

Introduction

Background

The Life Skills Curriculum was developed with the goal of teaching LEP (Low English Proficiency) students the skills they need to adapt, function and thrive in the U.S. This curriculum serves as a tool for teachers to enable English language learners to transform their individual challenges into meaningful growth.

Despite having a wealth of skills and experience from their own countries, refugees and immigrants to the U.S. often come with limited knowledge about U.S. culture and may lack certain skills pertaining to life in the U.S. As a result, they can experience social isolation, poor health due to trauma, and have barriers to employment, housing, transportation, language and technology. Newly arrived refugees and immigrants often struggle in establishing social connections, are unaware of the resources available to them and have difficulties understanding U.S. culture. However, their excitement about their new life and eagerness to learn new skills cannot be denied.

To help newcomers cope and overcome the challenges they face, it is vital to teach them the skills they need to be successful and self-sufficient. These skills will enable them to think critically and independently, pursue economic opportunities, engage in lifelong learning, navigate resources, and access technology to live peaceful and healthy lives.

Using the Curriculum

This curriculum comprises nine modules, each containing three to five lessons focused on topics most relevant to adult learners' lives. Because newcomers arrive in the U.S. at various times, the modules and lessons can be taught in any order, with students joining at any point. The lessons were designed to be taught in a classroom setting, with large or small groups, or through 1:1 instruction.

Each lesson has two versions corresponding to WA State Adult Basic Education levels:

Low Intermediate Students:

- Can handle basic reading and writing, related to life roles.
- Can read and interpret simplified and some authentic materials on familiar topics.
- Can interpret simple charts, graphs, and labels; follow basic written instructions and diagrams.
- Can follow basic oral and written instructions and diagrams.

Beginning Students:

- Can fill out simple forms requiring basic personal information.
- Can write a simple list or telephone message.
- Can read and interpret simple sentences on familiar topics.
- Can read and interpret simple directions, signs, maps, and simple menus.

Recognizing that students in one class rarely have the same English proficiency, the two versions of lessons can be taught on their own or used side-by-side in a mixed-level class.

Technology

The Life Skills curriculum was designed to be easy to use and all-inclusive. All lessons can be taught using only the printed material. However, there are certain lessons in which students will benefit from real-world practice using technology. For the module on *Digital Literacy*, and the lessons on *Navigating Transit* and *Email Communication* we recommend that students have access to a smartphone, tablet or computer that is connected to Wi-Fi.

Printing and Adapting the Curriculum

The curriculum is available as a PDF to preserve formatting for easy printing. If you would like a version that can be edited to meet the needs of your specific learning community, please contact ReWA at 206-957-2029.

Currently the curriculum is presented in English, but we hope to offer it in more languages in the future.

