

PBS LiteracyLink®

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

for GED Connection®, Pre-GED Connection™,  
and Workplace Essential Skills

This section contains Teacher's Guide pages for  
the LiteracyLink Resources Section.

For more information, visit the LiteracyLink website at  
[www.pbs.org/literacy](http://www.pbs.org/literacy) or contact KET at (800) 354-9067 or  
[www.ketadultlearning.org](http://www.ketadultlearning.org).



VIDEOS

WORKBOOKS



ONLINE



# **LiteracyLink® Classroom Tools and Technical Specifications**

## **Recommended Learning Tools**

- TV with VCR
- Student workbooks
- Computers (PC or Mac) with Internet access; ideally, one for every 1-2 students, at least enough for students to alternate with workbook lessons.

### **Computer Requirements and Internet Access Recommendations:**

- PC with at least a 486 processor; Mac with at least a 68040 processor.
- Windows 95 or Mac OS 7.5 (or higher)
- 16 MB RAM memory (or more)
- 28.8 modem or faster Internet connection
- Sound card; speakers or headphones
- To view the video clips in *GED Connection* or *Workplace Essential Skills* online lessons you will need QuickTime version 3.2 (or higher) installed on each computer. You can download a free version of QuickTime at [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com) or install it off the *Workplace Essential Skills* Video Clips CD-ROM.
- To view the *Workplace Essential Skills* videos with less than high speed Internet access, you should purchase one video clip CD-ROM per computer station; to use this CD-ROM, you need 25-35 MB free space on your hard drive.
- Netscape Communicator or Microsoft Internet Explorer version 4.0 or higher. If you need to upgrade your browser, you can obtain the latest versions on the Internet at [www.netscape.com](http://www.netscape.com) or [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com).

## **Online Management System**

Teacher's who have purchased the Online Management System will need a computer with the same capability and Internet access described above.

LiteracyLink Customer Support  
1-800-354-9067

# Effective Use of Videos in Adult Education

Excerpted and Adapted from,  
*Enhancing Adult Literacy  
Instruction with Video*  
Jerome Johnston, Ph.D.  
University of Michigan  
Spring, 1999

As this century ends, an impressive collection of new video resources is appearing to enhance instruction in adult literacy... These video series are the result of millions of dollars spent by the federal government and private foundations to improve literacy instruction in the U.S. It is appropriate to ask—why video? What can video contribute to literacy instruction? How should it be used in the classroom? What role should the human teacher play if students are going to derive the most benefit from this video?

## Learning vs. Teaching

This paper focuses on dimensions of video instruction that make for high quality instruction... Learning is an active not a passive activity. To learn requires more than just opening the doors to someone's mind and letting the knowledge flow in. The best-designed videos cannot make a person learn; they are only resources that learners interact with. For learning to occur, an individual must choose to engage the materials, activate prior knowledge to understand the materials, understand the instruction presented, and perhaps respond to corrective feedback from a mentor. Learning is influenced by the social context as well. The insights and responses of fellow learners play an important role in what a person derives from a set of learning opportunities...

## Video as an Instructional Medium

Video... is an ideal medium for capturing an event or process and bringing it into the classroom (or into a learner's home). The event and commentary can provide stand-alone instruction for an isolated viewer. When shown in a classroom setting, it can be an invaluable springboard for a lesson led by a teacher. One of the challenges of classroom-based instruction is the isolation of the classroom from the very life events that form the topic of the instruction.

The *Finding a Job* videos in the *Workplace Essential Skills* series show a number of employers talking about what they expect from a prospective employee, and what they look for in hiring a new employee. These segments can make an invaluable contribution to a lesson about the interview process...

...The contribution of a particular video is shaped by the technology used to deliver it to the viewer. Learners have different learning possibilities depending on whether the video is available through open-circuit broadcast, analog videotape, digital media such as CD and DVD, or digitized "clips" stored on a computer. The *LiteracyLink* project will distribute the videos for *Workplace Essential Skills* in several ways. Programs will be broadcast by PBS stations in their full half-hour format. Cassette copies will be available for teachers to play in their entirety or in segments in front of a class of students. Digitized segments of 60-90 seconds length will be available on a learner website as part of a collection of exercises built around a video. On the website, the learner selects a lesson, plays the clip, and then answers questions about the content in much the same way that a teacher might show a short clip in class and ask questions aimed at furthering understanding of the video or leading learners to solve the problem posed in the video.

But video is limited by the very richness it provides. It is not the best medium for providing explanations of complex concepts or providing targeted practice of particular skills. It is for this reason that many instructional videos are accompanied by workbooks. Text is a very versatile medium. It can be used to explain very simple or very complex concepts. It can be used to provide exercises where a learner takes a self-test and then turns to a different place in the text to find the correct answer. Text can be supplemented with graphics and pictures when words fall short of capturing the full essence of complex concepts.

### Instructional Characteristics

Several criteria can be used to evaluate a particular video. Judgements on these criteria can affect both the decision of whether or not to use a particular video at all, and what kind of instructional wrap-around is needed to make the video a useful learning experience for adult learners.

- **Inspiration:** Do your students need inspiration to engage the tough task of learning the skills covered in the video? If the answer is yes, any one of these new series will serve to capture the attention of learners in ways that are superior to the entertainment skills of most teachers. But a teacher always needs to judge whether a video is appealing to a particular audience.
- **Clarity of the message:** Will the instructional message be clear to the target audience?
- **Pacing:** A message can be clear, but the pace at which it is delivered can be too fast for a given group of learners.

- **Graphics:** When graphics are used to explain a concept, do they clarify the concept? Do they appear on screen long enough to be comprehended by the learners?

After evaluating a video using these dimensions, a teacher can plan instruction that accommodates the needs of particular learners and compensates for aspects of the video that fall short of providing a complete instructional message.

### Conclusion

The new video resources for adult literacy present great opportunities for learners and teachers alike.

But before adopting them for adult literacy programs, teachers should review the content and instructional characteristics of the programs and develop a strategy for using them that matches the unique needs of the learners being served.

## Distance Learning and New Technologies You Can't Predict the Future but You Can Plan for It

Christopher E. Hopey and Lynda Ginsburg

Distance education is the hot topic these days as millions of dollars are being invested in new technologies, such as the Internet, with the expectation that education at all levels will be revolutionized. Newspapers now have feature sections about the Internet and technology-related self-help books are proliferating. Technology is frequently hailed as the “magic pill” that will somehow provide solutions to the organizational and policy issues that are endemic to adult education. Adult and continuing education programs are rushing to become players in the new world of global technology, searching for new applications while fearful of “being left behind.”

Discussions seem to center around the impact of technology on distance education provision, but perhaps these discussions are reflective of the past rather than predictive of the future.

Distance education technologies have been primarily used, historically, to extend access to classroom instruction to rural or isolated sites. For the most part, adult distance education programs have done that with high levels of success long before the Internet or computer networks were cost effective. Efforts such as *Project Leap* in Mississippi and the *GED on TV* are excellent examples of successful and effective distance education programs.

These and most other distance education programs embrace a traditional classroom approach (i.e., they attempt to emulate a traditional classroom using one-way video with two-way audio), relying heavily on printed materials and on the host institution for both the delivery of services and the management of instruction. Broadcast times are set and learners must be available at those times or miss instruction. Research has shown that distance education in an “extend-the-classroom approach” is one of the more effective ways to provide access to diverse learners who are place bound, bound by distances, or bound by economic efficiencies or policies (Johnstone 1991). Indeed, learners in distance education programs progress as well as learners in a face-to-face classroom environment (Jones, Valdez, Nowakowski, Rasmussen, 1994). Overall, it is evident that distance education programs have exceeded their potential in enabling adults in rural and isolated communities to gain access to instruction.

However, is providing access to “a traditional classroom” reason enough to expand investments in such new technologies as desktop video conferencing and the Internet? Is the goal simply to make a better mouse-trap (i.e., a faster machine to deliver traditional classroom-based instruction)? We can improve our existing distance education programs cheaply by simply upgrading existing broadcast and cable systems. Instead, the emergence of new technologies enables us to shift our focus from the delivery of classroom-based instruction to the delivery of new materials and the facilitation of new ways of learning. In this environment, issues of instructional content, information resources, learning theory, and quality are paramount. The question is not, “How can we transport the classroom?” but rather, “What can we do with the new technologies to reform, change, and improve adult learning?”

Clearly, we are no longer talking about distance education but rather beginning to envision distance *learning*:

- What does learning look like when it is not bound by four walls and the knowledge base of one teacher?

- How can we modify our organizational structures to enable learners to interact from a distance with more than one instructor, other learners, and extensive, accessible resources?
- How can we begin to conceptualize and initiate learning experiences that capitalize on this new extended learning environment?

Using technology to create new models of adult learning may have an impact on the adult education provision system. Adult education programs will become hubs of learning instead of just places to learn. Does this mean that formal classroom-based instruction will be viewed as obsolete and will be replaced? Actually, the number of classroom-based instructional settings could increase as adults encounter educational demands in new settings. Those who had never before considered entering an adult education program via the front door may soon enter on-line, realize their educational needs, become motivated to learn, and then choose to participate in adult education classes that provide face-to-face interactions.

How successful we are in moving from the familiar model of *distance education* to the future model of *distance learning* will depend in part on the assumptions and preparations we make now. We can begin to define and plan for what we want to happen. To influence the future, we must be proactive. To wait passively will relegate us to the role of adjusting to changing technological and learning environments that will be thrust upon us. We suggest six assumptions as points from which to develop a model of distance learning.

- **Traditional classroom-based models of distance education will be enhanced not replaced by the new technologies.** Classroom-based models of distance education will change, but they will have an important and viable role. New technologies will be used to enhance formal learning. Students will have Internet tools at their fingertips to help develop their own learning paths. Classroom-based models of distance education will resemble facilitated group learning environments in which learners learn from each other as well as from the instructor because all will be sharing and constructing ideas.

- **Self-authoring of learning activities will be commonplace.** In the past, the resources required to customize learning were not available to teachers, let alone adult learners. Networking technologies, such as the Internet, and multimedia databases will greatly increase access to learning resources on a scale unknown to adult education. Distance learning will, at some level, be about customizing learning for specific learners. Teachers will no longer mass-produce learning activities and deliver them, aiming for a middle ground. Adult learners will demand that learning activities meet their specific needs. Activities will be created by many different people in many different places and deposited into large databases of video, graphics, simulations, and software applets. Adult educators will guide adult learners through these materials by helping them draw from these vast databases to create a meaningful learning experience. As learners and instructors interact with the learning content, their interactions will in turn inform and modify the activities in the database.
- **Instructors will become facilitators of learning not transmitters of knowledge.** Research has shown that advanced skills are acquired not through the transmission of facts but through the learner interacting with content. Learners learn more effectively when they create, build, and interact with knowledge, thereby constructing their own meaning (Steffe & Cobb, 1988). In a constructivist learning environment, instructors do not provide all the knowledge and content to passive learners but rather empower, guide, and challenge learners to make sense of their world. Instructors will still provide some basic transmission of knowledge, but for the most part, their role will be one of a facilitator, motivator, and validator of knowledge.
- **The future of learning will be about connecting learning to the world of work and home.** We know from research that the meaningfulness of a learning activity is increased when instruction connects events that happen in the larger world to things that are happening in an adult learner's world (Kozma & Grant, 1995). New technologies can provide those important links so learning will be relevant and skills developed in one setting can be transferred to other settings (home, work, school).
- **Collaborative learning will be stressed.** Most adult learning emphasizes individual achievement and solving problems without the aid of other people. However, in the world of work and personal relationships, collaborative problem solving is not an exception but rather the rule. Collaborative learning focuses on processes rather than isolated topics or simple one-word answers. With the development of collaborative computing, adult learners at different places can come together on-line to collaboratively solve problems anytime and anywhere.
- **Staff development and teacher training will need to be continuous and ongoing.** Traditional staff development models of workshops and conference presentations will not meet the need for continuous on-going technology. New methods of continuous improvement and training will need to be developed. Technology will help, but staff development will need to be readily available.

Planning for the future of distance learning requires envisioning how learning should change for a changing world. Distance learning will only be successful if it is educationally grounded and not driven by the technology. Technology will be a powerful tool that we use for a continuous renewal, reflection, and improvement. However, it will not in itself create a learning community of thousands of teachers and learners interacting and borrowing resources while at the same time building and providing new resources. Only people with ideas can do that.