

Review of the *Maryland Department of Labor's Adult Education Digital Literacy Framework for Adult Learners: Instructor Implementation Guide*

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The *Maryland Department of Labor's Adult Education Digital Literacy Framework for Adult Learners: Instructor Implementation Guide* is a very useful resource. The need to teach digital literacy skills has never been more widely recognized than now. This guide goes a long way to illustrate how to think about integrating digital literacy skills into content instruction through the lesson activities and online resources it contains. The crosswalk with College and Career Readiness standards and CASAS standards also makes this guide very helpful for teachers who may be applying these standards already but had no guidance on how to incorporate digital literacy skills into the content they were already teaching. The guide also offers versatile lesson ideas that can be used as they are written or as models that instructors can use to develop lessons specifically related to the learners in their classes.

This resource for adult education instructors was developed to provide practical examples of how to implement the [Digital Literacy Framework for Adult Learners](#), a separate publication, also developed by the Maryland Department of Labor, which introduces the seven interconnected

elements of the Digital Literacy Framework: technical, civic, communicative, collaborative, computational thinking, investigative, and productive.

The guide is clearly and attractively laid out with a table of contents that contains hyperlinks that makes it easy to navigate around inside the 137-page document. The guide consists of an overview followed by three sections:

- Section I: Lesson Activities;
- Part II: Curated Resources; and
- Part III: Appendix.

Section I contains 33 lesson activities divided into seven content areas: general, college and career, reading, math, social studies, writing, and language learning. Under each content area there are two to eight lesson activities. It is evident that the guide was made specifically for adult education as each lesson includes a breakdown of the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education and CASAS Competencies and Content Standards incorporated in the activity. This crosswalk between digital literacy skills and existing adult education standards

Harris, J., & Adetunji, B. (Eds.), *Maryland Department of Labor's Adult Education Digital Literacy Framework for Adult Learners: Instructor Implementation Guide*. Maryland Department of Labor. 137 pages. PDF. <http://labor.maryland.gov/gedmd/dlfinstructorguide.pdf>

and competencies clearly demonstrates a model for how to integrate digital literacy into adult education. Each lesson also includes a list of objectives, materials, resources, instructions, extension activities, and key observations. While most of the lessons are designed for work on a computer with a keyboard, many include suggestions for use with smartphones or through distance learning.

The lessons vary in length and detail. One can sense that the lessons were developed by different people and have not been homogenized, which means that most instructors using the guide should be able to find at least a few lessons that fit their teaching style and routines. The detailed instructions included with the majority of the lessons will support instructors new to this type of content, but also leave room for instructors to take the concepts and make them their own.


In the language learning section, I was particularly impressed to see so many lessons designed for low-level ESL instruction. Examples include “Cooking Up a Recipe with a Word Processor,” “Errands Made Easy with Google Lens,” “Getting to Know You with Digital Maps,” and “Sightseeing with ESL Listening Lab,” all designed for ESL level 1. Lessons for other content areas that stand out include, for example, “Collaborative Problem-Solving with Blogs.” The writing section features broad content possibilities, collaborative processes, and flexible delivery including distance learning. Lessons in the reading section, e.g., “Saving the Tree Octopus and Giant Panda by Comparing Websites,” model useful ways to assess website reliability, and the lesson idea can be transferred to content at different reading levels or with subjects related to other content areas. The “Career Mapping with Traitify” in the college and career section can also be adapted for various levels and includes many basic digital skills like filling

in a form online and finding resources online. This lesson provides an opportunity for learners to think about their own traits and the jobs that fit them. While the Traitify test is a little light and breezy, that can be part of the discussion after learners use it.

Section II contains web resources related to digital literacy instruction. These resources are hyperlinked and provide professional development opportunities for instructors as well as online materials and activities that can be used with learners. Section II is organized around the seven interconnected elements outlined in Maryland’s Digital Literacy Framework. This organizing principle helps make the elements more understandable without having to access the original [Framework](#) document.

When we think about integrating digital literacy skills into content instruction there are two areas that are often not dealt with: assessment and discrete checklists of digital skills. While the guide does not explain how to assess student digital literacy skills and does not include a scope and sequence of digital literacy skills for both instructors and learners, Section II does provide links to Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment and Google Applied Digital Skills, both of which give access to assessments and lists of skills. A few of the other online resources included in this section are International Society for Technology Education Podcasts, MediaSmarts video tutorials and courses from computer basics to online safety, Microsoft Digital Literacy Course, Mozilla resources for Web Literacy, and “A Digital Workbook for Beginning ESOL” from ABE Teaching & Learning Advancement System.

Section III is an appendix with supplemental materials related to the lessons in Section I. These include printable worksheets, readings, graphic



organizers, and images. Section III feels like the least thought-out section as the resources have been shrunk to fit the page layout of the guide and are static when in some cases, they need to be editable for the activity to work. This section

made me want this whole guide to be a website or online resource. But even as a PDF, this guide is a well thought-out and valuable tool for instructors working to integrate digital literacy skills into their instruction.