

Course
Informed Choices
ENG 1101-4
Secondary Cycle One



“Today we are beginning to notice that the new media are not just mechanical gimmicks for creating worlds of illusion, but new languages with new and unique powers of expression.”

Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980)

Presentation of the Course *Informed Choices*

The goal of the course *Informed Choices* is to help adult learners use oral and written discourse to deal competently with real-life situations related to being informed about different current issues in the media.

This course develops adult learners’ language proficiency by involving them in a variety of listening, speaking, reading and writing activities that provide adults with an opportunity to put language skills into practice in situations related to exploring current issues in the media.

By the end of the course, adult learners will be able to understand and produce a wide range of informative and expressive texts regarding current issues in the media, including both print and electronic media. They will understand texts, such as short newspaper and magazine articles, radio and television commentaries and documentaries, and produce letters, short articles and opinion texts in order to inform themselves and others about the issues of the day. They will be able to discuss issues, compare points of view, express and justify opinions and articulate concerns regarding current issues in the media.

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: *Using language to explore current issues in the media.*

The class of situations *Using language to explore current issues in the media* comprises a range of real-life situations in which adults are required to obtain and give information and formulate opinions both orally and in writing regarding current issues in the media. Dealing competently with these situations requires a more extensive vocabulary. It also depends on the ability to discuss issues, compare different points of view, express and justify opinions as well

as understand and exchange information regarding current issues in the media.

Some examples of real-life situations include finding out about climate change and global warming, exploring the problem of violence in the community and becoming informed about the health care system.

Class of Situations	Examples of Real-Life Situations
Using language to explore current issues in the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finding out about medical breakthroughs ▪ Finding out about scientific discoveries ▪ Finding out about climate change and global warming ▪ Exploring the problem of violence in the community ▪ Becoming informed about the health care system ▪ Becoming informed about local politics ▪ Exploring issues related to pollution ▪ Exploring the world of entertainment

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"> ▪ Interacting orally to explore current issues in the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exchanges information (e.g. on local political issues) ▪ Discusses issues (e.g. regarding the educational system) ▪ Compares different points of view (e.g. regarding causes of violence in the community) ▪ Expresses opinions and concerns (e.g. regarding health care provision) ▪ Justifies opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listening to informative texts related to current issues in the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listens to radio and television talk shows (e.g. regarding pollution, political affairs) ▪ Listens to television documentaries (e.g. regarding space exploration) ▪ Listens to radio and television news reports (e.g. regarding new medical treatments) ▪ Listens to radio and television commentaries (e.g. regarding public spending) ▪ Listens to radio and television interviews (e.g. with politicians, scientists, entertainers) ▪ Listens to debates (e.g. on global warming)

Categories of Actions	Examples of Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reading informative and expressive texts related to current issues in the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reads media web sites ▪ Reads opinion texts on local issues (e.g. regarding public safety measures) ▪ Reads articles (e.g. regarding new medical treatments) ▪ Reads pamphlets and flyers (e.g. regarding political candidates, environmental issues) ▪ Reads blogs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing informative and expressive texts related to current issues in the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writes short articles (e.g. on public safety) ▪ Writes opinion texts (e.g. regarding the effects of pollution) ▪ Writes notices, posters and flyers (e.g. advertising concerts, community theatre) ▪ Writes blogs ▪ Writes letters and e-mails (e.g. request, complaint) ▪ Writes journals

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

Using language to explore current issues in the media

Categories of Actions

- Interacting orally to become informed about current issues in the media
- Listening to informative texts related to current issues in the media
- Reading informative and expressive texts related to current issues in the media
- Writing informative and expressive texts related to current issues in the media

Operational Competencies

Communicates

- Determines a purpose for communicating
- Recognizes the other speaker or writer's purpose
- Responds appropriately to the interlocutor's interventions
- Adapts language to the roles, status, characteristics and needs of the audience
- Uses language appropriate to the degree of formality and the topic of the exchange

Thinks logically

- Uses features of coherent discourse
- Adopts an organizational structure appropriate to the text type
- Uses transitional devices and connectors that establish semantic links between sentences and paragraphs

Exercises critical and ethical judgment

- Evaluates an oral or written text in terms of its purpose and audience
- Uses criteria to assess the quality of an oral or written text
- Distinguishes between informative and persuasive language

Essential Knowledge

- Types of discourse (informative, expressive)
- Discourse cues and features
- Speaking, listening, reading and writing strategies, techniques and procedures
- The writing system
- Language functions
- Sociolinguistic features
- Grammar and syntax

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 with the class of situations *Using language to explore current issues in the media*, adults use language resources to keep informed about the important matters of the day. Whether they are speaking, listening, reading or writing, adults determine a purpose for communicating.

When interacting orally, adult learners use a variety of language functions to achieve the communicative purposes they determined, such as asking for and exchanging information, giving opinions, agreeing or disagreeing. When discussing various subjects and comparing points of view, they recognize the other speaker's purpose and respond appropriately to their interlocutor's interventions. They use speaking techniques such as ordering ideas in a sequence and repetition when expressing and justifying opinions. When discussing issues, they use a variety of features of oral discourse, such as stress, intonation, facial expressions and eye contact.

When listening to informative texts, whether they are radio and television news reports, or short editorial comments, adult learners use listening techniques such as appealing to visual and auditory cues—images and sound effects. They also distinguish between informative and persuasive language and recognize the underlying attitudes and biases conveyed by a speaker's choice of words, tone, volume and facial expressions.

Adult learners read a variety of informative and expressive texts both print and electronic, such as short reports, articles, opinion texts and blogs to explore current issues in the media. They use appropriate criteria to assess the quality of a text, such as accuracy of facts and clarity of expression. They also evaluate oral and written texts in terms of their appropriateness to their intended purpose and audience. To construct meaning from the text, they rely on discourse cues such as chronological order or order of importance. They employ reading techniques such as making inferences or pausing and summarizing. After reading, they rely on procedures to enhance their response, such as sharing and discussing interpretations, comparing different perspectives or writing a reflective journal entry.

When writing informative and expressive texts such as short articles, letters of opinion, notices and journal entries, adults adopt an organizational structure appropriate to the text type using features of coherent discourse, such as an introduction, body, conclusion. They also use visual features such as illustrations, graphics and layout. They use transitional devices and connectors that establish semantic links between sentences and paragraphs and observe conventions of the writing system, such as correct spelling and punctuation. Furthermore, they systematically appeal to rules of grammar and syntax in creating and interpreting meaning.

When speaking or writing, they respect the sociolinguistic features of discourse by adapting their language to the roles, status, characteristics and needs of the audience and by using language appropriate to the degree of formality and the topic of exchange.

Evaluation Criteria

- Interacts effectively using a limited range of oral texts
- Understands a limited range of oral texts effectively
- Reads a limited range of texts effectively
- Writes a limited range of texts effectively

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*, *Thinks logically* and *Exercises critical and ethical judgment*.

Contribution of the Operational Competency *Communicates*

The operational competency *Communicates* is the capacity to express meaning intelligibly and to understand the meaning that is expressed by others. It is solicited in all real-life situations in which people exchange meaning and is linked to the class of situations *Using language to explore current issues in the media*.

Adult learners exercise their communicative competency by determining a purpose for communicating and recognizing the other speaker or writer's purpose. When interacting orally, they respond appropriately to their interlocutor's interventions. They use language appropriate to the degree of formality and the topic of the exchange and adapt it to the roles, status, characteristics and needs of their audience in order to achieve their communicative purposes. The operational competency *Communicates* is exercised whenever adults are involved in real-life situations related to exploring current issues in the media.

Contribution of the Operational Competency *Thinks Logically*

The operational competency *Thinks logically* involves the capacity to organize one's thinking and to make connections between ideas in a rational and coherent fashion in order to achieve a specific purpose. Language users exercise logical thinking in all real-life situations associated with the class of situations *Using language to explore current issues in the media*.

Adult learners exercise logical thinking by using features of coherent discourse. They adopt an organizational structure appropriate to the text type such as introduction, body and conclusion that ensures coherence and unity of the text. They also use transitional devices and connectors that establish semantic links between sentences and paragraphs and help to convey the logical relationships between ideas, such as cause and effect or comparison and contrast. The operational competency *Thinks logically* is exercised whenever adults are involved in real-life situations in which they explore current issues in the media.

Contribution of the Operational Competency *Exercises Critical and Ethical Judgment*

The operational competency *Exercises critical and ethical judgment* is the ability to shape one's own thinking. It involves the capacity to analyze and assess the value or impact of oral and written texts in order to arrive at a critical judgment. This judgment is applied not only to the oral and written communication of others, but also to one's own. This competency is solicited in all real-life situations associated with the class of situations *Using language to explore current issues in the media*.

Adult learners exercise critical and ethical judgment when they evaluate an oral or written text in terms of its purpose and audience. They use criteria in order to assess the quality of texts, such as accuracy of information and clarity of expression. Adults also distinguish between informative and persuasive language and recognize the underlying attitudes and biases conveyed by a speaker or writer's choice of words, tone, emphasis, and volume. Thus, the operational competency *Exercises critical and ethical judgment* is used whenever adults are involved in real-life situations related to current issues in the media.

Essential Knowledge

The essential knowledge for the Secondary Cycle One courses is found at the end of the Secondary Cycle One level.

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.

Openness	Respect
<p>Adult learners manifest openness when they show interest in learning and accept new situations without making any assumptions based on values or beliefs. By questioning and challenging different interpretations and points of view, adults explore and integrate aspects of language in a variety of real-life situations in order to further develop their understanding of themselves and others. Openness empowers language learners to expand their cultural and linguistic horizons.</p>	<p>This attitude allows adults to construct language knowledge in a safe learning environment, one that encourages tolerance, acceptance, and common decency to all. It provides for concrete, practical outcomes that build and implement strategies for expanding and diversifying communication across new linkages with the workplace, the local community, and the wider environment.</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▪ Government agencies▪ Non-government agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dictionaries▪ Thesauri▪ Glossaries▪ Grammar reference books▪ Other reference materials (e.g. encyclopaedias, maps, government documents)▪ Writing models▪ Web sites▪ Authentic teaching materials▪ Multimedia materials (print and non-print)

Andragogical Context

It is understood that for learning to take place, adults 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 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 learners where mutual respect and trust create a climate conducive to learning. With the support of the teacher, adult 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 learners. By participating in the learning situation that is linked to a real-life situation, adult learners 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 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. At the secondary cycle one level, an example of a learning situation is provided in the course *Enjoyment and Entertainment II*. It demonstrates the possible interaction between a teacher and learner(s) and the integration of the compulsory elements pertinent to the learning situation.

The courses in the *English, Language of Instruction* program of study are especially designed to promote adult 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.

