIFESKILLS PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES	FUNCTIONS & LANGUAGE	DIGITAL LITERACY INTEGRATION	RESOURCES	EXTENSIONS
4. Write a simplified resume and cover letter.	<p>Sample Language: See sample resumes and cover letters</p> <p>Structures: verb tenses, see sample resumes and letters</p>	<p><b>Word Processing 2:</b>  <a href="#">REEP Lesson Plan: Level 450 Work Tech Module: Resume, Cover Letter</a></p> <p><b>Internet 2:</b> Search online for "resume samples" by career or job type</p>	<p>All-Star 4 (2nd ed.) Unit 1 (Lesson 6); Unit 7 (Lesson 6)</p> <p>All-Star 4 Workbook (2nd ed.) Unit 1 (Lesson 6); Unit 7 (Lesson 6)</p> <p>Future 4 (1st ed.) Unit 2 (Lessons 2, 9)</p> <p>Future 4 Workbook (1st ed.) Unit 2 (Lesson 9)</p> <p>Future 4 Tests and Test Prep (1st ed.) Unit 2 (p. 11, 16)</p> <p>Microsoft Word Resume Wizard</p>	<p>Cross-culture: reverse chronological order</p> <p>Extension: Complete a resume with a resume builder online tool</p>

Also noted with the digital literacy resources are relevant sections from the Digital Literacy Skills Chart. Lesson Plans and activities from REEP that are mentioned in this column will have digital literacy skills described in the lesson plan as well (see Lesson Plans & Activities section).

Lesson Plans & Activities -

- Lesson Plans & Activities
  - This is a complete inventory of all lesson plans and activities noted throughout this curriculum in instructional planning, assessment, and units and objectives)

If you are starting in a Lesson Plan, see the Digital Literacy Integration section, which will refer to the Digital Literacy Skills Chart.

**REEP ESL Curriculum for Adults**

**CONSUMERISM UNIT ACTIVITY**  
**Level 200/250**  
 (Contributed by Taylor Lawrence)  
 May 2019

**LESSON OBJECTIVE:**  
 Students will identify restaurants in local community using cellphones to find the name, location, distance from school, price range and compare ratings and reviews.

**CORRELATIONS TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS:**

**DIGITAL LITERACY:** Navigate and find information on a website (Internet 1); use a voice command to search (Mobile 1)

Assess your students' abilities to determine what digital literacy skills need to be taught, and what additional instructional or classroom management support you need for your students to be successful. There are needs assessment resources in the Digital Literacy Instructional Planning section as well as

# REEP ESL Curriculum for Adults

the Learner Assessment section of this curriculum.

## Understanding the Digital Literacy Skills Chart:

The Digital Literacy Skills Chart lists the technology-based tasks that support the language and life skill objectives of the REEP curricula. During planning, teachers should identify the multiple steps it takes to complete the task. Depending on the students' knowledge of the skills or the English vocabulary for it, the teacher should model the steps for the activity and use the relevant vocabulary. These skills have been adapted from the standards of the Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment.

The Skills Chart is found in the Instructional Planning section of this curricula.



It is organized in topic areas and increasing difficulty.

		100	150	200	250	300	350	400	450	ACCESS 500/ 550	EXIT
<b>Mobile Devices</b>											
	Identify the operating system used by a mobile device. (Android, iPhone, etc)	T	T	T	T	R	R	M	M	M	M
	Connect to Wifi.	T	T	T	T	R	R	M	M	M	M
	Send a text message.	T	T	R	R	M	M	M	M	M	M
	Take a photo or record a video.	T	T	T	R	R	M	M	M	M	M
1	Share media (photo, video, etc)	-	T	T	R	R	M	M	M	M	M

To the right of the skill are the REEP instructional levels and whether the skill is appropriate to (-) not introduce at that level; (T) Teach; (R) Review; or (M) Maintain.

**Teach (T):** These are the skills that need to be taught from scratch. No prior knowledge on the part of the student should be assumed. These skills should be taught within a life skills context, whenever possible.

## REEP ESL Curriculum for Adults

**Review (R):** These are the skills that students have been introduced to and have practiced at lower levels or through prior experience. In other words, they have been exposed to the skills and have had some practice with them. Students are not expected to have already mastered these skills. The teacher’s task is to reintroduce the skill and provide additional practice within a life skills context. The extent of review needed will depend on the class.

**Maintain (M):** These represent skills that students should be able to use correctly much of the time. That is, these should not require much (if any) explicit instruction or review. However, the necessity of instruction and/or review will depend on a class.

It is important to keep in mind that this is a guide and not a checklist, and is meant to help inform your planning.

### What are the priorities for digital literacy instruction?

The priorities of digital literacy instruction include, but are not limited to the following:

- that it’s relevant to the lesson objective and reflects the students’ needs and interests.
- that the language and life skill topic needs assessment provide a first level of priority
- that the teacher assesses students’ digital literacy skills and models the tasks, based on what’s needed for each activity, project, routines, etc., gradually increasing over the course of a cycle.
- that the teacher identifies what instructional supports are needed for the students to be successful, no matter their skill level

Next, consult the Digital Literacy Skills Chart, Needs Assessment, Unit Objectives, and Lesson Plans & Activities section of this curriculum.