Bridging the Gap Between Literacy and Technology

Overview

The **Bridging the Gap** curriculum guides offer practitioners the tools to integrate information technology into many of the reading, writing, and computer requirements of today's workplace. Having a comprehensive computer-integrated curriculum gives both the practitioner and the learner the skills needed in the 21st Century workplace. The guides have been developed with flexibility and adaptability in mind. Every classroom and every group of learners is unique with a range of interests, abilities, and needs. These guides should be adapted to meet these needs. These guides are intended to be used with adult learners at stages 3 to 4 as outlined in the Literacy and Learning Certificate. The Certificate in Literacy and Learning was developed by Manitoba's Department of Adult Learning and Literacy (ALL) as a means of articulating the achievements made by an adult learner in a literacy program. The four stages demonstrate the learners skill development. These four stages mirror the first four levels in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS).

The **Bridging The Gap** curriculum guides will assist practitioners in teaching the skills required in the workforce, as outlined in the Conference Board of Canada's document on the Critical Skills Required of the Canadian Workforce:

- Understand and speak the languages in which business is conducted
- Read, comprehend, and use written materials, including charts, graphs, and displays,
- Write effectively in the languages in which business is conducted,
- Use technology, instruments, tools, and information systems effectively.

This easy-to-follow curriculum is broken into two components, the Education Component and the Computer Component.

How to Use the Education Component of the Curriculum Guide

The Bridging The Gap ~ Education Component, consists of four theme units:
1. **Ourselves**, which includes subtopics such as: negative self-talk, goal setting, and autobiographies of self and others.
2. **Humour** subtopics include, types of humour, how and when to tell a joke, cartooning, limericks, and situation comedies.
3. **Employment** subtopics include: resumes, cover letters, interviewing and follow-up, and portfolios.
4. **Memories** subtopics include: story telling, oral history, what makes memories, how are memories recorded and passed on, quilting, Scrapbooking, and famous Canadians.

Each theme unit is complete with lesson plans, activities, blackline masters, evaluation tools, and a list of resources.

The theme starts with an overview in calendar form of twenty days of lesson plans and activities. Practitioners can choose to work through an entire theme or to pick and choose individual lessons within a theme. **It is important to note that you do not have to cover all the topics. Use only the ones which are relevant to your learners, and that some topics may take several class sessions. The length of time needed to complete a topic is entirely up to the discretion of the practitioner.**

Journal Entry Suggestions
Each unit includes a list of journal entry suggestions that are relevant to that topic.

Page Layout

The **Expected Outcomes** are cross-referenced with the objectives in the third and fourth Stages of the Certificate in Literacy and Learning. The Certificate in Literacy and Learning was developed by Manitoba's Department of Adult Learning and Literacy (ALL) as a means of articulating the achievements made by an adult learner in a literacy program. The four stages demonstrate the learners skill development. These four stages mirror the first four levels in International Literacy Survey (IALS). For example, a task in a Memories lesson asks the learner to "find evidence of the different ways that people/cultures keep memories alive." This part of the assignment will meet the requirements in Stage 3, Unit 1, Assignment 1: Reading Textual and Graphical Material. This includes extracting information, selecting and evaluating material from a variety of sources for a particular purpose.

Resources
This shaded textbox on the right side of the right page, provides a list of relevant resources, and authentic materials ranging from text, video, web sites, and web based resources. We have provided additional space in the resource box to allow practitioners to add any new resources which would be useful and relevant to that topic.

Lesson Description
The icon resembling a quill with writing paper indicates that this lesson is best completed using these tools. The lesson description provides a step-by-step plan of how the lesson could be carried out in the classroom. Again, this is just a suggestion. You may adapt this to your situation, and to your learners.

Subskills Needed
Each lesson plan includes a section that suggests the subskills that the students should have in order to successfully complete the lesson.

Materials Needed
Any resources or materials that are needed for the lesson, such as blackline masters, newspapers, or forms are listed here.

Computer Integration
The icon resembling a computer indicates that some or all of tasks in this lesson could be completed using the computer. This section offers suggestions on how the computer can be integrated into the lesson. In some instances, for example, the word processor can take the place of the pen and paper.

Note: These tasks are merely suggestions. They do not imply that you must incorporate them into your lesson, or that you need to include computers in every lesson. These are to be used at your discretion. You decide if the task is too advanced or too simple and adapt the lesson to suit your learners. If you do not have Internet access in your classroom, some of the computer tasks may be completed at local community centres such as the Employment Resource Centres, public libraries, or Community Access Projects.

See Computer Curriculum Guide
This section will direct you to the page in the Computer Component where each suggested computer task can be found. Note: The points in this section are in the order they would be performed.

Evaluation Tools
In this section you will find the appropriate checklists and rubrics which describe competencies learners have to master for each level and some conditions under which they are expected to perform them.

How to Use the Computer Component of the Curriculum Guide

Bridging the Gap ~ Computer Component: The Computer component provides practitioners with a step-by-step guide for using a word processing application. The guide starts with a brief introduction to computer basics and then moves into basic Word Processing using Word 97. It is cross-referenced with the **Bridging the Gap ~ Education Component,** giving the instructor the option of integrating the computer skills at various points in the lesson or using the Computer Component on its own as part of a Computer Skills course. It also includes numerous exercises to ensure the learner has lots of opportunity to practise. There are also activities and projects which have real life applications, such as creating memos, flyers, posters, writing resumes and cover letters. The **Computer Component** also includes a glossary of computer terminology. Computer integration has been included to encourage instructors to think about the many ways that a lesson may incorporate technology in a relevant context. It will also help adult learners develop the abilities to use, manage, and understand information technology. It is important that learners develop these abilities throughout the learning process in all the curriculum areas. The benefits of integrating computer skills into the lesson are many, computer integration enhances language learning as well as enhancing the skills needed to obtain employment, and to function effectively in the workplace and in the community.

Note: The exercises in the Curriculum guides are merely suggestions. They provide the practitioner with ideas, and should be adapted to meet the specific learners' needs and computer literacy levels.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our appreciation to the many people who so generously shared their time, talents and expertise to ensure the success of this project.

And a special thank you to all the adult learners who have inspired us.

Biographies

Lan Tang, B.Sc
Teacher/Curriculum Developer Computer Component
Lan was born in Vietnam, emigrated to Canada in 1980 and has lived in Brandon ever since. Lan received the Brandon University Board of Governor's Entrance Scholarship to attend Brandon University. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in Computer Science and Mathematics. Lan is currently the Computer Teacher/Curriculum Developer at the Samaritan House Training Centre in Brandon, Manitoba.

Teresa Gibbons, B.G.S, B.Ed
Teacher/Curriculum Developer Education Component
Teresa has worked in all aspects of the education field from grades K to 12 and with all ages of students from children to adults. She also has been involved in the Fine Arts as a teacher and coordinator. Teresa has been recognized on several occasions for her outstanding work. She, together with her students, won the Hometown Hero award for a poster they designed, as well as an Honorable Mention for an environmental video they produced.

Sylvia Provenski, B.Ed., CAE
Project Coordinator
Sylvia has been involved in the adult literacy field since 1985 as a teacher, coordinator and leader. She has been responsible for the development and management of a number of technology related projects. She was an invited presenter at the Literacy and Technology Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Sylvia was also nominated for the Lt. Governor's Medal for Outstanding Achievement in Literacy.

Rose Cucksey: Artist
Rose is well known in Brandon for her artwork. She specializes in "window art" and has created many wonderful thematic scenes on the windows at Samaritan House. The greatest joy in Rose's life comes from her two children. Her strong Christian beliefs help her to meet the challenges of life with two exceptional children.

Curriculum Development: The Process
It has been suggested that we document the process of putting together this curriculum. Outlining the entire process would require a document that would be equally as large as this one. Instead, we have decided to summarize the process in point form. If anyone is considering taking on a curriculum development project…be forewarned, it is a huge undertaking that requires enormous time and expertise. In retrospect, the curriculum development component of this project would have been better done as a twenty month project rather than the ten month time frame we worked under.

The Process
1. Planning:

- Define curriculum. What is a "curriculum"? It represents a set of tools for practitioners to use in the development of programs, approaches and materials that are designed to increase the level of skills, knowledge, and capability of their learners.
- Consider appropriate goals. Whose goals need to be met, and what are those goals? We decided on these four.

Academic skills
Employment skills
Personal development
Computer skills

- Where are the students developmentally: As the learners in our program were mostly Level 3 and 4 learners we determined we would focus on this group.
- What are the learners' needs and interests. We felt that learning best takes place when learners identify their own questions and gaps in knowledge as well as their own interests and needs. Therefore, we enlisted the help of our learners in choosing the four themes.
- What skills do they need to have introduced and mastered? Adults with limited literacy skills should be given credit for the skills and knowledge they do have. Therefore, it is important to build on and extend the knowledge and skills of adult learners. The lessons and activities chosen in each theme reflect this philosophy.

2. Considerations

- What format should we use: instructional units or themes?
- Which computer application: MS Word, Word Perfect, or Word Pad?
- How much time should be devoted to each lesson?
- How many themes would we be able to develop in the given time frame?
- What themes would provide a relevant context for the adult education classroom, reinforce all aspects of the learners' experiences, and reflect learners' interests
- What materials are readily available to support instruction
- What Page layout, fonts: style, size should we use

3. Design/Production

- Become familiar with the objectives and performance criteria for the Stage 3 Literacy and Learning Certificate, and the Stage 4 Pre-GED, and Employment Certificates
- Become familiar with the objectives and performance criteria for GED test
- Become familiar with the Essential Skills as outlined by the Conference Board of Canada
- Review planned curriculum
- Research activities and corresponding performance tasks
- Design lesson plans
- Research and design assessment/ evaluation tools
- Research and compile resource list
- Design Blackline masters

4. Piloting during the development stage

- Use sections of both curriculums on a trial basis
- Distribute sections of both curriculums to other literacy programs to use on a trial basis
- Make necessary modifications
- Evaluation

5. Field Test completed guides

- Make necessary modifications
- Evaluation

Note: Draft copies of the curriculum will be dispersed throughout the province to two test groups. Group 1 will have had an opportunity to use the curriculum guides with the help of the developers in a weeklong "hands-on" workshop, which takes place in July 2000. Group 2 will use the curriculum guides without the weeklong hands-on session. A report summarizing the impact of intensive hands-on training and support for practitioners will follow in the fall of 2001.