

Course
Discovering the World of Print
ENG-B121-4

Literacy



"Through literacy you begin to see the universe...Between the two there is you, unstoppable."

Grace Slick (1939-)

Presentation of the Course *Discovering the World of Print*

The goal of the course *Discovering the World of Print* is to initiate adult literacy learners to the understanding and use of written discourse in real-life situations related to their immediate environment. They will begin to appreciate the world of print as a powerful tool for the communication of meaning, self-expression and enjoyment.

This course develops adult literacy learners' language proficiency by initiating them to a variety of reading and writing activities that provide them with opportunities to develop their awareness of the

interaction between spoken and written words in their close surroundings.

By the end of the course, adult literacy learners will be able to understand and interpret basic symbols and signs as well as recognize and use some basic, common high-frequency words in their immediate environment. They will, for example, transcribe basic information, write one-word instructions and recognize signs, common words in simple forms, labels or flyers and begin to make associations between the written and spoken word.

Dealing with Real-Life Situations

Dealing effectively with real-life situations is based on actions. These actions are grouped into categories and make use of a set of resources that include operational competencies and essential knowledge. During the learning process, adults are expected to construct knowledge related to these resources in order to be able to deal appropriately with their real-life situations.

The class of situations, categories of actions, operational competencies and essential knowledge constitute the compulsory elements of the course. These elements are detailed in their respective rubrics.



Class of Situations Addressed by the Course

This course addresses a single class of situations: *Becoming acquainted with written language in the immediate environment*.

This class of situations includes a wide range of personal and social real-life situations that require adults to recognize and begin to use the codes and conventions of written language in their close environment. Dealing competently with these situations requires awareness of basic signs and symbols as well as familiarity with some common high-frequency sight words related to their immediate surroundings. It also requires the ability to understand

and give short, frequently required information and simple instructions.

Some examples of real-life situations include shopping for food, clothes and medication, celebrating special occasions, and locating services.

Class of Situations	Examples of Real-Life Situations
Becoming acquainted with written language in the immediate environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Discovering one's neighbourhood▪ Shopping for food▪ Shopping for clothes▪ Shopping for over-the-counter medication▪ Occupying a dwelling▪ Finding one's way around▪ Locating services▪ Celebrating special occasions

Categories of Actions

The *categories of actions* are groups of actions that are appropriate for dealing with the real-life situations addressed in the course. *Examples of actions* are provided to illustrate the scope of the category across a variety of contexts.

Categories of Actions	Examples of Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking the first steps in reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognizes basic, common signs and symbols (e.g. traffic signs, warnings, weather forecast symbols) ▪ Recognizes basic, common high-frequency sight words (e.g. Stop, Metro, Danger, Yield) ▪ Reads one-word pictorial instructions (e.g. on, off, press, pull) ▪ Recognizes alphabetical order (e.g. in telephone books) ▪ Recognizes sound-symbol correspondence ▪ Associates spoken words with printed words ▪ Recognizes common words (e.g. bus identification banner, street name) ▪ Reads cardinal points (e.g. N, S, E, W) ▪ Recognizes requests for personal information on short, simple forms (e.g. name, address) ▪ Recognizes symbols and words on signs in public buildings (e.g. exit, stairs, elevators, fire extinguisher) ▪ Recognizes letter symbols on labels, tags (e.g. S, M, L) ▪ Matches pictures and symbols with words and numbers (e.g. in food flyers, clothing ads) ▪ Recognizes months and days on calendars ▪ Identifies common trademarks, brands (e.g. Tylenol) ▪ Recognizes a limited number of common high-frequency sight words in basic high-interest/low-vocabulary adult content books (e.g. Fry, Dolch) ▪ Associates reading and writing modeled through listening to stories ▪ Follows read-aloud illustrated predictable stories

Categories of Actions	Examples of Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking the first steps in writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writes basic personal data in short, simple forms (e.g. name, address, phone number) ▪ Copies basic, common information (e.g. name and phone number of hospital, doctor) ▪ Writes one-word instructions (e.g. stop, go, turn) ▪ Signs short, simple forms (e.g. first name, family name) ▪ Copies words from pictorial ads (e.g. for food shopping) ▪ Copies appointment dates on calendar ▪ Expresses feelings and thoughts through pictures and storyboards

Compulsory Elements and End-of-Course Outcomes

Dealing effectively with real-life situations is based on actions. These actions are grouped into categories and make use of a set of resources that include operational competencies and essential knowledge. During the learning process, adults are expected to construct knowledge related to these resources in order to be able to deal appropriately with their real-life situations.

The class of situations, categories of actions, operational competencies and essential knowledge constitute the compulsory elements of the course.

Class of Situations

Becoming acquainted with written language in the immediate environment

Categories of Actions

- Taking the first steps in reading
- Taking the first steps in writing

Operational Competencies

Communicates

- Recognizes that written language is a tool for communication
- Determines a purpose for reading or writing

Acts methodically

- Uses print-decoding strategies to make sense of written text
- Uses strategies to encode meaning in the production of written text

Essential Knowledge

- Types of discourse (Informative and expressive)
- Discourse cues and features
- Reading and writing strategies, techniques and procedures
- The writing system
- Language functions
- Vocabulary pertaining to the immediate environment

The end of course outcomes describe how adults make use of the compulsory elements to deal with the real-life situations addressed in the course.

End-of-Course Outcomes

In order to deal competently in the class of situations *Becoming acquainted with written language in the immediate environment*, adult literacy learners understand and use basic signs, symbols and words and begin to discover the relationship between written and spoken words in their immediate surroundings. Whether they are interpreting or creating written discourse, adults recognize the communicative value of the written word and determine their own purpose for reading or writing.

They make sense of some simple written texts in their immediate environment by recognizing basic signs and letter symbols, as well as a limited number of common high-frequency sight words in pictorial instructions, ads, simple maps and in basic high-interest/low-vocabulary adult content books. When doing so, they use a variety of print decoding strategies such as recognizing graphophonic cues and sight words and other meaning-making strategies such as visualizing and memorizing.

They also write a restricted number of informative and expressive texts by copying basic data, writing very basic personal information in simple forms, common one-word instructions, as well as producing basic pictorial storyboards to express their thoughts and feelings. When creating such texts, they use strategies to encode meaning, such as copying and making sound-symbol correspondences and observe basic conventions of the writing system, such as handwriting and upper and lower case letters to shape print.

Evaluation Criteria

- Reads frequently encountered or highly predictable texts at a basic functional level
- Writes short routine, formulaic texts at a basic functional level

Operational Competencies

The contribution of each operational competency is described in terms of the actions that are appropriate for dealing with the real-life situations of this course. These operational competencies are addressed in other courses and therefore all of the courses taken together contribute to their development.

In this course, only the following operational competencies are addressed: *Communicates* and *Acts methodically*.

Contribution of the Operational Competency *Communicates*

The operational competency *Communicates* is the capacity to express meaning simply and clearly and to understand the basic meaning expressed by others. It is solicited in all real-life situations in which people decode and encode meaning in written texts and is linked to the class of situations *Becoming acquainted with written language in the immediate environment*.

Adult literacy learners exercise their communicative competency by recognizing that written language, as much as oral language, is a tool for communication and by distinguishing different types of written texts according to their communicative function. For example, they realize that an advertisement is intended to sell the reader something, that it has a certain visual layout and that it is likely to include information such as price, location, opening and closing hours, pictures, etc. and may include words such as “sale” in large bold print. They also establish a personal purpose for reading or writing; for example, to obtain or give certain specific information, to understand or give basic instructions.

Contribution of the Operational Competency *Acts Methodically*

The operational competency *Acts methodically* involves the identification and use of appropriate strategies, techniques and procedures in order to achieve a specific purpose. It is solicited in all real-life situations linked to the class of situations *Becoming acquainted with written language in the immediate environment*.

Adults exercise the operational competency to act methodically when they use print decoding strategies such as recognizing graphophonic cues and sight words and other meaning-making strategies such as, memorization, guessing from context and appealing to graphics and pictures. They also use writing strategies, such as copying, checking in a picture dictionary and guessing at spelling by appealing to sound-symbol correspondences.

Essential Knowledge

The essential knowledge for the literacy level courses is found at the end of the literacy courses.

Attitudes

The following attitudes are provided as suggestions only. The development of these attitudes can help adults to become more competent in dealing with the real-life situations in this course.

Willingness to take risks	Self-confidence
<p>Willingness to take risks involves being ready to experiment and not being inhibited by fear of making errors. This attitude is a crucial factor in language development and depends on recognizing and accepting the fact that learning is a trial-and-error process. It is by showing initiative, accepting new challenges and experimenting with various forms of communication in different situations that adults increase their language proficiency and improve their level of competency.</p>	<p>Self-confidence can be defined as having faith in one's abilities. It is an attitude that allows adults to have positive and realistic views of themselves and their situations and to progress. When adults are self-confident, they show a readiness to learn: a willingness to interact orally with their interlocutors and to undertake new reading and writing challenges. This attitude allows adult literacy learners to reflect upon their achievements, establish new goals, and actively participate in the construction of new knowledge and the development of language proficiency.</p>
Perseverance	
<p>Perseverance can be defined as persistent determination. Adults who persevere continue their language studies even though they may sometimes feel discouraged. They are committed to hard work. This attitude allows adults to learn from their mistakes and to purposefully participate in learning activities to increase their level of competency. Perseverance is a key attitude for the development of language and lifelong learning.</p>	

Complementary Resources

The following resources are provided as suggestions only and consist of references that may be consulted in learning situations.

Social Resources	Material Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Community centres▪ Libraries▪ Museums▪ Theatres▪ Retailers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Picture dictionaries▪ Beginners' dictionaries▪ Spelling reference books▪ Writing models▪ Audio books▪ High-interest/low-vocabulary adult content books▪ Authentic teaching materials (e.g. telephone books, calendars, schedules, menus)▪ Multimedia materials (print and non-print)

Contribution of Other Subject Areas

Essential knowledge from other subject areas is also useful for dealing competently with the real-life situations in this course. While this knowledge is pertinent, it is not subject to formal evaluation in this course, nor does it constitute a prerequisite.

In Literacy, the same situation can be treated in more than one course and can solicit essential knowledge from other subject areas such as Mathematics, Science and Technology.

Andragogical Context

It is understood that for learning to take place, adult literacy learners must perceive it as meaningful and relevant to their life. It is from this perspective that the English, Language of Instruction program of study has been developed. The content of the courses in the program has been organized around the real-life situations of the learners. Consequently, in order to make learning concrete and useful, all learning situations are based on these real-life situations.

Learning situations target the construction of the essential language knowledge and the development of the operational competencies necessary to deal competently with real-life situations. Adults develop these operational competencies with the help of the teacher who calls particular attention to the significant actions associated with them by engaging the adults in meaningful speaking, listening, reading and writing activities. As a result, adults build essential knowledge, solicit the appropriate operational competencies for the given real-life situation, and reflect upon their learning, the strategies used, the reinvestment and transformation of their existing knowledge and the attitudes adopted.

In this learning context, teachers play the role of facilitator, mediator and guide. They establish a safe learning environment for adult literacy learners where mutual respect and trust create a climate conducive to learning. With the support of the teacher, adult literacy learners share responsibility for their learning. They define their learning needs, taking into consideration their existing knowledge and experience. Emphasis is placed on the learning process used to

construct the essential language knowledge and to develop the operational competencies. It is therefore important that the learning situation be linked to the needs of the adult literacy learners. By participating in the learning situation that is linked to a real-life situation, adults perceive the relevance of their learning to their life, which in turn stimulates their motivation and involvement.

The learning situation occurs in the adult's place of learning. It is not specific to the needs of a particular adult; rather it is sufficiently open and global to allow all adults to explore important aspects of language related to dealing competently with the real-life situation. Throughout the learning situation, teachers observe the adult literacy learners in action, whether they are in small or large group discussions or interacting with peers. They guide and advise them on the appropriate strategies for constructing the necessary resources and give specific instruction to individuals and groups as needed. The teacher encourages the learners to make links between new knowledge and existing knowledge, and to reflect on and evaluate their learning process and the degree to which they have developed their competencies.

The courses in the English, Language of Instruction program of study are especially designed to promote adult literacy learners' active participation in their own learning. It encourages them to develop their autonomy by providing them with the opportunity to build the language skills required to function competently in real-life situations.

Learning Situation

The learning situation that follows is provided as an example to show teachers how the principles of pedagogical renewal can be applied in the classroom.

It is authentic, in the sense that it addresses a real-life situation, taken from the class of situations in the course, that adults may find themselves in. It is sufficiently open and comprehensive to allow adult learners to explore several important aspects related to dealing with this real-life situation.

The examples of actions presented in the course help the teacher to identify those actions that an adult would take to deal with the real-life situation. The teacher can then refer to these examples in order to develop pertinent learning activities.

The learning situation is organized in terms of the three steps of the teaching-learning process, namely:

- planning learning
- actual learning
- integrating and reinvesting learning

These steps highlight the principles of pedagogical renewal insofar as they encourage adults to be active, to reflect on their learning and to interact with their peers when the learning context is suitable. They include learning activities and may also include evaluation activities intended to support adults in the learning process.

These activities help learners to construct knowledge related to the compulsory elements of the course that are targeted by the learning situation concerned: one or more categories of actions, essential knowledge and the actions of the operational competencies associated with the categories of actions.

The example provided also refers to certain teaching strategies—pedagogical methods and techniques—that can be selected according to the learners, the context and the learning environment. Certain learning strategies may also be suggested, as well as a variety of material and social resources.

Example of a Learning Situation

Creating a Special Menu

In the class of situations *Becoming acquainted with written language in the immediate environment*, one of the examples of situations is *Shopping for food*.

In the context of Valentine's Day, the adult literacy learners commemorate this special day by planning a potluck lunch for their fellow students. Each student is responsible for choosing a specific food item from supermarket flyers or ads, and copying its name onto menu posters that will be placed around the classroom. In order to function competently in this situation, students reinvest essential knowledge previously constructed (specific vocabulary, alphabet and sound-symbol correspondence) and engage in two categories of actions: taking the first steps in reading and taking the first steps in writing. They start to develop their operational competencies *Communicates* and *Acts methodically* by undertaking the significant actions associated with them.

To introduce the learning situation, the teacher begins by having the class brainstorm the different foods that they like or dislike and which ones would be appropriate to bring to class for the potluck lunch. He or she guides the students in a discussion on how these food items could be divided into three categories. To help them, the teacher provides three separate poster boards that have previously been identified with the names of the three categories: main dishes, side dishes and desserts, with a few examples and illustrations under each one. They continue the discussion by giving examples of foods that could be placed under the groupings. The teacher writes the words on the blackboard, identifying the sounds and asking for repetition.

Learners then break into pairs and go through supermarket flyers and ads they have collected and brought to class. Together, the students scan the texts to identify the sounds and letters of the word represented by the picture and reinvest their knowledge by practising sound-symbol correspondence. The teacher moves around the class, monitoring their work and intervening to give help when needed. They continue to decode, matching words and pictures, and each adult chooses a main dish, a side dish or a dessert they intend to bring to class. Once the decision is made, each student dictates to the other the food personally chosen. The partner writes it, trying to reproduce the associated sounds and letters. They then review their answers together, comparing it to the words written on the flyer or ad. The teacher provides feedback or remedial instruction if necessary. At the end, each learner copies the item chosen, in alphabetical order, onto the appropriate poster, attaching the picture next to the word if he or she so wishes. When writing down their preference, they print the words legibly, making sure the spelling is correct. Students are then asked to read aloud the words under each category.

While working on the identification of the printed words, adult literacy learners act methodically by using print-decoding and encoding strategies, such as using graphophonic cues and sight words, as well as other meaning-making strategies, such as appealing to graphics and pictures. They exercise their communicative competency by establishing a purpose for their reading and writing activities, namely to select and identify food items to bring to the potluck lunch.

At the end of the learning situation, the teacher animates a discussion with the whole class on the value of the learning situation. They discuss the information they learned, the strategies they applied, and the problems they encountered. The learners also reflect on the knowledge gained and on the effectiveness of the strategies used. They keep a log of new words learned so as to facilitate any reinvestment and adaptation of constructed knowledge to a real-life situation related to shopping for food.

Elements of the Course Addressed by the Learning Situation

Class of Situations	
Becoming acquainted with written language in the immediate environment	
Learning Situation	
Creating a Special Menu	
Categories of Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking the first steps in reading Taking the first steps in writing 	
Operational Competencies	Essential Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates Acts methodically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of discourse (informative) Discourse cues and features Reading and writing strategies, techniques and procedures The sound system The writing system Language functions Vocabulary pertaining to the immediate environment
Complementary Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supermarket flyers and ads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posters

