Online Supports for Literacy and Foundational Learning

This document was created primarily for educators who work within the Community Adult Learning Program (CALP) Grant. The resources and information may be useful for anyone working online with Adult Foundational Learners.

Notes: This is a living document and as with the internet, many links, prices, features, and other information change daily. While we try to keep this info up to date, there may be errors.

Some resources can fit into various categories but are not duplicated. For example, an adult literacy learner may benefit from the self-study websites found in the ELL section.

Please email us at grants@ecala.org with your recommendations and additions. We want this document to be a collaborative product of all ECALA-Funded organizations.

Last updated: June 23, 2020

Connecting with Learners

One of the first challenges we have is connecting with learners. While sometimes we need to think outside of the box, other times the resources have been right there all along. The most important thing is for communication to be consistent and present.

Discussion Boards

Facilitators can communicate with classes using a discussion board online, in a Learning Management System such as Moodle or Google Classroom, or a such as Padlet (see more info below in Asynchronous Learning Tools).

Doodle

This site can be used for scheduling classes or meetings with your learners or colleagues.

Email

Your learners might be comfortable with email already. You can send links, apps, videos, text, and more through email.

Fongo 🤖

This app gives you a local Edmonton number to use for calling. Many numbers in Canada and US can be reached for free. International calls can be completed for a fee.

Mail

For some learners, technology may be a barrier too daunting. If instructors have access to a printer, they may be able to print out materials and mail them directly home. Learners can fill out the work and take photos and text/email back to instructors for feedback.

Text Now 🤖

This app gives you a number to use for calling and texting. Many numbers in Canada and US can be reached for free. International calls can be completed for a fee.

Viber 🤖

A common international voice over IP and instant messaging App by Japanese company Rakuten. The app uses data or wifi and replaces your phone. You can send messages, videos, and voice memos. The app also supports large group chats, voice calls and video calls.

Last updated: June 23, 2020

WeChat 🤖

A Chinese multi-purpose messaging, social media and mobile payment app by Tencent.

WhatsApp 🤖

One of the world's most popular instant messaging and voice over IP Apps is used by many learners, especially Newcomers and those who have connections to people outside of Canada. The app uses data or wifi and replaces your phone. You can send messages, videos, and voice memos. The app also supports large group chats (no limit) and voice calls and video calls (up to 4 people).

Tech Basics

COVID-19: How Nonprofits Can Facilitate Inclusive Online Gatherings

https://www.techsoupcanada.ca/en/community/blog/covid-19-how-nonprofits-can-facilitate-inclusive-online-gatherings

A great article from Tech Soup with Online Facilitation Principles and Tools.

Microsoft Digital Literacy Courses

https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/digitalliteracy/home

Microsoft has free digital literacy courses in 12 different languages. There are different self-study modules: Work with Computers, Access Information Online, Communicate Online, Participate Safely and Responsibly Online, Create Digital Content, and Collaborate and Manage Content Digitally. Each module is approximately 1 hour in length and learners can print out a certificate of completion. There are also downloadable resources available.

Media Smarts

https://mediasmarts.ca/

Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy has tons of resources for self-study and also for instructors.

Digital Literacy 101

https://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/digital-literacy-101

This section includes self-study tutorials as well as short videos with clear explanations.

Protect Kids Online

https://protectkidsonline.ca/app/en/

This site includes information for parents on risks and emerging issues regarding Internet safety.

Video Conferencing Etiquette: 10 Tips for a Successful Video Conference

https://www.owllabs.com/blog/video-conferencing-etiquette

This OWL Labs article highlights the most important tips when using video conference technology.

Last updated: June 23, 2020

Community Capacity Building

211 Alberta

https://www.ab.211.ca/

From Alberta you can call or text 2-1-1 at any time for free confidential information and referral to a wide range of community, social health, and government information. Their website also has these resources available.

Alberta Health Services

https://www.albertahealthservices.ca

The site has trustworthy information on various topics from mental health, physical health, Pandemic information, Emergency Room wait times, and more.

Help in Tough Times

https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page16759.aspx

This page has links to resources for emergencies, grief, mental health, finding healthcare, social and community support, and more.

COVID-19 Information

There is information overload in the world today, and the newest coronavirus Pandemic is no exception. Here are a few clear, concise resources that may be useful for practitioners and learners.

COVID-19 Info Booklet in 11 Languages

https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/plain-language-information-on-covid-19/

Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center has created an 8-page plain language booklet in English, Spanish, Bengali, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese.

COVID-19 Terms in Plain Language

https://www.nala.ie/covid-19-words-explained/

The National Adult Literacy Agency in Ireland created a great plain language glossary of COVID-19 terms.

Last updated: June 23, 2020

COVID-19 Q & A by Dr. Jennifer Robson

https://www.decoda.ca/resources/online-resources/

A Carleton University professor created an open-access PDF Google Doc that answers questions with great resources such as "I'm self-employed. What benefits can I get?" or "I need to take sick leave because I'm ill or self-isolating or have to quarantine."

Health Literacy Resources – Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

https://ciwaresources.com/ciwahlp/

This great resource provides an literacy practitioner manual, a healthcare professional manual, and six scenario videos presented in 7 different languages.

Kids Help Phone

https://kidshelpphone.ca

Available 24/7 by phone at 1-800-668-6868 or by text CONNECT to 686868 to speak with a counsellor. The website has more details.

Telus Internet for Good / Connecting- Families

https://www.telus.com/en/about/company-overview/community-investment/how-we-give/cause-campaigns/internet-for-good

https://connecting-families.ca/welcome

This initiative provides low income families with internet for $9.95/month for 24 months. Connect with school for families with children, or Connecting Families (Federal Govt. Initiative)

The Today Family Violence Help Centre

https://www.thetodaycentre.ca/

The organization provides immediate, inclusive, integrated services for those impacted by family violence. Visit their website or call 780-455-6880.

Last updated: June 23, 2020

Video Conferencing Tools

When meeting face to face isn't possible, here are some great tools for online audio and video meetings. Some programs offer free trials or simple free accounts with limitations. Please click the link to find the most recent and relevant information for each site.

BigBlueButton

https://bigbluebutton.org/

An open-source platform that is free to use. Includes many features such as whiteboard, call-in technology, and more. Used by ELL site Tutela.

Cisco Webex

https://www.webex.com/training-online.html

Share presentations, stream webinars, and encourage participation using tools like whiteboard and chat. The free account currently allows up to 100 participants without a time limit.

Google Meet

https://meet.google.com/

Video conferencing and video classrooms, free access to extra features during COVID-19 period: https://cloud.google.com/blog/products/g-suite/helping-businesses-and-schools-stay-connected-in-response-to-coronavirus

Microsoft Teams

https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software

Part of the Microsoft 365 Suite, Teams works as a video conferencing tool as well as an LMS. Features include integration into Microsoft forms, OneDrive, and other 365 programs, call-in capabilities, private and group chat, and a simple app.

Zoom

https://zoom.us/meetings

Free account for video conferencing and webinars—unlimited meetings between two participants, limited to 40-minute meetings with more than two participants. Paid accounts start at $20 monthly. Features: breakout rooms, polling, whiteboard.

Zoom Official Tutorial Videos

https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/03/18/quick-info-how-to-zoom-new-videos/

Learn to Zoom! In Clear Language- The Ohio State University

https://nisonger.osu.edu/learn-to-zoom/

How To Guide: Zoom (in plain language with images)

https://www.aceanglia.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/how-to-use-zoom-easyread-3-1.pdf

Learning Management Systems (LMS)

Sometimes you need a platform to host all of the elements of a class. These sites can host links, activities, videos, discussion boards, attendance, and more. Most are free, while some require a monthly fee.

Bublup

https://www.bublup.com/

This website allows you to "visually organize anything." You can add links, text, images, videos, and more to your *Bublup Roll.* This system has been used for ELL Literacy students to access information for classes. See *Tutela.ca's* webinar on Bublup for the ELL classroom.

Canvas

https://www.instructure.com/canvas/

A free system for teachers to sign up and create a course. There is a vast Commons section where you can download already created material to add to your course. Learners can sign up with any email and there are apps for both teachers and students.

Edmodo

https://www.edmodo.com

A completely free LMS that visually resembles social media. All announcements, assignments, and other information are created at posts, ordered by date.

Google Classroom

https://classroom.google.com/h

A free tool that integrates all that Google has already—slides, calendar, forms, meet, etc. Users must have a Gmail account.

Microsoft Teams

https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software

Part of the Microsoft 365 Suite, Teams works as a video conferencing tool as well as an LMS. Instructors can upload documents, schedule video classes, and more.

Moodle

https://moodle.org/

Moodle is a free, online Learning Management system enabling educators to create their own private website filled with dynamic courses that extend learning, anytime, anywhere. If you aren't very tech savvy, you may need to pay to help with some of the back-end hosting.

Schoology

https://www.schoology.com/

A free site for teachers. It is designed for K-12, but it is very user friendly. Learners create an account with any email and are given a code to join the teacher's class.

Synchronous Learning Tools

These are tools you can use in a face to face or online class via video conferencing tools. They add interaction and learner participation.

Kahoot

https://kahoot.com/schools-u/

An interactive game to play with students. If using an online class, learners must have a secondary device (such as a smart phone) to be able to see the question and respond.

Mentimeter

https://www.mentimeter.com

This is an interactive presentation tool that you can use during an in-person or online video session. Instructors can add surveys, quizzes, word clouds, and more. The free account limits you to 3 slides, but there is a paid version for unlimited content.

Socrative

https://socrative.com/

You can create quizzes for free and give the students a link to your "classroom." Students can easily access the site from a cell phone or other device with internet. The instructor can choose when to launch and activity and the length of time it will be active. Following completion, the results can be downloaded as an Excel document.

Asynchronous Learning Tools

These tools can be given to students to complete on their own time. They require guidance or creation from the instructor.

ABC Life Literacy

https://abclifeliteracy.ca

This website includes a collection of different literacy resources. There are a variety of programs from digital literacy to health literacy.

Audacity

https://www.audacityteam.org/

A free website to create podcasts. You can download the audio files in various formats to post/send to learners.

Camtasia

https://www.techsmith.com/video-editor.html

Camtasia 2019 makes it simple to record and create professional-looking videos on Windows and Mac. Free trial but charges apply for subscriptions.

Decoda Literacy

https://www.decoda.ca/resources/online-resources/

British Columbia's Literacy Organization provides tons of online resources in Adult and Family Literacy.

Edhelper

https://www.edhelper.com/

A website with free printable worksheets in math and other topics for K-12 students, but many can be modified.

Edpuzzle

https://edpuzzle.com/

One of the hidden gems online. This site allows you to use any video found online and edit it to integrate questions right into the video. Instructors can create a 'class' and have their learners'

results sent to them. Teachers can also find a video and record a voiceover to all of part of the video. All of the features are free!

ESL Library

https://www.esllibrary.com/

Paid subscription service, with some access to free content. The basic plan is for printable lessons, but if you already have access to a paid Standard account, they are currently offering a free upgrade to Plus during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The extra features allow you to project a class activity live, which students can access on a cell phone, tablet, or computer.

Flipgrid

https://info.flipgrid.com/

A social learning platform that allows students to respond to a discussion topic or questions. Learners can then respond to each other in a discussion format.

Google Forms

https://www.google.ca/forms/about/

Create surveys or quizzes that are compatible on multiple devices. Easily integrates into Google accounts, and results can be downloaded and compiled.

Hands On! (PDF Document)

http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/handson/handson.pdf

This free PDF contains literacy printouts for learners to practice. Could be used to print and mail/drop off packages.

Live Worksheets

https://www.liveworksheets.com/

This site allows an educator to share fillable worksheets with their learners. Learners can check their own answers or submit forms to their instructors. There are many worksheets already created that you can freely use, but you also have the option to create your own!

Microsoft Forms

https://forms.office.com

Last updated: June 23, 2020

Part of Microsoft 365, can be used to create surveys and quizzes. Links to the activities can be sent to anyone, and the data can be downloaded into an Excel sheet.

Padlet

https://padlet.com/dashboard

An online platform for compiling ideas and responses. Learners can post from all devices when given a link. Learners do not need an account to participate.

Quill

https://www.quill.org/

An interactive grammar and writing activities. Instructors can create a free account and either allow students to join with a code or create accounts for them (without an email address!) Teachers can assign activities and see all of the results of their learners. Activities can be assigned individually so each learner can work at their own pace. Currently, the pro upgrade is free!

Quizlet

https://quizlet.com

This site lets you create your own flashcards or study thousands of sets already created. You can play games to help you learn new vocabulary.

TypeForm

https://www.typeform.com/

A free trial allows you to create 3 surveys/quizzes for up to 100 participants on the free account. You can start with one of their free templates and send a link to learners (compatible with computer, tablet, and cell phones)

YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/

The most common free video sharing platform available. YouTube doesn't offer live engagement or live streaming options.

Last updated: June 23, 2020

Self-Study Websites

These sites can be recommended to learners to work on their own learning independently.

Adult & Family Literacy

Family Literacy First

https://familyliteracyfirst.ca/

This site includes resources in English, French, Chinese, Tagalog, and Arabic. With a free account, learners can download 13 modules with more than 50 activities to do with their families.

Free Rice

https://freerice.com

Free rice is a website (and app) with games for learning. There are games with categories such as: English vocabulary, Grammar, Multiplication Table, Basic Math, and Canadian and World Geography. This app/website is created by the UN's World Food Program, and while you're learning, you're supporting the organization.

Merriam-Webster

https://www.merriam-webster.com/word-games

This site is a collection of word games and quizzes to strengthen vocabulary and spelling.

Read Theory

https://readtheory.org/

*Account Required. This site provides informational texts with questions to practice reading and writing.

Basic Digital Skills

Excel Easy

https://www.excel-easy.com/

This site contains easy Excel lessons for learners to focus on one task at a time.

GCF Global

https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/subjects/tech/

A great website with self-study modules in various categories: Office, Email, Internet, Computers, Online Safety, Windows, Mac OS, and Linux.

Lyrics Training

https://lyricstraining.com/

This website (and app) can be used as ELL listening practice or typing practice. Learners listen to songs and type in all or some of the lyrics (depends on level)

Microsoft Digital Literacy Course

https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/digitalliteracy/home

Microsoft has free digital literacy courses in 12 different languages. There are different self-study modules: Work with Computers, Access Information Online, Communicate Online, Participate Safely and Responsibly Online, Create Digital Content, and Collaborate and Manage Content Digitally. Each module is approximately 1 hour in length and learners can print out a certificate of completion. There are also downloadable resources available.

Typing.com

https://www.typing.com

Learners can practice typing with various activities, and educators can create classes and monitor their students' progress.

Typing Club

https://www.typingclub.com/

This site includes various typing activities for learners. If learners create an account, they can save their progress.

ELL All Skills

BBC Skillswise English

https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/skillswise/english/zjg4scw

This site includes resources such as videos, games, and activities divided in 6 categories: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Word Grammar, Sentence Grammar, and Speaking and Listening.

CBC Learning English

https://www.cbc.ca/learning-english

Here you can find new stories in audio form (CLB 4) or video (CLB 6) with activities and quizzes related to comprehension below.

Eng VID

https://www.engvid.com/

A collection of videos with English lessons on various topics.

ESL Flow

https://eslflow.com/

A site with tons of free English lessons of various skills divided into 3 levels: Beginner, Pre-Intermediate, and Intermediate.

Learning Chocolate

https://www.learningchocolate.com/

This vocabulary building site introduces a set of words by theme and includes activities such as matching and dictation to learn the words.

Many Things

http://www.manythings.org/

There are quizzes, word games, word puzzles, proverbs, slang expressions, anagrams, a random-sentence generator and other computer assisted language learning activities.

ELL Listening Specific

English Central

https://www.englishcentral.com/browse/videos

*Free account required. A collection of videos edited to contain subtitles with identifiable vocabulary. For free, learners can identify difficult words, see the definitions, and practice watching the video again typing in the new words.

Lyrics Training

https://lyricstraining.com/

Last updated: June 23, 2020

This website (and app) can be used as ELL listening practice or typing practice. Learners listen to songs and type in all or some of the lyrics (depends on level)

Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab
https://www.esl-lab.com/

A great website for listening practice, divided into Easy, Intermediate, and Difficult.

ELL Reading Specific

Bow Valley ESL Literacy Readers
https://globalaccess.bowvalleycollege.ca/learners/readers.php

These great online and printable readers come with an audio to follow along with the text. They can be used as self-study or as an asynchronous part of a class.

WestCoast Reader
https://thewestcoastreader.com/newspapers/

A Canadian site with 'issues' of the reader on varying topics. Great to use as a part of a lesson or as self-study. This year's digital issues are currently free.

News in Levels
https://www.newsinlevels.com/

This site contains international news in 3 different levels. There is also accompanying audio and/or video with each article.

ELL Writing/Grammar Specific

English Grammar Online
https://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar

A website with grammar, writing, reading, vocabulary, and business-specific English.

Khan Academy Grammar
https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/grammar

This site is mostly known for Math and Science, but they have a great section of Standard American English grammar. The course is divided into sections on Parts of Speech, Punctuation, and Syntax (words and phrases creating sentences), and learners must collect "mastery points" to continue on to the next section.

Numeracy

BBC Skillswise Maths
https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/skillswise/maths/zfdymfr

This free site has videos and games to help learners in 6 main themes: Numbers, Calculation, Percent and fractions, Measuring, Shapes, and Graphs.

GCF Global
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/math/

Great free self-study modules in Addition and Subtraction, Multiplication and Division, Algebra Topics, Decimals, Percents, Fractions, and Good at Math.

Math.com
http://www.math.com/
Free practice of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Also includes a section with games.

Khan Academy
https://www.khanacademy.org/math/arithmetic

This site includes math practice by grade level as well as by theme. The Arithmetic math is great for foundational learners. There are lots of practice activities with links to videos if the learner gets stuck.

Self-Study Apps

Apps can be downloaded on either Android or Apple smartphones/tablets. The platform is indicated by the small green robot (Android) or black apple (Apple). Most are free, but some require a one-time payment or a subscription.

ELL

Awabe 🤖

A free app with over 4000 common words and phrases. There are speaking, listening, and vocabulary lessons.

BBC Learning English 🤖

This app has lessons on vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation based on the news.

Beelinguapp 🤖

This app uses audiobooks to help you learn the language you want. You can listen to stories in English (or another language that you want to learn) and read the text beside it. There are a few free samples, but some are paid.

Busuu 🤖

An app that uses native speakers to create the language courses (English is one option!) The app is also a social media network and you can interact and chat with learners of different languages.

Duolingo 🤖

This app is common for English speakers to learn other languages, but it is also very useful for low-level English learners. The app starts at a very basic level and it is ad supported, so the app has a completely free version. If you want to get rid of the ads and download content to learn offline, you have to pay.

ELSA Speak 🤖

This app uses speech recognition technology to help learners improve (American English) pronunciation. There are idioms, daily conversations, and slang.

English Speaking Practice (Talk) 🤖

This app has recorded conversations of native speakers to practice listening, then record yourself responding to practice pronunciation.

Hello English 📱🍎

This app helps you learn English through short lessons. There are 22 first languages supported, and the app is completely free. There is a premium version to learn without ads.

Knudge Me 📱🍎

A free app for English grammar and vocabulary. It includes modules for self-study divided by concept with times of completion between 30 minutes- 8 hours.

Learn English Daily 📱

This app contains lessons with words and phrases spoken by native speakers. You can set up notifications to practice daily.

Lingbe 📱🍎

An innovative language exchange app that allows you to practice speaking with a native speaker of the language you want to learn. You earn coins by helping someone who wants to learn your language, and then you can use that currency to call someone to practice the language you want to learn. It is free, as long as you are willing to help someone practice your native-tongue.

Lyrics Training 📱🍎

This app can be used as ELL listening practice or typing practice. Learners listen to songs and type in all or some of the lyrics (depends on level)

Memrise 📱🍎

Like Duolingo, this app allows you to learn many different languages. Most of the activities are in game form, and your learning is a mission of discovery!

Preposition Builder Master 🍎

This app includes 3 different levels to practice English prepositions in sentences: Beginner, Professional, and Expert. The app is free, though there is a paid Pro version.

Family Literacy

FLIT, A family Literacy App 📱🍎

This app created by the Centre for Family Literacy has activities ranging from reading, recipes, rhymes and games specifically designed to build strong reading, writing, and literacy skills in their child and have FUN doing it!

Foundational Life Skills

MagnusCards 🤖🍎

This free app teaches life skills through story telling. You can collect Card Decks that teach everyday activities like grocery shopping, taking the bus, and ordering at Tim Hortons. The app is built for anyone who benefits from structured, step-by-step guidance.

Numeracy

Star Dash Studios 🤖🍎

This game is created by UK's National Numeracy organization. You must complete math challenges as part of a team.