



Toolkit for Sustainable  
Hybrid Instruction for  
Adult Literacy Learners:  
**BALANCING  
FLEXIBILITY  
& STRUCTURE**



RESEARCH & PROGRAM  
DEVELOPMENT  
THE IMMIGRANT  
EDUCATION SOCIETY



This toolkit was produced by the Research & Program Development Department at The Immigrant Education Society (TIES).

This is the final version of this toolkit.

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# ABOUT TIES



**The Immigrant Education Society (TIES)** is a not-for-profit charitable organization established in 1988 that aims to provide Calgary immigrants and economically disadvantaged individuals with a solid foothold in Canada and afford them opportunities to gain a sense of belongingness as members of the local community. TIES is governed by a Board of Directors made up of devoted community-minded volunteers and operates through funding from both government and private organizations. TIES has grown from five volunteers in a single office to an employer of about 174 dedicated staff members and over 200 volunteers. TIES now operates across three locations in Calgary: Forest Lawn (SE), Whitehorn (NE), and Westwinds (NE). TIES has full ownership of two of these three facilities. Since its inception, TIES has assisted over 300,000 clients by providing diverse settlement services to support newcomers as they integrate into Canadian society.

# ABOUT RPD

## The Research & Program Development (RPD) Department

at TIES aims to move the organization toward greater use of evidence-based knowledge and best practices to inform its efforts to help newcomers settle into Canadian society. RPD operates in **3 streams of services**:



### ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Employing researchers experienced in quantitative and qualitative methods;



### PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Identifying community needs, designing a solution, and piloting it in an implementation phase;



### EVALUATION

Providing contractor services varying from program evaluations to systems mapping, community engagement, satisfaction evaluation, and so on.

To ensure the credibility and success of its efforts, RPD engages in partnership with post-secondary institutions, such as the University of Calgary, The University of British Columbia, the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and the University of Michigan, to name a few.

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# Introduction to Hybrid in Literacy Classrooms



# INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT

## WHY HYBRID?

Hybrid delivery has the potential to make an enormous difference for your students. A hybrid mode of delivery can **offer the greatest benefits to the most vulnerable students** in your classroom. Women with complex caregiving responsibilities, students with disabilities, and seniors with mobility challenges are among those who have benefited the most from having increased flexibility offered by hybrid modes of delivery.

*Hybrid delivery is an equity policy. It can provide solutions to systemic barriers to accessing education.*

Hybrid delivery can also improve student attendance and retention and support students in developing digital literacy skills to use in and beyond the classroom.

## LEAVE NO STUDENT BEHIND

Literacy students need a base level of digital skills to benefit from hybrid delivery as an equity policy. Digital skills should gradually be introduced in classroom settings to build students' skills and confidence. Digital tools and platforms are pervasive in educational settings and beyond the classroom. By including technology in your classroom, you are preparing your students for their future endeavours.

Even at the lowest literacy levels, it is likely that many of your students are already using smartphones for communication or entertainment. When forced online during the COVID-19 pandemic, literacy students adapted and found ways to continue learning online (i.e., by sending pictures of their homework to teachers through messaging apps like WhatsApp). By leveraging students' digital skills, you can help prepare them for hybrid learning in both planned and unexpected circumstances.

This toolkit is grounded in the belief that technology can, and should, be introduced to literacy learners right from the beginning. This toolkit provides guidance on introducing digital skills in-person even from the earliest levels of literacy, and outlines a model for mid-high level literacy students to succeed in online and remote classroom settings.

## WHAT ABOUT THE LOWER LEVELS OF LITERACY?

We understand that addressing the range of skill levels in your classes might seem daunting, and that using technology in the classroom may seem out of reach for some learners who are newer to the digital world.

The scope of our toolkit is aimed to support teachers working with any level of literacy learner, by providing ideas to gently move *all* learners slowly but surely towards greater comfort and familiarity with navigating technology and digital spaces. Of course, this looks different for every learner.

## IF YOU TEACH FOUNDATION...

**The parts of this toolkit that might be most helpful to you are:**

- **Resources for Hybrid Teaching** (p. 16-23)  
The resources that are most suitable for Foundation, or absolute beginners, are marked with this symbol: **F**  
Depending on your learners' level, you might want to use these resources as a **display only**, without requiring learners to use the technology themselves. Displaying resources allows learners to become more familiar with them.
- **Introducing Digital Skills Before Going Online** (p. 24-31)  
This section is packed with guidance on how to start integrating technology, bit by bit. In particular, take some time to explore the 'What is Digital Literacy' section, including the ECSD Progression Checklist (p. 24). Looking at the lower levels of this checklist will help you know where to start.
- **Planning the Unexpected** (p. 45-46)  
This section will help you think through how you will react in emergency circumstances.

## CHALLENGES OF HYBRID

Hybrid presents significant challenges for teachers. Adapting materials for online learning, fostering student participation in two different modalities, and managing the transition between two learning environments (i.e., the classroom and the home) is a lot to handle.

Hybrid delivery can feel especially daunting for teachers of literacy learners. You are teaching students who will need assistance and explicit instruction at every step. You cannot rely on your students to troubleshoot their audio or remember to bring their binders and writing materials back and forth between their home and the classroom. They will also need instruction on (a) how to use Avenue.ca,<sup>1</sup> (b) how to log into the video conferencing platform that your program uses, and (c) how to turn on the WiFi. Through it all, you're the one who has to provide everyday assistance.

How do you plan ahead for all these hurdles? How can you prepare your students for success in new learning modes that disrupt the usual routines in your classroom?

This toolkit can help you get started. The toolkit lays the groundwork for many considerations for structuring hybrid delivery options for adult literacy learners. You will need to pick and choose the elements that work for you and build your own solutions for your own classrooms and programs.

## SOLUTIONS IN THE TOOLKIT



Resources, activities, and ideas to run into the classroom with.



Insights on building digital skills in-person first, especially in lower level literacy classes.



Materials to plan for success when transitioning mid-high level literacy learners online.



Tips for setting up your hybrid classroom and keeping learners engaged

<sup>1</sup> Avenue.ca is the learning platform and course management system for the IRCC-funded settlement language training sector.

# WHO ARE LITERACY LEARNERS?

While the demographics of literacy students are always changing depending on global trends, here's a snapshot of who your literacy students could be:

## Arriving

from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Chad, Congo, Haiti, and Colombia.



The majority are

## women



Most have

## 0-8 years

of formal education

These data are based on trends across 6 LINC literacy classes at TIES during April - July 2023.

# DEFINING HYBRID MODELS

A range of hybrid delivery options allows varying modes of in-person and online learning. Consider the differences between these hybrid delivery models and select the approach best suited to your students' needs.

There are **three distinct hybrid models**:

1

**Blended** learning consists of a fixed schedule of in-person and remote learning. There is no element of student choice in this model – students are required to be in-person or online on set days of the week. Online learning may take the form of video conferencing or asynchronous, self-directed learning, or a combination of the two.

The benefits of blended learning include significant digital literacy instruction, as every student is required to learn online every week. It offers the possibility of asynchronous learning for higher-level students and allows all students the flexibility of one day of learning from home.

2

The **HyFlex** (i.e., hybrid flexible) model offers the greatest amount of student choice. Students are free to learn in-person or online with no restrictions. Classes may contain any combination of the following:

- Fully in-person students
- Fully online students
- Students who move between in-person and online

HyFlex gives students significant flexibility and encourages clients to identify the schedule and learning structure which works best for them. However, it presents challenges to planning and building routine and structure in the classroom.

# 3

**Sustainable Hybrid** retains some flexibility to accommodate student choice but adds an increased level of structure to give the teacher more control. Learning primarily takes place in-person, and on an as-needed basis, students learn online for short periods, perhaps due to illness or work scheduling issues. In this model, online learning schedules and expectations are planned ahead of time to provide ample support to clients' learning goals.

## Key Elements of Sustainable Hybrid:

- 1 Ensuring students who want to pursue online learning are ready (i.e., with the needed digital literacy skills, technological resources, and internet connectivity).
- 2 Agreeing upon individualized hybrid schedules ahead of time.
- 3 Providing clear guidelines for attendance and participation in online learning.

## CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE MODEL

Consider the needs of your clients and your program to decide which model to adopt in your context. You may find it best to adopt elements from multiple models.

The ideas presented throughout the toolkit can be applied in blended and/or sustainable hybrid models. These hybrid models have the potential to support students in developing digital skills while accommodating varying life demands. The HyFlex model is generally not recommended for literacy students, but many aspects of this guide could also be applied to the HyFlex classroom.

Our research has identified the most transparent benefits of hybrid delivery for students at CLB 3L and higher, with moderate benefits also found at CLB 2L. Students in Foundation and CLB 1L will most likely struggle with hybrid, regardless of the adopted model. Therefore, lower-level literacy learners will need additional support. Your program may decide to restrict hybrid delivery below CLB 2L. If this is the case, use the ideas presented in this toolkit to prepare your students for hybrid delivery in the future by introducing and practicing digital skills in-person first.

# THINKING ABOUT HYBRID: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Hybrid delivery affects every aspect of teaching, from getting students into the classroom, creating lesson plans, designing learning materials, and setting up classroom space. Where do you even start when there are so many moving parts to consider?

We developed a ***Conceptual Framework for Successful Hybrid Delivery*** to provide a basis for thinking about hybrid delivery. The conceptual framework organizes aspects of hybrid delivery into three domains. For each category, consider your own context and your learners for thinking about hybrid delivery. The conceptual framework organizes aspects of hybrid delivery into three domains. For each category, consider your own context and your learners' needs.' needs.

## 1. ACCESS: GETTING INTO THE HYBRID CLASSROOM

The first domain concerns students' ability to access the hybrid classroom. Students may need support acquiring or borrowing required technological devices, gaining internet access, and developing digital skills to navigate a hybrid space. Once students have access to the hybrid space, you'll need to define what attending remotely looks like for your students. For example, how often can they attend class remotely? Do they need to have their cameras on?

## 2. ADAPT: RESOURCES AND TOOLS FOR THE HYBRID CLASSROOM

The second domain centres on resources, materials, and tools for hybrid classrooms. This entails providing resources to students attending both online and in-person. Moving online provides you with access to a large roster of digital resources and platforms that can support your students' learning, but sharing those with in-person students may require integrating technology into the classroom in new ways. You may also have to reimagine ways of transitioning in-class paper-based activities and worksheets to online platforms.

## 3. TEACH: MANAGING THE HYBRID CLASSROOM

The final domain focuses on the pedagogical implications, challenges, and opportunities of hybrid delivery. This includes classroom management and setup, engaging students with varying learning styles, monitoring activities, and conducting formative assessments. In addition, teachers should consider how to increase participation and interaction between in-person and online students. These considerations may require some trial and error and reflection to determine how your teaching preferences, styles, and philosophy apply for hybrid teaching.

## USING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

You can use the conceptual framework as a starting point to guide your thinking as you work through the specific aspects of implementing a hybrid mode of delivery in your classroom.

Access: Getting into the Hybrid Classroom

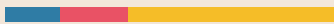
Adapt: Resources and Tools for the Hybrid Classroom

Teach: Managing the Hybrid Classroom





# Technology & Resources for the Hybrid Classroom



# EQUIPMENT AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Here is a list of commonly used digital technologies for a hybrid environment, with some examples of how each technology can be used.

## HARDWARE DEVICES



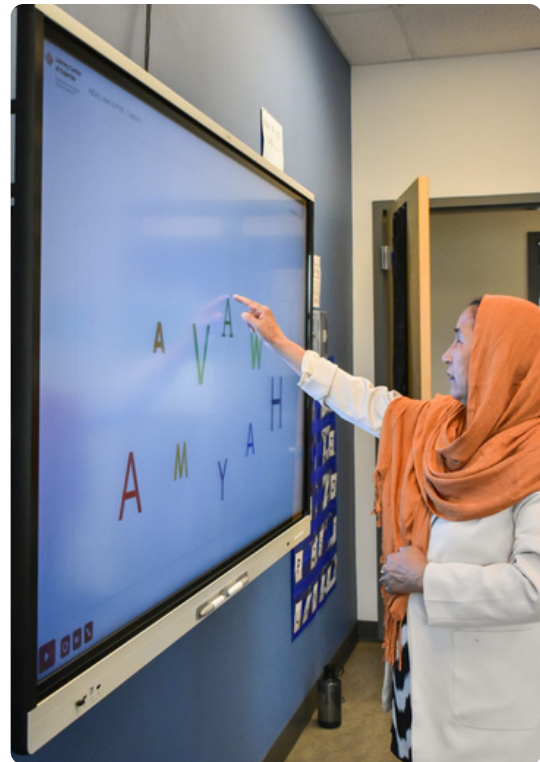
### 1. Desktop Computer

A desktop computer is a standard device to have in the hybrid classroom. It is used to connect to other devices (e.g., a smart board or overhead projector) and to display a video conferencing platform.

### 2. Smart Board or Overhead Projector

A smart board or overhead projector allows teachers to display remote students on the in-person classroom screen, which helps integrate them into the classroom and creates opportunities for interaction.

In addition, these devices can provide visual aid for students to understand concepts, words, and pictures more easily. By incorporating multimedia into lessons, such as videos, audio recordings, and images, you can cater to visual and auditory learners. For kinesthetic learners, a smart board will allow opportunities for students to actively use the board themselves during classroom activities.





### 3. Secondary (Fixed) Camera

Aside from using the desktop computer camera to facilitate hybrid learning, classrooms can use a secondary camera that is placed at a high position at the front of the classroom. The purpose is for remote students to view the classroom as an entirety. The secondary camera will allow teachers to stay at the front of the classroom and for students to walk up to and interact with the remote students.

### 4. Swivel Camera

Swivel cameras may be used in the classroom to provide a more dynamic and inclusive learning experience, especially for students attending remotely. A swivel camera is usually mounted on a tripod or a movable stand, and can be easily swivelled around to capture different areas of the classroom. For instance, it could point towards the teacher, then be rotated as needed to display other students who are speaking. This allows the online students to feel more connected to the classroom and more engaged in the lesson.

Swivel cameras can be used to capture different areas of the classroom, such as the whiteboard, the teacher's desk, or a group of students working together. They can also show hands-on activities or demonstrations.

The downside of using a swivel camera is that it may be less suitable in contexts where there is a lot of foot traffic, since the tripod could be knocked over. Additionally, the equipment is not stationary, and would need to be carried to and from class every day.





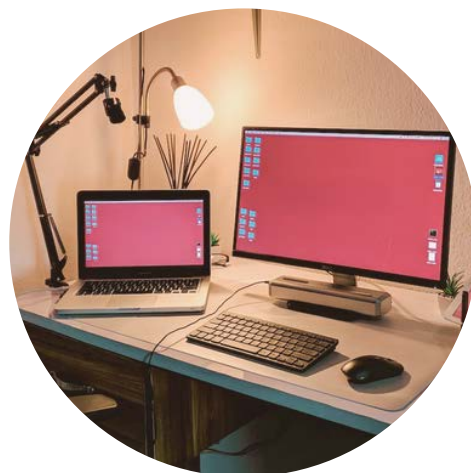
### 5. Laptop

Incorporating a laptop in the classroom allows teachers to have the flexibility of increased mobility in the classroom, while maintaining face-to-face contact with the remote students.

The teacher can bring the laptop to sit or stand at different locations in the classroom. The laptop can be passed around among the in-person students when activities are taking place.

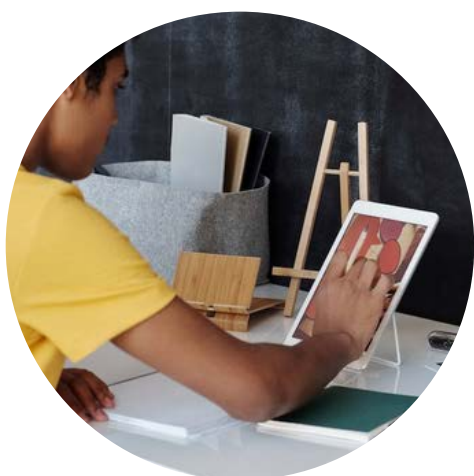
### 6. Secondary Monitor

A secondary monitor is useful to have at home learning spaces in conjunction with a laptop or desktop computer. It will allow the teacher to have the video conferencing platform on one screen so students can be seen at all times. The other screen can be used for displaying learning material.



### 7. Tablet and Stylus

Similar to laptops, tablets can offer increased mobility in the classroom for both the teacher and student. Tablets also can act as digital whiteboards allowing both teachers and students to write on them, thus fostering interactive learning. Tablets can be connected to the Smart board through a cord or screen mirroring, which will allow remote students to see how the tablet is being used. The teacher can also use the tablet and stylus to annotate or highlight materials, such as slides or documents, making it easier for learners to follow along and understand the material.



## 8. Smartphones

Smartphones are beneficial when communicating in real-time with remote students during class. They are useful for answering questions and providing feedback. Teachers also use smartphones in the classroom for students to practice texting, using the camera, sending pictures, and scanning QR codes.

A smartphone can be used to quickly look up information, such as definitions or translations, during a lesson, which can be helpful for students who may have questions or need additional clarification.



## 9. Headphones

Headphones are beneficial for students and teachers when they are remote. Headphones help minimize any distracting background noise that may be picked up on a microphone.

## 10. Ring Light

To enhance the video quality, teachers may use a ring light to improve lighting in low-light environments. This would be beneficial for teachers who use facial expressions a lot. A ring light can help create a more professional appearance for the teacher during video conferencing, making them look more polished and well-lit and projecting a more positive image to learners.



## DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND PROGRAMS



### 1. Video Conferencing Platforms

Video Conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom or Teams) are necessary to facilitate a hybrid model. They can provide a more interactive and engaging learning experience for students, with features such as screen sharing, chat, breakout rooms, annotations, and polling.

### 2. Messaging Apps

Messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp) allow teachers and students to communicate in real-time, enabling them to quickly exchange information, troubleshoot technical problems, and ask questions as needed. Messaging apps can be more accessible for students who are used to using their phones but have difficulty navigating other technological devices. Messaging apps can also facilitate group communication, allowing students to collaborate on assignments and ask questions.



### 3. Websites and Programs Specific for Learning

Digital learning resources often feature interactive elements, such as games, quizzes, polling tools, digital whiteboards, and multimedia (e.g., YouTube videos), which can help make learning more engaging and effective.

See the **Resources for Hybrid Teaching** section that follows for a list of resources you can use in a hybrid environment.

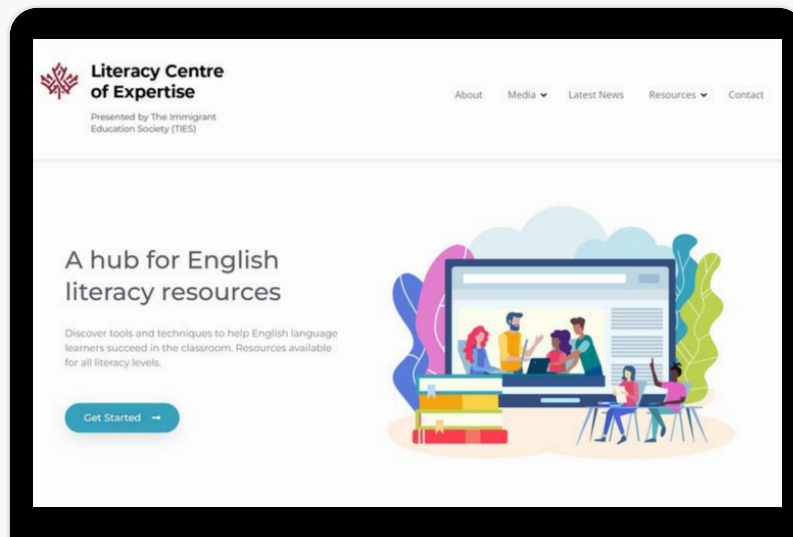


# RESOURCES FOR HYBRID TEACHING

Over the next pages, you will find online resources for teaching Literacy in the hybrid classroom, resources for supporting students' digital literacy skills, and resources to further your professional development. Choose resources that best suit your classroom, and then be sure to spend some time intentionally teaching students *how* to use whatever platform you choose before using them as part of your lessons. To learn more about these resources, search for teacher tutorials online.

## RESOURCES FOR LITERACY LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

### 1. TIES Literacy Centre of Expertise



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Look for this symbol next to Foundation-friendly resources! Remember that these may be used as a 'display only' for lower levels.

The Literacy Centre of Expertise website houses a growing collection of literacy resources that you could either print out, display on a digital screen (with video conferencing), or send as a link to students to open on tablets so that they can practice writing using a stylus.



#### Adults Learn to Print

Interactive guide to handwriting each letter of the English alphabet.



#### Reading Skills Stories

Interactive stories for students with a focus on phonics



#### Modules

Interactive modules including stories, activities and handbooks



#### Skill-Building

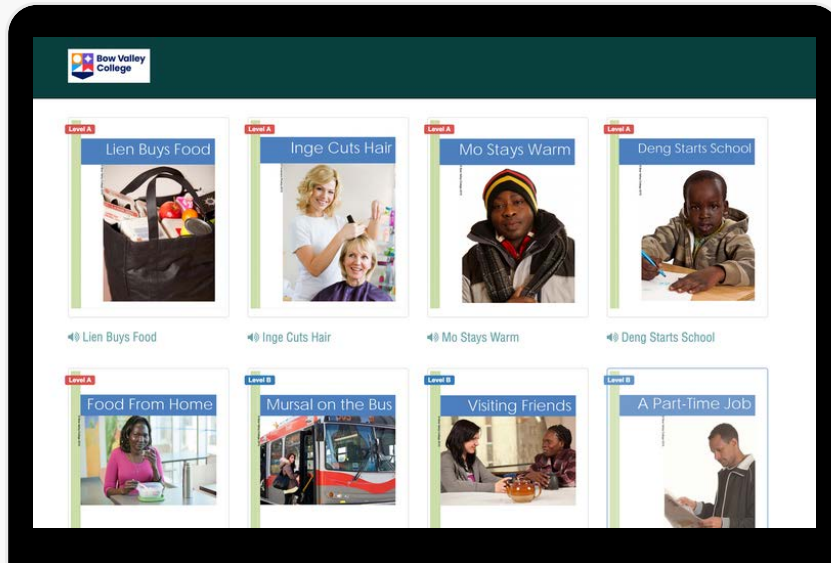
Skill-building resources to support real-world tasks



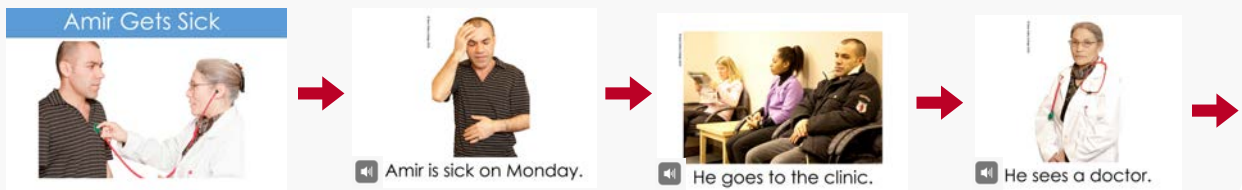
#### PBLA Assessments

From Foundation Literacy to Literacy 4L, plus "About Me" resources

## 2. Bow Valley Literacy Readers

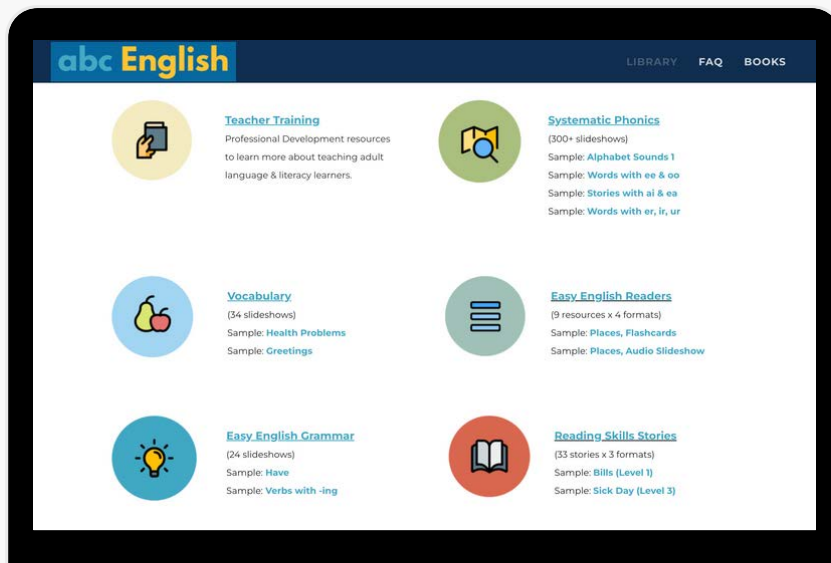


Bow Valley Literacy Readers is a free resource. Students can read and hear stories with visual aids using a straightforward user interface. Use these resources during class time, or send a link to students via a messaging app so they can practice outside of class time.



## 3. abc English

abc English offers slideshow lessons and printable packets for teaching English to adult literacy learners. You will need to create an account to start a free 30-day trial.

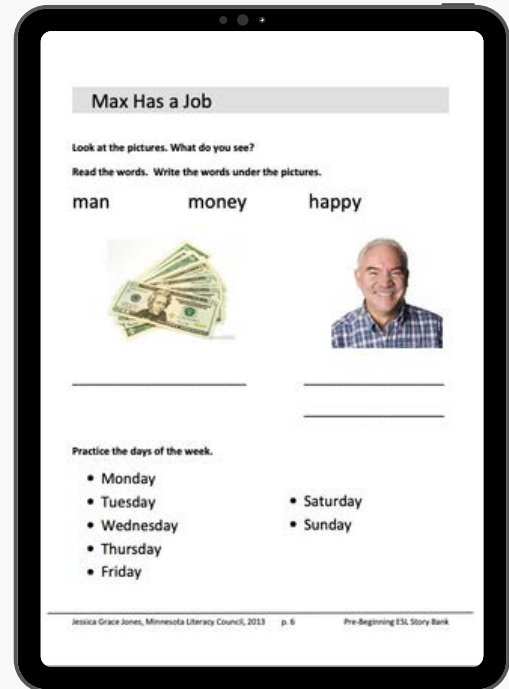


#### 4. Minnesota Literacy Council - ESL Story Bank

This free resource offers a collection of over 20 short stories written for adult ESL learners. Stories are organized into units/themes, with phonics learning outcomes. The Minnesota Literacy Council suggests using each lesson as a 'story of the week,' with learners revisiting the material each day of the week to look at the pictures, listen to the stories, read the stories aloud, learn vocabulary, and do the practice exercises.

In the Hybrid Classroom:

- The teacher can record a story by audio and send it to students' via a link on their phones.
- Students can record themselves reading the story aloud and listen back to their own voice as they follow the text.
- Students can type 1-2 sentences from each story.
- Information gap activity: Send the link to a story to a remote student and ask them to read the story to the in-class students.



#### 5. Learning Chocolate

Learning Chocolate is an ESL vocabulary learning platform with over 100 categories of words and pictures, ranging from routines, food, animals, colours, tools, calendars, jobs, and more. Take advantage of the website's tasks, which include matching, fill-in-the-blank, and dictation.

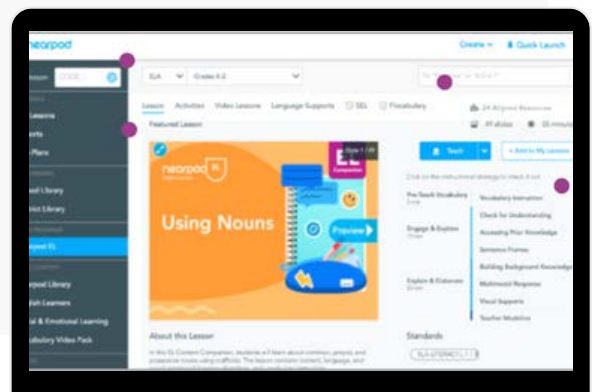
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#### 6. Nearpod

Nearpod is a free resource for teachers to create interactive slides and lessons where students can participate in live-time. This allows teachers to:

- Do live formative assessments - Add a quiz, poll, open-ended question, matching task, 'draw it' activity, and more, to see students' responses in real time.
- Present dynamic media experiences - Add engaging photos or videos to enhance student understanding.

You can share the link for your lesson/activity with students via a messaging app so that they can join from their phone either in class or remotely.



## 7. Kahoot

Kahoot is a game-based learning program where you can create, share, and play activities or quizzes in minutes. You can create a Teacher account for free and familiarize your students with accessing Kahoot on any device through a web browser. To join a game, students enter a PIN code generated by Kahoot (they do not need to create an account or log in). Entering the code can be an activity in itself to give students practice using a mobile or computer keyboard.

This can be a fun way for the hybrid classroom to bring together students who are attending remotely and in-person. Kahoot also presents an opportunity for formative assessment, since teachers can create quizzes to gauge progress toward learning outcomes.



## 8. Quizlet

Quizlet is an online platform for studying and learning. While the platform may be a bit more difficult for literacy students to navigate than some others on this list, the platform allows teachers to customize flashcards and at-home study tools on any topic so that students can continue practicing English on their own time.

## 9. Whiteboard.fi

This virtual whiteboard platform allows teachers to write/draw on an online whiteboard that can be shared with students via a link. Once students are logged in, they can draw/write on the whiteboard, and the teacher can view each student's work in real-time. Teachers can add pictures, videos, worksheets, text, and drawings to the whiteboard.

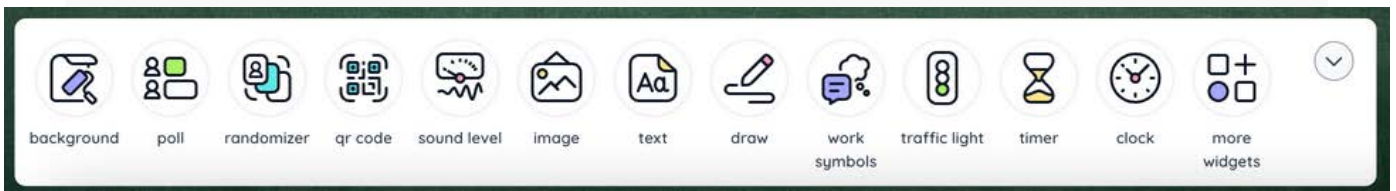


You could use this platform to give students prompts such as, "write the date" or "use an emoji to show how you feel today." You can have students practice following instructions by combining prompts (e.g., "write your name at the top of the page, write the date at the bottom" etc.).

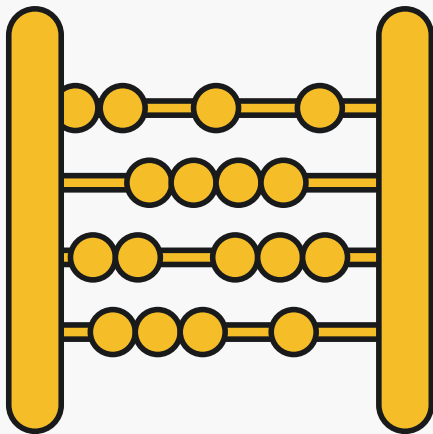
You could also paste a screenshot of your learning management system or a website you are training your students to use onto Whiteboard.fi, and then give students prompts such as, "circle the *chat* button" or "write [www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca) in the address bar."

## 10. Classroom Screen

Classroom Screen is another virtual whiteboard that teachers can use to project a variety of widgets such as dice, polls, stopwatches, QR code generator, word or name randomizer, and more. For example, you could roll a dice and have the students write and spell the number or use the randomizer to pick from a list of vocabulary words.



## 11. English & Math Online Games



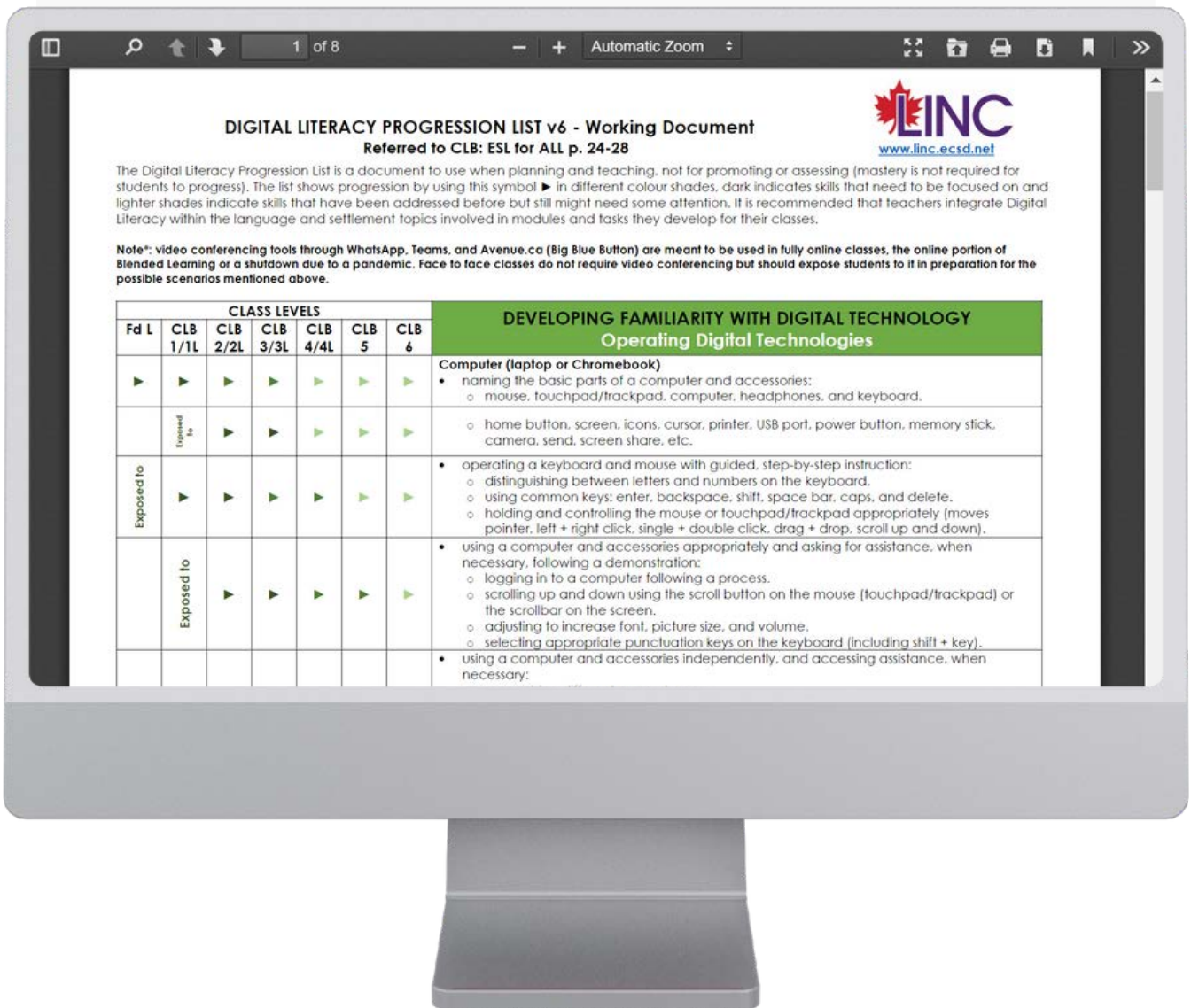
Your literacy students likely have varying levels of numeracy skills. As you determine their needs, you may find there is a need to practice basic math (and related language). Several websites utilize game formats to engage students. These can be played as a class or independently. For math games see [Shepphard Software](#). [IXL](#) also offers a variety of math and English games and lessons for a subscription fee. For other English games see [Reading Bear](#), [Starfall](#), and [Games to Learn English](#)

# RESOURCES FOR BUILDING DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS

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## 1. ECSD LINC Digital Literacy Progression List

The Digital Literacy Progression Checklist will help teachers visualize how learners progress through developing increasingly complex digital skills. The list covers operating digital technologies, accessing and evaluating information, presenting ideas online, communicating with others online, and digital citizenship. Skills are broken down into individual components that will help teachers understand the building blocks that go into developing students' digital literacy, one step at a time. It is highly advisable to familiarize yourself with progression to plan when and how to introduce each concept and skill.



## 2. Newcomer Introduction to Classes Online (NICO)

This is a free online program that helps prepare students for online classes. The course covers computer skills, online communication, study skills, and vocabulary. You may recommend NICO to your students with moderate levels of digital skills.

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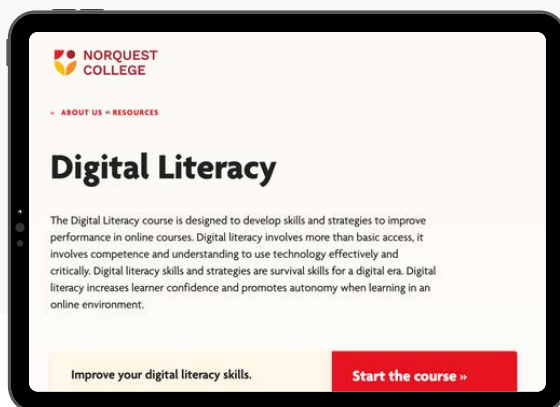
## 3. NorQuest College - Basic Computer Skills

Norquest College provides a series of short videos that help students learn basic computer skills through stories and practice. Developing these skills, one by one, can help students view technology as a tool for learning. Some of the topics covered include:

- Body and Machine
- Mouse Operations
- Log in, Log on
- Using a Keyboard
- Navigating on Screen
- Photo sharing
- Show password option and confirm correct password
- Using the shift key
- No food or drink on your laptop
- Carrying your laptop safely

Send students a link to one of the skills and then work through a lesson together during class time so that you can support them in building these skills.

As students progress through CLB levels, you can also take advantage of other resources from Norquest College, including their *Digital Literacy* course and their course on digital citizenship called *Websafe*.



## 3. Additional Websites

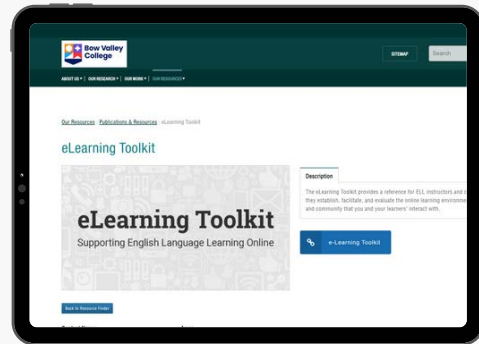
Students can gain extra typing practice by visiting [typing.com](https://www.typing.com) or extra trackpad and mouse practice by visiting [mouseprogram.com](https://www.mouseprogram.com)



# RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## 1. [Bow Valley College E-Learning Toolkit for ELL](#)

This toolkit is intended to help language teachers develop methods, strategies, and a philosophy for teaching online and using digital resources in the classroom. The toolkit provides resources and tools for teachers to set up, facilitate, and evaluate learning online while considering the space, the content, and the community. Reflective prompts throughout the toolkit encourage teachers to expand and refine their practice.



## 2. [ATESL - References and PD Resources](#)



This ATESL resource contains academic articles, websites, videos, tutorials and courses for teachers to improve their understanding of ESL in hybrid spaces. Topics include: lesson planning, a framework for adult ESL literacy learners, a framework for curriculum development for ESL programming, support for understanding CLB, best practices in ELT instruction, and Tutela collections and resources.

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## 3. [Avenue.ca](#)

In addition to providing courseware and a space to store digital resources for future use, Avenue.ca offers teachers a wide range of webinars, podcasts, publications, and teacher forums where teachers can learn more about how to use the platform. These resources feature voices and ideas from across the nation, making it an ideal space for expanding ways of thinking about hybrid learning and digital tools in the classroom.



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Avenue.ca is the online learning management system for LINC. The platform is challenging for literacy students, but using it as a 'display only' resource will help learners gain familiarity with the platform for their future courses.



# Introducing Digital Skills Before Going Online



# WHAT IS DIGITAL LITERACY?

---

Digital literacy is a common and increasing aspect of everyday life, and many programs are starting to incorporate digital literacy training into their literacy programs.

We are experiencing rapid change in the digital sphere, and students' learning needs in the context of digital literacy are also changing rapidly. Do your students need to use email in their daily life? Create passwords? Reply to an automatic appointment reminder? Do they more often use their smartphones or a laptop?

Together with changes in our conception of digital literacy, we are also seeing a rapid change in modes of writing. We write with a pen on paper, typing on a keyboard, or, increasingly, on our smartphones with autocomplete or predictive text. Which of these literacies are necessary for literacy students to learn and master?

As you read this section, consider your context and students as well as your own abilities, classroom practices, and teaching beliefs when it comes to digital tools in the classroom.

## DEFINING DIGITAL LITERACY

*Digital literacy is accessing, managing, understanding, communicating, evaluating, and creating information safely and appropriately through digital technologies.*

## DIGITAL SKILLS AS BUILDING BLOCKS

At the lowest literacy levels, where students have more limited digital literacy skills, using hybrid or blended learning formats can be difficult and pedagogically unsound.

Even so, it is essential to introduce literacy learners to digital tools and skills to support their technological needs in life and for future online learning.



Digital literacy cannot be taken for granted in a literacy-level classroom. Accessing, operating, creating, and troubleshooting in digital spaces involves complex skills. Every skill must be introduced, practiced, and developed over time. Think of each digital skill as a building block that you will need to return to again and again in your classroom.

The **[ECSD Digital Literacy Progression List](#)** can help you identify skills to focus on in your literacy class. Here are examples of skills you will need to build over time:

- Naming the basic parts of a computer and its accessories (i.e., mouse, trackpad, headphones, keyboard, screen, power button, icons, etc.)
- Finding and using common keys like 'enter,' 'backspace,' 'shift,' and 'space bar.'
- Logging into a personal account, scrolling up and down on a web page or document, adjusting the size of windows and apps, adjusting the volume.
- Downloading an app on a smartphone, tablet, or computer.
- Opening Zoom (or another videoconferencing platform), joining a meeting, leaving and re-joining a meeting, (un)muting, turning on/off video, opening the chat window.

# DIGITAL SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR TEACHERS

As you prepare to teach digital skills or teach in a hybrid setting, take some time to gauge your own digital literacy skills and competencies. Use this tool to reflect on strengths and areas of improvement.

Consider each statement and assess yourself according to the degree to which you agree with that statement. If you disagree or feel unsure, seek out some training or support.

## BASIC DIGITAL LITERACY

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
<b>Operating Digital Technologies &amp; Using Programs/Applications</b>					
I understand how to operate different hardware devices (e.g., smartphone, tablet, desktop computer, laptop)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to distinguish the differences between Android and iOS (Apple) devices, and PC and Mac computers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to keep the software on my devices up-to-date	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am competent in using video conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom, Teams)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am competent in using digital messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Creating with Digital Technologies</b>					
I feel competent in using Microsoft (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.) and/or Google Applications (Docs, Slides, Forms, etc.) to create things	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Troubleshooting</b>					
I am able to do basic troubleshooting when experiencing technical difficulties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Digital Privacy</b>					
I know how to protect my personal information on the Internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The headings for this digital self-assessment tool are adopted from the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks "[ESL for ALL Digital Literacy Progression](#)" List.

## DIGITAL LITERACY IN THE CLASSROOM

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
<b>Operating Digital Technologies &amp; Using Programs/Applications</b>					
I am able to use and manage multiple hardware devices (e.g., desktop computer, Smart board, laptop, etc.) in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am familiar with how to use the different hardware devices my students use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If applicable, I am competent in using WhatsApp to communicate with my students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If applicable, I am competent in using Avenue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Creating with Digital Technologies</b>					
If applicable, I know how to customize Avenue to fit the needs of my students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am competent in turning my hard-copy resources into digital resources (including mobile-friendly resources) for my online students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am competent in creating my own digital resources to use in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Troubleshooting</b>					
I am able to troubleshoot between the Android and iOS operating systems my students use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to troubleshoot on the PC and Apple computers my students use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to help my online students when they are experiencing technical difficulties, such as issues with WiFi connectivity, microphone/video, software (e.g., Zoom, Teams), etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Digital Privacy</b>					
I know how to protect my private information when using and sharing my personal device(s) in the classroom (e.g., students using your personal tablet)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# CONSIDERING LEARNERS' NEEDS

## A SELF-AUDIT OF YOUR CLASSROOM

### WHAT ARE MY STUDENTS' CURRENT DIGITAL ABILITIES?

How proficient are my students at each of the following modes of writing:

- Printing on paper
- Typing on a keyboard
- Texting on a smartphone

How are my students already using each of the above modes in their daily lives?

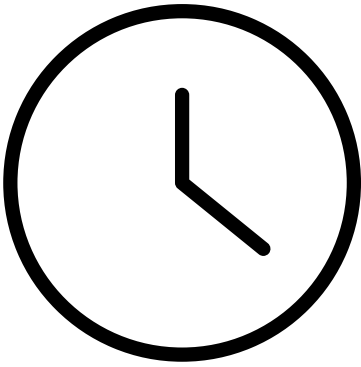
### WHAT ARE MY STUDENTS' DIGITAL NEEDS FOR THE FUTURE?

What areas of digital literacy are important for my students to learn? What do they ask about frequently, or where do I see my students struggling?

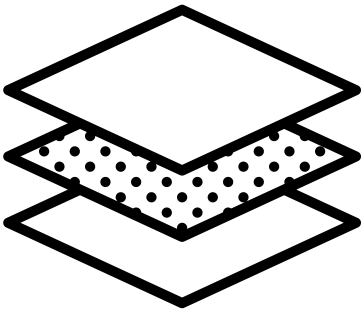
In order for students to succeed in my class and in their daily life, what digital skills do they need help developing?

# INTRODUCING DIGITAL SKILLS BEFORE TRYING HYBRID

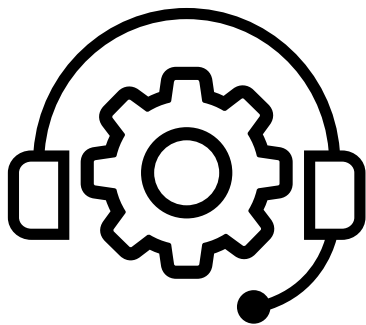
## TIPS FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS' SUCCESS IN BUILDING DIGITAL LITERACY



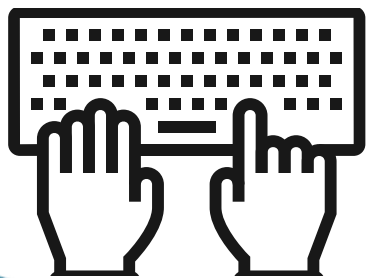
**Be patient and plan on taking it slow.** Building digital skills is time-consuming! It requires step-by-step, and often one-on-one, guidance. Be intentional in separating out every step of an activity (e.g., find the chat button, find the space to type, type a message, find the backspace key if you make a mistake, push send, etc.).



**Practice and scaffold.** Once you introduce a skill, you will need to *practice, practice, practice* it so that students build muscle memory. To further develop their skills and confidence, scaffold skills by applying an already learned skill to other apps or devices or by combining multiple skills into one task (e.g., asking students to “send an email” combines using a mouse, logging into an account, and typing, among other skills).



**Provide controlled computer support.** Refer students to your organization's tech support specialist. If your organization has a computer lab, have classes in the lab periodically. Try teaching an entirely remote delivery class so that all the students join online and can troubleshoot issues at the same time.



**Use technology in authentic ways.** Encourage students to expand and apply digital skills in authentic ways. For instance, model how to use a search engine to look for a definition or photo.

## IDEAS FOR HOW TO INTEGRATE TECHNOLOGY INTO YOUR CLASSROOM

### Voice memos and recordings

- Practice pronunciation by having students record themselves reading a text aloud, then ask them to listen back to hear themselves speak (i.e., self-assessment).
- Practice conversational English by having students send and respond to voice memos on messaging apps from peers.

### Watch YouTube videos as a class

- Introduce or review topics by watching YouTube videos. Many channels provide content for language learning.

### Explore online news

- Several websites feature news using language graded for ESL students (e.g., [Breaking News English](#), [News in Levels](#)).
- Pick an article related to your class topic and highlight the various components (i.e., source, title, author, pictures).

### Translators, online dictionaries, and photo searches

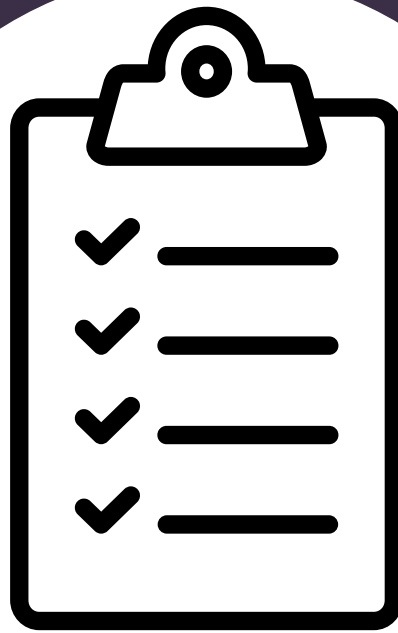
- Teach students how to use these tools and strategies to look up the meanings of words/concepts.

### Leverage social media and mobile skills

- Practice keyboard typing and logging in by having students access an account on a computer rather than mobile.
- Ask students to share images in your class WhatsApp group.

### Language learning apps and websites

- Help students download apps on their mobiles (i.e., [Duolingo](#)) or access websites that support language learning so they can practice digital skills and language beyond class time.



# **At Mid-High Literacy Levels: Planning Ahead for Hybrid**



# DETERMINING IF STUDENTS ARE READY FOR HYBRID

Use this guide to determine whether remote/hybrid learning is viable for students in your class. Consider your student's track record, strengths, and challenges.

**Instructions:** Before commencing a hybrid plan with a student, reflect on their abilities, skills, and track record to determine whether hybrid is a good option for them. This evaluation can be completed with other teachers who are familiar with the student.

**Is hybrid a good option for this student in the near future? (Select all that apply)**

	No	Maybe	Yes
<b>Attendance / Punctuality</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> They do not attend class <input type="checkbox"/> They infrequently attend class <input type="checkbox"/> They do not show up to class on time <input type="checkbox"/> They do not stay in the class for very long (e.g., shows up for only 10 minutes)	<input type="checkbox"/> They sometimes attend classes <input type="checkbox"/> They sometimes show up to class late <input type="checkbox"/> They sometimes leave the classroom early and will not come back	<input type="checkbox"/> They almost always attend class <input type="checkbox"/> They almost always show up to class on time <input type="checkbox"/> They almost always stay throughout the class time
<b>Engagement / Participation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> They have a difficult time staying engaged/focusing (e.g., too many distractions) or actively participating <input type="checkbox"/> Their camera and/or microphone are almost always turned off when needed <input type="checkbox"/> They almost never actively participate in activities	<input type="checkbox"/> They sometimes get distracted and take time to get focused again <input type="checkbox"/> Their camera and/or microphone are sometimes turned off when needed <input type="checkbox"/> They sometimes participate in activities	<input type="checkbox"/> They almost always are able to minimize distractions and stay focused <input type="checkbox"/> Their camera and/or microphone is almost always turned on when needed <input type="checkbox"/> They almost always actively participate in activities
<b>Communication</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> They do not communicate difficulties experienced <input type="checkbox"/> They almost never send assignments	<input type="checkbox"/> They sometimes communicate difficulties experienced <input type="checkbox"/> They sometimes send assignments	<input type="checkbox"/> They almost always communicate difficulties experienced <input type="checkbox"/> They almost always send assignments

Continues on the next page...

### Digital Literacy Skills

They do not have enough digital literacy skills to be remote

They sometimes need extra support with building digital literacy skills

They have sufficient digital literacy skills for remote learning and require minimal support

### Digital Devices and Internet Connectivity

They do not have adequate internet connectivity

They sometimes have poor internet connection

They have good internet connectivity

They do not have sufficient/reliable devices suited for remote learning

They have an okay device suited for remote learning, but sometimes it is faulty

They have sufficient/reliable devices suited for remote learning

### Home Learning Space

They do not have an adequate learning space at home

They sometimes have an adequate learning space at home

They have a good learning space at home

If you ticked a lot of boxes in the **yes** column, then your student might be ready for hybrid delivery. The next few pages will guide you through setting up a **Personal Hybrid Learning Plan** with/for your student.

However, if you ticked more boxes in the **no** and **maybe** columns, you should provide some guidance and/or further training for your student to remove some barriers and set up healthy learning habits to better prepare them for hybrid delivery.

# PERSONAL HYBRID LEARNING PLAN

Once you have determined that your student is ready for a hybrid learning format, take some time to set up a **Personal Hybrid Learning Plan (PHLP)**. A PHLP is a short, structured plan to clarify with your student why and when they will transition to studying remotely. It will also give you a chance to state your expectations for the student.

An important element of the plan is meeting with the student to review the hybrid arrangement and determine if it continues to be relevant and conducive to successful learning. Students should understand the expectations surrounding what successful hybrid learning looks like and should be encouraged to return to in-person learning if their progress is unduly impacted. There are two types of hybrid learning plans:

The **Fixed-Term Remote PHLP** can be used with students who will need to go online for a fixed period of time, such as planning for an absence due to pregnancy or being unable to attend in-person due to an injury.

The **Continual Hybrid PHLP** is for situations where a student might benefit from attending remotely on pre-planned days for a predictable reason, such as routine childcare obligations or medical appointments.

In the case of exceptional and unplanned circumstances such as severe weather conditions or illness, it will not be possible to use a PHLP. See **Planning the Unexpected** (p. 45) to best prepare yourself and students for these situations.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

First, read the example scenarios for how PHLPs can be used.

You will find two versions of both the Fixed Term Remote and Continual Hybrid PHLPs. One version is designed for you to fill out yourself, though you may want to go over it orally with the student. The second is a more simplified one designed for the student to complete. Feel free to adjust the plan depending on your students' needs, and you may want to adapt the expectations based on your own classroom and organization.

Discussing the plan with your student should be supplemented with the **Hybrid Readiness Checklist** (p. 44). This will ensure that your student is prepared for online learning and can also determine what areas the student may need extra support with.

# PHLP

## EXAMPLE SCENARIOS

### FIXED-TERM REMOTE | Case 1: Jawahir

*Jawahir is experiencing mental health issues, making it difficult for her to get up every day and come to class. You are noticing her coming to class late, not interacting with her classmates, and experiencing panic attacks.*

*You ask if Jawahir would be more comfortable staying at home and learning online instead, while she gets some mental health help. Jawahir is able to receive mental health counselling for 6 weeks. You discuss the plan for going remote. Jawahir has sufficient digital literacy skills to be able to access and participate on Zoom; however, she easily gets distracted and has challenges around punctuality.*

#### Personal Hybrid Learning Plan

My student, **Jawahir**, will learn online for a fixed term.

Reason: She will do hybrid learning because of **recent mental health concerns that she is experiencing that are affecting her in-person learning.**

Time Period: She will attend online from **next Monday, April 24**, until **June 6**, when her **counselling sessions are finished.**

- We have gone over the hybrid readiness checklist and remote attendance expectations.

She will need some extra help with:

**Forming good habits with attending class on time.**  
**Eliminating highly distracting things and managing other distractions.**

### FIXED-TERM REMOTE | Case 2: Qasim

*Qasim's wife is having a baby next week and he is her only support to help care for the baby.*

*Qasim asks if he can study on Zoom after the birth of his baby for the remainder of the semester. Since there is a month left of classes, you agree that it would be okay for him to go remote. Qasim is inexperienced with online learning and often forgets instructions.*

### Personal Hybrid Learning Plan

My student, **Qasim**, will learn online for a fixed time.

Reason: He will do hybrid learning because **his wife recently had a baby and he is the only support she has to care for the baby.**

Time Period: He will attend online from **now** until **the end of the semester.**

- We have gone over the hybrid readiness checklist and remote attendance expectations.

He will need some extra help with:

**Practicing accessing Zoom, turning off/on the camera, and muting/unmuting the microphone, especially when the baby is crying in the background.**

## CONTINUAL HYBRID | Case 3: Aaina

*Aaina has two young children who finish school early every Friday at noon. She has a long commute by bus and needs to get home in time to pick up her children from school and take care of them. She doesn't have anyone who can help her.*

*Aaina and you discuss the plan for her to study remotely. Her eldest child has experience with using Zoom and has promised to help Aaina with logging on and with any technical problems. You discuss the requirements needed for her remote study on Fridays.*

### Personal Hybrid Learning Plan

My student, **Aaina**, will learn online part-time.

Reason: She will do hybrid learning because **her children are off early from school at noon and she is the only person that can care for them.**

When will the student attend class remotely: **Every Friday.**

When will the student attend class in person: **Monday-Thursdays.**

- We have gone over the hybrid readiness checklist and remote attendance expectations.

She will need some extra help with:

**She seems to be okay with going remote and has her son to help her with any technical difficulties.**

## CONTINUAL HYBRID | Case 4: Shaheer

*Shaheer slipped on the ice and fell on his back as he was rushing to catch the train. He must do physiotherapy every other week for 2 months. The doctor scheduled him to come for his therapy on Tuesdays.*

*You and Shaheer meet to discuss his plan to study remotely on the days of his physiotherapy appointments. It was the beginning of January when Shaheer talked to you. Since this is Shaheer's first time studying online, he will need to practice on how to connect to Zoom, mute/unmute the microphone and turn on/off the camera. He also has an outdated laptop that is prone to technical issues, so he will need some support when these issues arise.*

### Personal Hybrid Learning Plan

My student, **Shaheer**, will learn online part-time.

Reason: He will do hybrid learning because of **physiotherapy appointments**.

When will the student attend class remotely: **Every second Tuesday**.

When will the student attend class in-person: **All other scheduled class dates**.

- We have gone over the hybrid readiness checklist and expectations and remote attendance expectations.

He will need some extra help with:

**Practicing to access Zoom, turning off/on the camera, and muting/unmuting the microphone.**

**Basic troubleshooting.**

**Updating any new software.**

For Teachers

# PERSONAL HYBRID LEARNING PLAN (FIXED-TERM REMOTE)



My student, \_\_\_\_\_, will learn online for a **fixed term**.

**Reason:** They will do hybrid learning because

\_\_\_\_\_.

**Time Period:** They will attend class remotely from

\_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_.

- We have gone over the hybrid readiness checklist and remote attendance expectations.

They will need some extra help with:

For Students (3L and up)

# PERSONAL HYBRID LEARNING PLAN (FIXED-TERM REMOTE)



I will learn online.

Start date: \_\_\_\_\_.

End date: \_\_\_\_\_.

I will be a good student online and...

- ... turn my camera on.
- ... unmute my microphone so I can talk.
- ... do all the activities.

For Teachers

# PERSONAL HYBRID LEARNING PLAN (CONTINUAL HYBRID)

My student, \_\_\_\_\_, will learn online **continually throughout the course.**

**Reason:** They will do hybrid learning because

\_\_\_\_\_.

When will the student attend class remotely:

\_\_\_\_\_.

When will the student attend class in-person:

\_\_\_\_\_.

We have gone over the hybrid readiness checklist and remote attendance expectations.

They will need some extra help with:

For Students (3L and up)

# PERSONAL HYBRID LEARNING PLAN (CONTINUAL HYBRID)

---

I will learn online AND in class.

What day will I learn online? \_\_\_\_\_.

What day will I learn in class? \_\_\_\_\_.


I will be a good student online and...

- ... turn my camera on.
- ... unmute my microphone so I can talk.
- ... do all the activities.

# HYBRID READINESS CHECKLIST

## (TEACHER)


Use this checklist before starting the semester/term to ensure you are equipped for delivering hybrid instruction.

- 
- I have the digital devices (e.g., Smart board, cameras, desktop computer, smartphone, laptop, tablet, etc.) I need for both at home (if required) and in the classroom.
  - I have tested all my digital devices to ensure they are working and all software is up-to-date.
  - I have tested my WiFi connectivity both at home and in the classroom.
  - I know or have made a plan to discover what devices my students will be using to access materials, and have tested my digital resources on them (e.g., laptop, Android phone, iPhone).
  - I have considered my **Digital and Remote Privacy** (p. 53) and I have made plans to protect my online privacy and that of my students.
  - I have my classroom set up for hybrid delivery:
    - Camera(s) and other digital technology placement
    - Desks/tables arrangement
  - I have a space at home to set up for emergency hybrid delivery.
  - My in-person resources have been modified for the digital space and other digital materials needed have been created or selected.
  - I have my digital resources ready for distribution.
  - I know who to contact for technical support, if needed.

# HYBRID READINESS CHECKLIST

## (STUDENT)

Use this checklist before starting your semester/term to ensure your students are equipped for remote study.

- 
- I have gone over the following set-up requirements with the student(s)
    - Appropriate home learning space (e.g., desk, private room if possible)
    - Digital devices, WiFi connectivity
    - They know how to connect to the video conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom/Teams)
  
  - My students have practiced accessing and using the video conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom/Teams)
    - Finding the link and logging on to the platform
    - Muting/unmuting the microphone
    - Turning on/off the camera
    - Using the chat feature (if applicable)
    - Annotations (if applicable)
  
  - Students have home learning materials (e.g., binder, paper/notepad, markers, scissors, etc.)
  
  - I have gone over what distractions can be at home and for other students in the class and how to lessen them:
    - Mute microphone when there is background noise at home (e.g., babies crying)
    - Private and quiet space, if possible
    - Headphones
    - No TV or music playing in the background
  
  - I have gone over the online attendance requirements:
    - Camera policy (preferably program policy)
    - Student engagement (e.g., listening and active participation in activities)
  
  - I have gone over basic cyber safety norms:
    - Keep written passwords in a safe place and never share them with anyone that you don't trust
    - Log out of websites after using them (e.g., Avenue.ca)

# PLANNING THE UNEXPECTED

## HYBRID GUIDE

Apply this guide to situations when you or your student(s) must go remote due to sudden personal or external circumstances, such as sickness, appointments, family responsibilities, poor weather conditions, or building conditions that may affect in-person access.

### MINIMIZING THE UNEXPECTED

Unplanned absences will always occur, but you can minimize unplanned moves to hybrid by preparing yourself and your students for different possibilities. This might be as simple as talking with your students about how your organization handles snow days well before the first snowfall.

It might also be worth proactively suggesting and creating a **Personal Hybrid Learning Plan** with a student who has a history of frequent schedule disruptions. Perhaps a student with a complex schedule would benefit from going online every Tuesday, so she can book all her appointments on those days. A student with chronic pain might benefit from going online periodically in the wintertime because you know that his condition flares up in cold weather.

Consider how you might make hybrid accommodations for your students to minimize sudden absences and remain flexible in their diverse situations.

### IF A STUDENT MUST GO REMOTE DUE TO SUDDEN PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

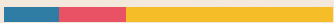
- 1 Go over the hybrid requirements again with the student (i.e., through WhatsApp, phone calls, etc.) to ensure they are able to access and participate in the digital classroom
  - a. Appropriate learning space (e.g., desk, private room, etc.)
  - b. Digital devices, WiFi connectivity
  - c. How and where to access the digital classroom
  - d. Muting/unmuting the microphone
  - e. Turning off/on the camera
  - f. Using the chat feature and annotations (if applicable)
- 2 Physical learning materials: If the student has any learning materials (e.g., pencils, papers, etc.) at home, encourage them to use these materials.
- 3 Check-in with the student throughout the class to see if they are having technical difficulties or if they are unsure of where to find features (e.g., microphone, camera, chat, etc.) on the video conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom/Teams)

***IF YOU MUST GO REMOTE DUE TO PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES OR IF EVERYONE MUST GO REMOTE DUE TO EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES***

- 1 Ensure students know the sudden change to remote delivery (i.e., through WhatsApp, phone calls, etc.).
- 2 Go over hybrid requirements and have students practice to ensure students are able to access and participate in the remote classroom:
  - a. Appropriate learning space (e.g., desk, private room, etc.)
  - b. Digital devices, WiFi connectivity
  - c. How and where to access the digital classroom
  - d. Muting/unmuting the microphone
  - e. Turning off/on the camera
  - f. Using the chat feature and annotations (if applicable)
- 3 Physical learning materials: Encourage students to have learning materials (e.g. pencils, papers, etc.) to use at home.
  - a. If you know there is a possibility of going remote, have your students bring their classroom materials (e.g., binders, flashcards, notebooks, etc.) home and then bring them back when in-person classes return.
- 4 Frequently check in with the student throughout the class to see if they are experiencing any technical difficulties or unsure of where to find features (e.g., microphone, camera, chat feature, etc.) on the video conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom/Teams).



# Engaging Learners in Hybrid Spaces



# SETTING UP AND MANAGING A HYBRID CLASSROOM

## SETTING UP THE SPACE

Creating a print-rich environment in your classroom is important for developing literacy skills. Remember that print or other visual materials on the walls will not be visible to online students (e.g., the calendar in the photo below). You may need to get creative to include online students in activities that involve manipulables or wall materials.

It is always a good idea to test to see what your online students are experiencing by logging into your own classroom. Consider checking the student experience on a few different devices, especially mobile phones.



Working from a desktop computer makes it very difficult to interact with in-person students at the same time as those online. This is even more true when the desktop is set up in a corner of the classroom. If you find that your computer setup forces you to turn your back to your in-person students when you are on the computer, this is not likely to be effective long term.

Where possible, use a portable device to allow for mobility within the classroom.



Setting up the classroom in a horseshoe facing the front gives in-person students a clear view of the board or smartboard but puts online students at the instructor's back. It can be easy to forget about your online students while facing the in-person class. It is also quite taxing to be turning back and forth through an entire class.



# PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN HYBRID SETTINGS

## INTEGRATING REMOTE STUDENTS INTO THE CLASS

- 1 Use Digital Tools for Engagement.** Using interactive digital tools, such as virtual whiteboards, online interactive quizzes and games, and collaborative document editors enable students to actively participate in the lesson and feel more connected to the class.
- 2 Nominate Remote Students.** Offer frequent opportunities for online student participation by intentionally calling on remote students to give them opportunities to share their thoughts, ideas, and questions. This can help online students feel more connected to the class and more invested in their learning.
- 3 Strategic Pair and Group Work.** Set up pair and group activities by partnering remote students with in-person students.
- 4 Foster a Sense of Community.** Online students will be more engaged when they feel like they are part of a community. Teachers can set up engaging classroom activities to help online students feel connected to the class (see a list of ideas on the next pages). Teachers can also establish classroom routines or traditions (e.g., starting with a daily icebreaker or warmer, having a themed background image on the display screen, etc).
- 5 Ensure Clear Audio.** Be aware of how your audio set up may be constraining interactions. Having clear audio can increase the amount and quality of interaction between remote and in-person students.
- 6 Online Guests and Events.** Inviting a guest to come to your classroom via video-conferencing can be an effective way to focus the classroom on a shared display.
- 7 Special Activities and Field Trips.** Especially if you have some students who are attending remotely for a longer period of time, consider building in opportunities for face-to-face interaction, such as field trips, mandatory in-person class days (e.g., for testing), or special in-class activities. Remember to give lots of advance notice for in-person activities so that remote students can prepare accordingly.

## IDEA BANK: ACTIVITIES TO ENGAGE REMOTE AND IN-PERSON STUDENTS

### Show-and-Tell

Instruct students attending remotely to find an item from their home for show and tell. You can give a theme for the type of item they should find (e.g., something green, your favourite food). Instruct in-person students to come up with simple sentences or questions about the show-and-tell items.

### Virtual Tours

Pique students' interest with a virtual tour of a museum or zoo, or find a live stream of a famous landmark across the globe. Even Google street view might be an interesting opportunity for students to share an area that is familiar to them.

### 'Name 5' Race

Put online students against the in-person students in a friendly race. Give a category (e.g., fruits, words that start with 'A') and instruct students to work with their team to name 5 items that fit the category. The first group to name 5 wins. Compare lists and introduce new words.

### Remote Dictation

Use the chat to give remote students a word or short phrase, and ask them to read it out loud (via a speaker that the in-person students can hear). In-person students write down the word/phrase. Check spelling and meaning, as needed. Then, switch roles.

### Shout it Out

Another friendly competition between the in-person and remote students entails displaying a photo on the screen so that both remote and in-person students can see it. Any student can shout out the target vocabulary that the picture represents, winning a point for their team. Also try this with simple trivia.

### Finding Commonalities

For mid-higher level students, instruct your class to find something that everyone has in common. You can give more specific instructions like, "do we all like the same type of food?" Make sure the group considers the opinions of remote and in-person students.

### Memory Game

Show students 10 pictures or real items (make sure to display them clearly via video to the students who are attending remotely). Then tell students to work together in pairs, one remote and one in-person, to remember and name as many of the 10 pictures/items as they can.

### Choose an Emoji

Ask all students to choose an emoji that reflects how they feel, and to share their chosen emoji via the class messaging group. Follow up to see if there are any similar ones, and ask students "why" they feel sleepy, happy, in love, or whatever other emoji they chose.

## IDEA BANK (CONTINUED)

### QR Code Quiz

Before class, print off (and be ready to display) a document with 4-8 QR codes from local shops or restaurants. Instruct students to practice using their phone cameras to open the links to the QR codes and then write down which store it brought them to.

### Pass the Mouse

This activity requires a bluetooth mouse and you need to display the screen that the mouse is connected to. Have students complete one or two instructions each, then pass the mouse to the person beside them. For example, click the music app, next, click 'play', next... etc.

### Create a Password

If you think students will understand not to share their real passwords, you could practice creating hypothetical passwords, with capital letters and symbols for added challenge. Then you can ask them to type them in twice - and the passwords must match!

### Mood and Music

Ask the students attending remotely to choose a favourite song of theirs to play for the rest of the class. Listen together and then, if feasible, discuss the meaning of the song, introduce some vocabulary, and see if students like the song / genre or not.

### Virtual Conversational Groups

Post conversational questions/prompts in the chat (or send them via WhatsApp) and put students in breakout rooms to discuss with each other. In-person students can gather in small groups. Once you re-group have online and in-person group share and compare their answers.

### Tic Tac Toe

Create a Tic Tac Toe grid on a virtual whiteboard (e.g., Zoom or another app). Insert questions in each square. Students must answer a question before putting an X or an O in the corresponding square. Questions can be substituted with pictures, math equations, or tasks (e.g. write "good morning" in the chat).

### Group Sort

Display on your screen a Group Sort template on [wordwall.net](http://wordwall.net) so that both remote and in-person students can see it. The website has several or you can create your own. One by one, students can sort words or pictures into the correct groups. In-person students can practice using a mouse to drag and drop.

### Voice Texts to Written Texts

Teach students how to use the voice text feature of a messaging app. Pair up remote students with in-person students and get them to practice sending voice texts. Students could type/text a question, and respond to each other by voice text. Or students can send each other voice notes and type out part of the voice text as a dictation.



# Digital and Remote Privacy



# PRIVACY AND ONLINE SAFETY FOR HYBRID TEACHING

Digital and remote privacy issues encompass **two distinct areas**:

- 1 **External:** Increased risk to both you and your students of viruses, scams, or stolen personal information due to increasing digital engagement.
- 2 **Interpersonal:** Risk of your or your students' personal information being shared inappropriately; increased risk of harassment, bullying, or inappropriate contact between classmates or between teacher and student.

Your organization may need to update its digital privacy policies and/or conduct a privacy audit to account for increased digital engagement and new online behaviours since the pandemic.

Literacy classrooms face different challenges than mainstream LINC ESL programs when addressing digital privacy issues. Students are less likely to have the digital literacy skills to protect themselves online and may have difficulty understanding online privacy. Or, they may be so fearful of scams or other online dangers that it creates a barrier to online learning.

Depending on their level, your students may not have the skills to use standard platforms or privacy tools. As a literacy instructor, you are probably used to thinking up workarounds for these kinds of problems - but there is a risk that some of the common workarounds for these issues may be a source of privacy risks.

Here are a few areas of concern:

## WHATSAPP

The use of WhatsApp as a tool for messaging literacy students has expanded since 2020. But it does come with some privacy challenges.

- 1 It is possible to obtain a 'virtual phone number' to protect your personal phone number. A virtual phone number can send calls to messaging and delay texts during off hours. There may be a cost, so speak with your organization about setting this up.
- 2 Set clear expectations for students' contact with classmates, and monitor group chats for inappropriate content.
- 3 Set and model your personal and professional boundaries between you and your students (e.g., if you have limits on when students can contact you outside of class time, honour those limits by not responding to their message).

## VIDEO CONFERENCING

Most teachers prefer a cameras-on policy for virtual attendance. While cameras can encourage participation and interaction with online students, there are some privacy issues.

- 1 Students may not feel comfortable showing the inside of their homes. Teach students to create a neutral background and be mindful of students' privacy. Students could also use the "blur background" or "virtual background" feature on video conferencing platforms that allow users to blur their background or select an image to use as their background. If they choose to show their homes, remind students to be mindful of what is captured in their cameras, as it's visible to everyone in the class. They may want to inform their household members that their camera will be on.
- 2 Be aware that some female students, especially those from conservative cultures, may consider their personal image to be private. A strict cameras-on policy may be seen as a violation of privacy, particularly when interacting with male teachers or in mixed-gender classes.

## PERSONAL DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM

- 1 If using a personal digital device (laptop, tablet, etc.) in the classroom, be careful to log out of personal accounts before sharing.
- 2 When screen-sharing with remote or hybrid learners, be aware of personal information visible to online participants, including open tabs, auto-fill (e.g., search bar), or automatic notifications (e.g., private message preview).

## CONFIDENTIAL CLIENT MATERIAL

With the rise of remote and hybrid learning, we are seeing an increase in literacy students sending confidential materials (e.g., medical and financial records, government documents, etc.) to their instructors via email or WhatsApp.

- 1 As far as possible, clarify expectations with literacy students around sending confidential materials.

Examples of some good expectations to share with your students:

- Clearly define what materials are acceptable (e.g., assignments, fun photos/videos of what they are doing over the weekend) and not acceptable to send (e.g., medical and financial records, government documents, etc.)
  - Clearly explain what confidential materials are and why these materials are confidential and must not be shared with you.
- 2 Do not keep confidential student material sent in error. Immediately delete from both the platform and device (check your phone's WhatsApp settings as some phones will automatically download attachments).

# NURTURING DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

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Part of digital literacy is knowing how to use online spaces and digital tools safely. As you use digital tools more and more in your classes, consider how you can raise your students awareness of a few key principles:



## **STAY SAFE**

Do not share personal information, do not share personal photos (even with classmates), do not share passwords.



## **BE CAREFUL**

Don't trust everyone online. Don't trust all information online. Be careful about clicking links in emails from addresses you don't know.



## **BE KIND**

Is what you post online positive and respectful to others? Do not make rude/bad comments online that you would not say to someone in person.



## **BE CONSIDERATE**

Don't message your classmates or teachers very late at night. Be prepared to contact other supports if needed during non-class hours.

## IDEAS OF ACTIVITIES TO INTRODUCE DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

These are recommended as 'in-person' activities to set some ground rules and establish a shared understanding of how to use technology safely and appropriately in the classroom. You can adapt these for an online space if needed.

### Do or Don't?

Tell your students you are going to go over some technology rules. Draw a smiley face ("do") on one side of the board and a sad face ("do not") on the other side. Adapt, print, and cut out the following rules and ask students to work together to place them on the correct side of the board.

I say my password to my class.	I send a message to my class at 10:00 PM	I say bad things to people online.
I keep my password a secret.	I send a message to my class at 10:00 AM	I say nice things to people online.
I send photos of my kids to my class on WhatsApp.	I say "good morning" to my class on WhatsApp	I send a WhatsApp message to my teacher when I am sick.

### Pictures to Share

Similar to above, divide the board to two sides: "share" and "don't share." Print off pictures that are (and are not) appropriate to share on WhatsApp with the class group. You may include photos of: food, a family photo, a piece of ID, a medical record, a photo of a viewpoint or landmark, etc.

### What's My Footprint?

Depending on your learners and their level, you could try introducing the concept of a **digital footprint** by modelling a physical footprint. You could do this yourself or have learners make physical footprints either in the classroom using paint or outdoors in dirt/snow). Then, help learners make the connection to how their presence online has a lasting impact.







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