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Avenue Instructor Standards for Technology-Enhanced Language Learning

Authors:
Philip Hubbard, PhD, Deborah Healey, PhD, Greg Kessler, PhD, Sharon Rajabi, MEd

Contributing Developers:
John Allan, MEd, Rob McBride, MEd, Matthias Sturm, MA, Ken Desson, MEd

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

New Language Solutions is based in Ottawa, Ontario. We acknowledge that our head office is on the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg People. Beyond Ottawa, we have staff working in locations across Canada. New Language Solutions is grateful to have the opportunity to work as a guest in communities and territories across the country, and we honour the stewardship of the many Indigenous peoples who have resided on these lands since time immemorial.

We make our acknowledgement as a sign of respect for all Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island, past and present. We accept the true impact of the past and the pain suffered by generations of Indigenous Peoples.

As an agency that works to support the integration of newcomers into Canadian society and cultures, we resolve to support activities that are inclusive of Indigenous Peoples. We will make our best efforts to address a history of injustice to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

We encourage our frontline staff and clients to discover whose traditional territories they live on and pause to reflect on the hospitality shown to us as guests in these territories.

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The purpose of the Avenue Instructor Standards for TELL is to provide guidance for effective technology-enhanced language teaching and learning for Canadian settlement language programs. The Standards support instructors as competent and reflective users of Avenue or similar platforms for their teaching. They also build instructors' confidence in incorporating technology tools and resources from Avenue and beyond into their face-to-face, blended, and online language classes. Some concepts are evident across multiple standards and reinforce key connections. Importantly, the Standards aim to help instructors not only face current challenges but also prepare for uncertainties that lie in the future, such as further developments in generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) and other forms of AI. The Standards are not intended as another hurdle for instructors to overcome. Rather, they are a guide to aid instructors and their program administrators in delivering exemplary language learning experiences for learners.

We are including short notes below for program administrators and teacher educators here so they also see how they can use this document to support instructors. We have also added much more AI-related content in this version (1.2).

NOTE FOR PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

The Avenue Instructor Standards for Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) incorporate the latest research and practices and are written in plain language. Every effort has been made to make them user-friendly and accessible to the adult ESL/FSL sector. The terms blended learning and online learning are used deliberately throughout to indicate all combinations of online delivery in face to face, hybrid, HyFlex and remote situations. Program administrators are encouraged to localize these definitions to their own contexts with input from their staff and redefine them over time as it suits their needs.

While these standards are designed for language instructors, they can be helpful to program administrators as well. Instructors who are well-equipped to use technology effectively with their adult learners can create better course outcomes. Administrators can help create professional development opportunities for instructors to meet or exceed the standards.

Some of these standards are ongoing, such as those that encourage instructors to stay abreast of research and exemplary practice. Rapid developments in artificial intelligence (AI) will change how the standards are implemented. It is impossible to predict how these technologies will evolve. Administrators should provide opportunities and resources for instructors, including information about relevant policies. For example, Canada has a policy on responsible use of AI in public education. That way, instructors can stay up-to-date by being curious, thinking about how a new tool might be used, trying it, and assessing the outcome. Administrators should also refer to the Avenue Program Standards for TELL and Avenue Learner Standards for TELL to find more guidance for their own actions.

NOTE FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS

The Avenue Instructor Standards for TELL target a sector that is populated largely by professional teachers with advanced degrees in TESL or a related field and in some cases many years of teaching experience. The standards are thus aimed at providing guidance for these teachers and the programs that employ them to improve their competence and confidence in integrating technology effectively in their online and blended language classes. It is meant to augment, not replace, whatever foundations of theory, research, and practice they may have received in their formal teacher education programs and subsequent professional development.

Because these instructors have limited time available to accomplish this task, we have focused on producing standards that we believe are useful and achievable for most of them, along with support materials to connect to the realities of settlement language teaching. These standards provide a foundation for what should be an ongoing journey for language instructors in integrating technology in their careers. Teacher educators in master's and certificate programs working with teachers and teacher candidates over multiple semesters will be able to integrate technology throughout the curriculum in a more robust and comprehensive manner than we can reasonably—and humanely—offer here. Those who provide professional development webinars and workshops can consider how these standards might fit into current and future offerings.

Developments in artificial intelligence will need to be incorporated into teacher education programs and teacher training. The standards urge instructors, administrators, and learners to collaborate on crafting policies about how AI can and should be used, and how it should not be used. Similarly, teacher educators and trainers should work with their learners and administrators to design and revise AI policies as the technology continues to develop.

We are grateful to teacher educators who offered feedback on earlier versions of these standards. A number of their suggestions have been incorporated in support and supplementary materials. The standards are being released with a CC-BY-NC-SA license so that anyone can freely adapt and add to them as they see fit to meet the needs of their particular contexts.

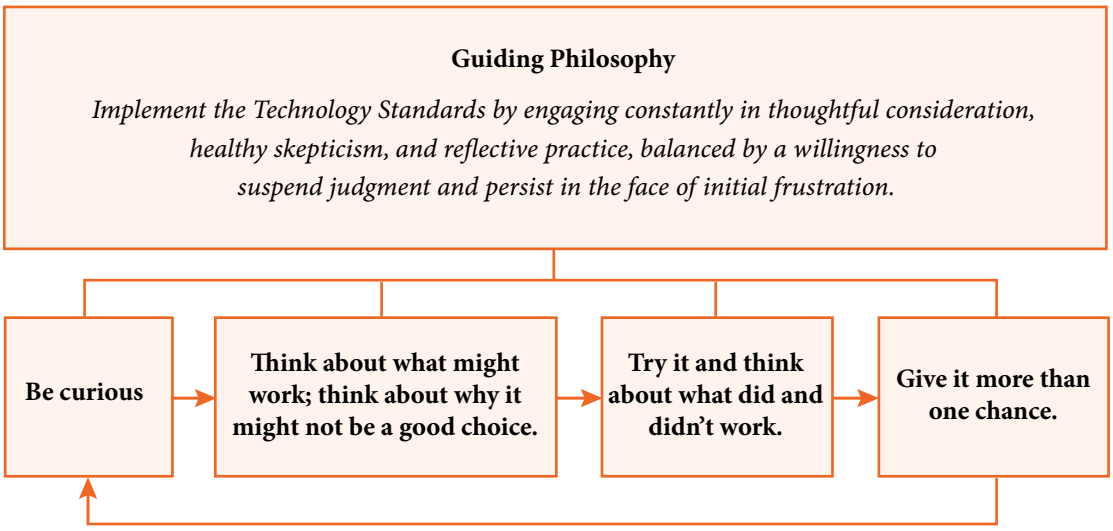
INTRODUCTION FOR INSTRUCTORS

In this document, we present the guiding philosophy and the seven instructor standards, each of which has a set of more detailed performance indicators (PIs) to provide clearer descriptions of what the standard entails. The PIs have a text that explains them, along with suggestions for reflecting on how they link to an instructor's own teaching. We also include two or more "Can-Do" statements for each PI to help instructors determine whether they meet them. The full set of Can-Dos is listed in Appendix A. A set of vignettes providing illustrations of how the standards and PIs can be realized in actual teaching situations are in Appendix B, and a glossary is Appendix C. A list of the standards and PIs is in Appendix D.

This version of the standards (1.2) includes additional references to AI, especially generative AI (GenAI). The terms are not interchangeable, but what people see tends to be GenAI. Since the Avenue TELL standards project began in early 2023, we have witnessed a rapid expansion of the use of GenAI tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini in language teaching and learning. We are also seeing "embedded GenAI" that expands capabilities in a wide range of browsers and other apps, such as email and Microsoft Word. Although GenAI tools are not the only AI tools in use, they are very important for instructors, program administrators, learners, and teacher educators to be aware of and to use efficiently, effectively, and ethically.

Although it would be tempting to do so, at this point, we are not proposing a separate standard for integrating GenAI. The standards themselves remain the same, but we have added GenAI-focused performance indicators (PIs) and Can-Dos, as well as enriched the PI text descriptions to include more GenAI guidance. This is because we believe that AI will become more and more interwoven with many of the aspects covered in the seven existing standards. We anticipate that later versions of the standards will have even more to say about this rapidly shifting area of technology-enhanced language teaching and learning.

UNESCO, ISTE, and the Canadian government also offer guidance which we anticipate they will update on a regular basis.



Standard 1 is about using devices and systems skillfully.

Understand and use personal and institutional devices, device system settings, and networks to support quality technology-enhanced language teaching and learning.

See Vignettes* *1: The Initial Challenge of Adopting CALL Technology

7: Learning Technology for Low Literacy Learners

8: Providing Support to ESL Teachers New to Online Instruction

PI 1.1. Be comfortable with technology in your settings: home, institutional, and mobile.

With technology part of our daily lives, it's worth spending a little time to understand it better. Being comfortable means being confident that the technology will serve you instead of the other way around. Knowing your passwords and being sure you have secure ones is one place to start. Being able to connect your computers, smartphones, and tablets to peripheral devices like printers, speakers, projectors, and so on through wires, wi-fi, and Bluetooth is also a fundamental skill. Important data should be backed up, either physically on an external disk or thumb drive or online in the cloud. You should know how to get online and offline, and if online, whether you are on a wired, wi-fi, or cellular data connection, selecting whichever is the most appropriate for a given setting. Understand that everything from light switches and watches to your laptop or desktop may be a computer.

Reflection: Think about the one or two devices you use the most. How well do you understand them, and what small steps could you take to understand them better?

- ☐ I am comfortable using my own devices on a daily basis and do not normally have to rely on others to help.
- ☐ I am proficient with at least one web browser (Chrome, Safari, Firefox, etc.) that I use regularly for connecting to websites.
- ☐ I am proficient with at least one search engine (Google, Bing, etc.) that I use regularly to locate information on the web.
- ☐ I know how to install and delete apps on my devices.

The full set of Can-Dos is in listed in Appendix A.

PI 1.2. Understand the primary features of the systems on devices you use and how to change them as needed.

The key to using your smartphone, computer, or tablet effectively is to have a good understanding of its system (also called the operating system). A widely used icon for the parts of the system that you can control is the gear or toothed wheel app on iPhones, iPads, and Android phones and tablets. For Windows PCs, look for the settings app or type "settings" into the desktop search box. For Apple Macintoshes/MacBooks, under the top left "apple" menu you will find "System Settings." For Chromebooks, click on the launch icon at the bottom left of the screen or just type "settings" into the Chrome search box.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is being built into the systems of all devices. You can see this in autocorrect and the way it "learns" about you to make predictions. Be aware of your options to override or accept what autocorrect and other AI elements tell you.

Reflection: Access the system controls on your favorite device—you can look online if you don't know how to find them. If you don't know what a control does, try it. What did you learn from this experience?

- ☐ I know how to operate the basic device controls, such as adjusting the display, adjusting the sound, and making wi-fi, data, and Bluetooth connections.
- ☐ I know how to locate the system settings menu on the devices I use for teaching and understand what the categories in that menu refer to.
- ☐ I know how to check to see if my system is up to date and update it as needed.
- ☐ I notice announcements about AI elements when I upgrade the system on my devices.

PI 1.3. Be familiar with the vocabulary that describes the technology devices and systems you use.

There is no end to technical terminology in the technology field, but it is useful to know a core set of useful vocabulary so that you can communicate about your system when needed. This may include technical words (e.g., bandwidth), commercial names (e.g., PowerPoint) or abbreviations (e.g., URL for "uniform resource locator"). For a list, try searching online for "basic computer terms." Another useful strategy is simply to notice terms that appear regularly in your personal, social, or educational uses of technology that you aren't sure about. If a term is something you see regularly, then it's probably something you should know. It's also important to keep updating this set as new terms move from the periphery into common usage.

Reflection: Think about relevant technical terms/abbreviations you have seen or heard recently but are not sure what they mean. What strategies could you use to understand and learn useful new terms when you encounter them?

- ☐ I understand most of the terms related to my devices that other instructors, learners, and tech support use.
- ☐ I know how to find definitions for relevant terms I am not familiar with.

PI 1.4. Know how to organize applications and files (documents, spreadsheets, photos, etc.) so that they are easy to locate when needed.

To work efficiently with technology, you need to know where your applications and files are located and where new ones go when they are added. Try to keep frequently used apps on your phone or tablet's home screen if possible. For computers, the task bar typically at the bottom of the screen should include items for quick launching. Similarly, files like Word documents, spreadsheets, photos, and videos ought to be organized in logical and easy to find ways and have distinct names. Just as with paper documents, accurately labeled file folders save time and frustration. Take control over file locations to fit your work style rather than always relying on system defaults. It's especially important to be aware of whether a file is on your device, in the cloud, or both. If you work with more than one device, there are advantages to synchronizing your data and applications across them.

Reflection: Have a look at the files and folders on your computer's desktop or the apps on your smartphone. Are there ways you could rearrange these to make your digital life easier?

- ☐ I am satisfied with how my files and apps are arranged.
- ☐ I know how to use the search function to find my files on my device and in the cloud.

PI 1.5. Know how to look up information about your devices, systems, and networks.

There is so much to know about your devices, systems, and networks that it is not realistic to expect you or even institutional technical support to know everything that might be needed. If you are searching for a specific question related to your technology, links to user forums may appear, and while these are not perfect, they often have clearer and more complete information than the help sites provided by the manufacturers. If you need to know how to set up something technological, YouTube is a great source for how-to videos. The web has a wealth of information from these and other sources, and of course the Avenue.ca site or other relevant ones may also help you find what you are looking for.

Reflection: Think about something you would like to know about how your computer, tablet, or smartphone works. Where might you start looking for that information?

- ☐ I know how to use the help feature on my device to get information.
- ☐ I know how to search online for information about how to use my device.
- ☐ I know how to find useful videos to show me how to do things I want to with my device.

PI 1.6. Be able to perform basic troubleshooting/problem-solving for devices and systems.

Maybe your computer or your smartphone suddenly doesn't work the way you expected it to. What happened? It could have lost its Internet connection, or it may have received a recent system update that either changed how it works or introduced a bug. Troubleshooting of common problems is an important skill to develop so that you can deal with such issues quickly and not let them interrupt your teaching. Often, simply restarting the device will fix the problem. Keep notes on what goes wrong and what you or someone else did to make it right. Be aware of any institutional support sites that can help and know how to contact your institutional tech support office when you can't immediately handle the problem yourself. An online search for the problem (be as specific as possible) will take you to sources that can help you diagnose and repair an issue. These may include the producer's website, online user forums, and even YouTube videos. If a problem arises during class, you may be able to tap into your learners' knowledge and skills to support troubleshooting for you or for their classmates.

Reflection: Think about a recent time when you had a technical issue with your device or with the network while teaching. What did you do? What did you learn from the experience in case the issue occurs again? How could you keep track of such incidents?

- ☐ I recognize that some problems can be fixed simply by restarting the device having issues.
- ☐ I have experience looking up solutions online to problems that arise and recognizing when I need to seek help from others.
- ☐ I keep track of problems I have had with my device or network and how they were fixed so that I can help myself and others in the future.

Standard 2 is about digital tools and resources.

Understand and use a basic set of relevant technology resources and tools for language teaching and continue to update and expand this set regularly.

***See Vignettes** 1: The Initial Challenge of Adopting CALL Technology*

2: Task-based Experiential Learning

3: Culturally Relevant Computer-Assisted Language Learning

4: The "Think Aloud" Method: Technology-assisted Language Skills Enhancement

5: A Bridge to Digital Skills

7: Learning Technology for Low Literacy Learners

8: Providing Support to ESL Teachers New to Online Instruction

PI 2.1. Recognize that tools and resources can not only enhance but also diminish learning effectiveness depending on how they are used.

We all know that technology alone does not teach. When you use technology in a class, the goal is usually to make learning effective, but besides effectiveness, you can also hope to improve learning efficiency, engagement, motivation, access, convenience, and so on. However, technology can sometimes focus on one of these at the expense of effectiveness, giving the illusion that learning is happening. A digital game, for instance, could be engaging and motivating but still not help the learner improve language proficiency. Captions on a video can improve comprehension but can also get in the way of building listening skills. However, both games and captions can be effective when used thoughtfully for specific purposes, with an eye on the goal of learning language. So, think critically about how you and your learners use these and other tools, and don't rely on a given technology to do the work automatically.

AI – including GenAI and embedded AI - is a good example of a technology whose usefulness is directly related to how it is applied. Poorly or maliciously used AI is a detriment to learning. Inappropriate feedback is harmful. We need to be fully aware of the pros and cons of this technology for both instructors and learners in the increasing number of apps that use it.

Reflection: Reflect on your current online or blended teaching environment—how is it making learning better? How is it impeding learning? What might you do about the latter?

- ☐ I am aware that technology including AI, may diminish learning effectiveness.
- ☐ I ask learners about their technology use for language learning to ensure that it is as accessible, convenient, and effective as possible.
- ☐ I focus on learner goals, objectives, and outcomes rather than the use of a particular technology.

PI 2.2. Know how to use foundational tools for content creation and communication, especially those included by default with most devices.

Tools for content creation and communication are everywhere and as a language teacher, it is good for you to have solid control of the ones you use. You are probably comfortable with a word processor and email program for basic purposes, but it is useful to know how to set up tables, insert graphics, and be able to use the range of review functions. Most foundational tools now include AI elements. For example, most newer word processors have AI-enhanced editors, some as add-ins. If you have never tried some of these functions, open your word processor to a new document and click on as many of the menu items as you can find. Try them out and see if you can discover something new and useful for personal or teaching uses. For example, on MS-Word and other word processors, there is an Insert heading next to Home at the top—click on it and try inserting different items--you may be surprised at what's there. Increasingly, GenAI apps like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot are establishing themselves as foundational tools.

Reflection: Open a popular video website or app like YouTube or TED.com. Find as many controls as you can and note any that are unfamiliar. What happens when you play with them?

- ☐ I am aware of the content creation tools, such as word-processors, and communication tools, such as email, available on my devices.
- ☐ I try out functions in these tools to better understand them.
- ☐ I know about some AI elements in content creation and communication tools that I use.

PI 2.3. Be able to perform basic troubleshooting/problem-solving for the tools you use.

You can't be expected to know how to fix everything, but there are some common problems with likely fixes that you should be aware of. Be familiar with how your audio and video settings work on the devices you use so that you are more likely to be able to anticipate problems and recover quickly. Test your setup before trying to connect with your learners. Make sure batteries are charged sufficiently. If a problem arises and you have time, try to fix the problem yourself by looking for solutions online—the time invested will improve your troubleshooting skills. Be aware that some apps work differently depending on the operating system (Mac OS, Windows, iOS, Android, Chrome) and that some websites operate differently in different browsers (Chrome, Firefox, Safari, etc.). Finally, know how to contact your institutional tech support and learn from them how to fix it yourself.

Reflection: Think about a problem you had with a specific app recently. What did you do, and what did you learn from the experience? How could you keep track of such incidents?

- ☐ I know how to adjust the settings of the tools I use for language teaching.
- ☐ I am aware that browsers and apps may behave differently on different devices.
- ☐ I try to solve problems that I encounter with language teaching tools by myself before I seek assistance from others.

PI 2.4. Teach language with and through technology across a range of online, in person, and blended modes, recognizing the differences in effective practice for each.

Information and communication technologies are a key part of education across fields but especially so in language teaching and learning. As many learned during the switch to emergency remote teaching (ERT) in 2020, classroom practices did not automatically transfer to the online context. For example, breakout rooms did not work the same way as pairs and small groups in class. Technology holds the potential to degrade teaching effectiveness if not used competently and confidently. Think about how best to apply your favorite classroom practices effectively in online and blended settings. Seek examples of new practices in all three domains and use your critical and reflective skills to gain control over them, adapted to your own context and teaching style. Provide guidance for your learners when asking them to try something new.

Reflection: Think about a favorite classroom activity that did not work as well online. What do you think caused the problems? How could you use your understanding of technology to adapt the activity to improve the online experience of that activity?

- ☐ I am aware that there are various ways to communicate with learners and use different forms of communication as needed.
- ☐ I try out different ways of using technology when teaching in different modes.
- ☐ I model effective technology communication practices for learners in different modes.

PI 2.5. Use Avenue or another learning management system if feasible to set up and manage an online or blended course.

Avenue with its embedded Moodle learning management system (LMS) is a critical part of your toolbox as an online instructor. If you are not able to use Avenue, other LMSs are available. LMSs are important for keeping class records, making and grading assignments, and setting up the class syllabus with content and assignments. They can also be repositories for content that you can import into your course. In a blended course, an LMS is a place where all documents and assignments can reside, reducing the need for class handouts and physical papers from learners. Because it is a core application, you will want to be familiar with all that it has to offer. This includes both tools and resources for instruction and those for organizing learner records and course content. Just like the operating system and commonly used applications, it is worth taking the time to explore whatever LMS you have access to.

Reflection: Think about Avenue or some other LMS that you use in your teaching. How well do you know the system so that you can skillfully take advantage of its features to make the online or blended experience better for you and your learners?

- ☐ I am aware of different functions in the LMS and how they may be used for online and blended lessons.
- ☐ I know how to set up online courses, including selecting appropriate content for my course.
- ☐ I know how to manage online and blended courses, such as monitoring student progress.

PI 2.6. Evaluate technology tools and applications for their potential.

Technology tools and applications can be an important part of the online teaching and learning experience. Evaluating the potential of a collaborative writing application like Google Docs, for example, starts with understanding things like the individual tools for producing, editing, and commenting on work. It expands to being aware of AI components and that a document's history is accessible. Beyond that, though, it is important to see how those technical features can be applied to further the development of writing and other skills for your class. It is helpful to think of this in terms of two elements: teacher and learner fit. For teacher fit, the potential uses of the tool or application should integrate with your language teaching approach. For learner fit, the potential uses of the tool or application should meet the learning goals of the course and support styles your learners are familiar and comfortable with. Think critically about how a new application might work for you and your learners before using it.

Reflection: Think about your language teaching approach. What theories, beliefs, or principles guide how you teach and support your learners? How have you used these to inform the selection and implementation of digital tools and apps, including AI components?

- ☐ I am aware that technology tools do not always fit well with teacher approach and learner needs.
- ☐ I know how to evaluate the learner fit of technology tools and applications.
- ☐ I try out technology tools to determine if they will provide a better fit than the tools I am already familiar with.

PI 2.7. Seek to adapt tools and resources to meet teaching and learning needs.

There are many tools and resources that have potential to support language learning but have not been designed to do so. However, they are not always ideal for meeting learning objectives without some adaptation by you or the learners. Existing lessons or activities from outside sources can be updated or be localized to have more impact on your learners. A longer YouTube video, for example, can be played directly from a specific point by capturing the URL with the desired time stamp instead of having to use the slider to try and find it.

Reflection: Think about one of your favorite resources. How can you select and adapt items within that resource to better serve the needs of your learners? What additional skills might help you do this more easily?

- ☐ I know where to learn about new tools and resources for teaching and learning.
- ☐ I understand how to adapt new tools and resources to address my learners' needs.

PI 2.8. Carefully consider and implement AI and GenAI tools.

AI has been incorporated into many educational tools, including automated writing evaluation. This trend will only continue. GenAI tools have the potential to radically change instruction and learning. They can create customized lesson plans, readings, dialogues, and more classroom material that instructors can evaluate, adapt, and use. The key is to adapt rather than just accepting what GenAI delivers. We know our learners, and GenAI doesn't. But it can save a great deal of time by providing material to adapt and use.

For learners, GenAI tools can offer formative feedback on writing drafts and hold a "conversation." They can also generate essays, reports, and other classroom assignments based on Internet information in seconds. The results can be prompted to include typical language learner errors, making plagiarism hard to see. Instructors will need to consider how to assign work that requires learners to edit and add to GenAI results, and how to ask learners to cite their use of GenAI. With ongoing support from their programs, instructors should examine how to use GenAI themselves and think carefully about how their learners should use it, both as a tutor and as a tool for language learning.

Some GenAI tools allow users to turn off sending data to the server. See if this is possible, use it, and show learners how to use it to keep their data private. (See Standard 4 for more about ethical use.)

Reflection: How are you learning about GenAI in the classroom? What training and policies, if any, are in place at your institution? How can you adapt assignments so that they need learner input?

- ☐ I am aware that GenAI tools can be helpful for designing and delivering instruction and that they need to be used cautiously.
- ☐ I try out new GenAI tools to determine how they may be used in my courses.
- ☐ I ask my learners which GenAI tools they are using and how they may be beneficial or harmful. (See Learner Standard 2.3 for more.)

Standard 3 is about technology-enhanced pedagogy.

Thoughtfully integrate technology in your teaching, informed by exemplary practice and relevant theory and research.

See Vignettes* *3: Culturally Relevant Computer-Assisted Language Learning

4: The "Think Aloud" Method: Technology-assisted Language Skills Enhancement

5: A Bridge to Digital Skills

6: Blended Instruction for Learners at Emerging Levels of Literacy

PI 3.1. Seek out and make use of sources of exemplary practice.

Videos that demonstrate exemplary practice with technology are available online. Think about reviewing these periodically to reinforce or gain ideas, especially in relation to introducing technology to learners, sequencing steps, modeling technology use, and helping learners consolidate ideas. Models can also demonstrate creating an environment in an online class that is as warm and welcoming as face-to-face. Peer observation can be another source of exemplary practice, especially when you share ideas and comments with your colleague afterward. Be curious; reflect; try.

Reflection: Where have you found useful videos about technology-enhanced pedagogy for online or blended environments?

- ☐ I look for exemplary practices related to technology use from peers or in online sources, including Avenue.
- ☐ I incorporate exemplary practices related to technology use that I have learned online or from others into my classes.

PI 3.2. Stay abreast of current theory and research related to technology use.

AI and GenAI are the subject of many new articles on research and classroom use. GenAI technology and its uses are evolving rapidly and will change teaching. Given these developments, GenAI is a good area to monitor carefully. Otherwise, research on technology use goes back decades, so someone has probably written about what you are trying to do. For example, computer games have been used and researched for a long time, and there are valuable and practical insights from that research. It is always a good idea to check the publication date and source for accuracy and relevance. Avenue.ca includes an annotated bibliography at https://bib.learnit2teach.ca/ with links to directly relevant theory-informed research that supports practice for the settlement sector. With resources of all kinds, be curious, read with an open mind and a critical eye, and consider just how applicable they can be in your context.

Reflection: Where do you get your information about technology for language teaching and how does it inform your practice? What are some example sources you could share with a colleague?

- ☐ I pay attention to what is happening with technology use in teaching (including GenAI) by reading articles, watching videos, going to webinars and conference sessions, and/or hearing from others with expertise.
- ☐ I learn about relevant theory and research related to technology.
- ☐ I think about how I might apply the theory and research I've learned about to my teaching, or why it's not a good fit.

PI 3.3. Create technology-enhanced learning environments that provide multiple types of media and modes for learning.

Learners respond better to a variety of media – audio, video, text, image - to build multiple channels in memory. Current communication channels also often involve mixed media. Keep in mind that some learners may have hidden disabilities that may be visual and aural, and learners may not tell you if they have problems hearing or seeing (colours, for example). Having individual, pair, and group work online lets those who are more social or more introverted find ways to feel comfortable.

Reflection: How often do learners have multiple pathways to the content they are learning? How familiar are you with the options for adaptive technology: font, colour, text-to-speech, and more?

- ☐ I use a variety of media when I'm presenting information to my learners.
- ☐ I know about adaptive technology for learners with visible or hidden disabilities, and I am proactive in designing digital material to address disabilities.
- ☐ I have learners work individually, in pairs, and in groups at different times when using technology.

PI 3.4. Use technology-enhanced active learning and task-based approaches that incorporate authentic learner experiences.

Learners should have something authentic and useful to do in every lesson, whether online, blended, or face-to-face. For example, learners can take photos with their phones to practice pronunciation, vocabulary, writing, and speaking. They can create an annotated map with their neighbourhood, using their photos and Google Maps. That task might include adding narration about why some places are important in the map they share online. Take advantage of the wide range of lived experiences that adults have to build inclusive, motivating language learning tasks with technology. Doing this also reduces the risk that learners will simply ask an AI tool to complete an assignment for them.

Reflection: Can learners see themselves in at least some of the digital material in your classroom? Do they see the activity in relation to their needs?

- ☐ I think about my learners' contexts when creating technology-enhanced or online activities.
- ☐ I have learners incorporate their own lives and contexts in online or technology-enhanced task-based activities.
- ☐ I create technology-enhanced activities that encourage learners to get out of the classroom and gain or use real-world experience.

PI 3.5. Use technology tasks to build creativity, reflection, and community.

Project-based learning with learner-driven group projects can encourage creativity and build on what learners bring to the classroom. Digital binders let learners reflect on their work and see progress. Apps like Flip (formerly Flipgrid) let learners share video and comments, and the Google Classroom suite provides platforms for real-time collaboration. When learners use guided peer review that focuses on praise rather than criticism, it can build community while encouraging formative self-assessment. It is important to work through the challenges and foster a welcoming, collaborative environment, especially in fully online classes.

Reflection: How often do learners think about their own choices, how they learn, with whom, and why? What have you done to help them feel more welcome and be more focused and connected?

- ☐ I encourage learners to use technology in creative and collaborative tasks.
- ☐ I guide learners in reflecting on their choices about how they learn with technology.
- ☐ I ensure that everyone feels welcome and included, especially in fully online classes.

PI 3.6 Identify, adapt, and create effective prompts for GenAI.

Prompts are commands to GenAI. A well-crafted prompt can produce the desired results quickly. For example, say, "You're teaching English to adults at the intermediate level. Create a simple dialogue of about 16 lines between two friends who are talking about looking for a job that does not require much English. Do not use idiomatic expressions." Prompts will generally take several iterations to produce an appropriate response.

Instructors should learn about the elements needed in GenAI tools to create classroom materials or assessments that are appropriate to their learners. More apps are emerging to help instructors craft prompts. Instructors who understand how prompts work can do a more effective job of evaluating prompt output and output from GenAI apps.

Reflection: How well do you understand how to evaluate GenAI prompts and their output? What training and tools could help you and your colleagues?

- ☐ I know where to find information about creating prompts or using a prompt-generating app for teaching purposes.
- ☐ I critically adapt prompts created by someone else or an app to better fit my context.
- ☐ I create effective prompts by providing the role for GenAI, context (type of learner/setting), topic, format, and learner proficiency level or use a prompt-generating app to do so.

Standard 4 is about digital literacy and digital citizenship for yourself and your learners.

Be aware of and model the use of technology in safe, legal, ethical, and equitable ways.

See Vignettes ***3: Culturally Relevant Computer-Assisted Language Learning***
4: The "Think Aloud" Method: Technology-assisted Language Skills Enhancement
7: Learning Technology for Low Literacy Learners

PI 4.1. Guide learners to make positive and socially responsible contributions online.

In a blended, hybrid, or fully online class, learners are often expected to attend a synchronous session, engage in pair or group work, ask questions, or present to their peers. This may be a frustrating experience if your learners do not participate as planned. You may be compensating by doing the speaking most of the time. To create a welcoming class, acknowledge early on that the dynamics in a Big Blue Button or Zoom session are different than in-person sessions. This can help address learner anxiety and inhibitions. For example, you could dedicate the first session to an orientation about how and why the dynamics in an online class are different. Encourage your learners to ask questions. Introduce guidelines around active participation, group or pair work, turn taking, and agreeing or disagreeing with peers respectfully in synchronous and asynchronous sessions. Incorporate in your daily plans multiple and varied opportunities for learners to ask questions and provide feedback.

Reflection: Think of strategies and practices that you incorporate in your online sessions. What works and what doesn't work? What would you do differently next time?

- ☐ I help learners understand how to be respectful and collaborative in synchronous or asynchronous online sessions.
- ☐ I encourage my learners – especially those who are quiet – to actively participate online.
- ☐ I revisit recurring issues that my learners experience to ensure that an online interaction feels as comfortable as an in-person one.

PI 4.2. Know how to access and select safe resources online and share this knowledge with learners.

Navigating online can be daunting and overwhelming for learners. They need to think about the key words to use in their search and which links are credible, relevant, and appropriate. They need to be able to avoid fraudulent ads and adverse links. Incorporating these topics in your planning promotes curiosity, critical thinking, and critical awareness as well as building learners' confidence when navigating online. Model safe use of websites for learning in your class; know what to look for and be aware of. Show and discuss the types of fraudulent websites including phishing scams and other fraud. You might discuss setting up an account (commercial or open source) and highlight whether payment or personal information is required. If resources are available for free, think about how much personal information is being demanded in return.

Reflection: Think about an example of a website of which you were suspicious. What steps did you take to ensure its validity? How would you incorporate this experience in a lesson?

- ☐ I encourage learners to turn Safe Search on and enable virus and spam detectors.
- ☐ I show and discuss types of false and fraudulent online information with my learners.
- ☐ I encourage learners to think about the personal information they are sharing and how it might be used.

PI 4.3. Acknowledge learners' ownership of their online work.

Discuss the concept of authorship, ownership, and copyright with learners: whether it is a piece of writing, a contribution to a forum, a recording, or a response to a peer in the classroom or the wider community, learners should know that they are authoring a piece of work. Demonstrate crediting someone's work by acknowledging their contribution orally and in writing. Have learners do the same in their next assignment. Explain the privacy concerns around copying, quoting, or referring to someone else's work. This is an evolving issue with AI-generated images, audio, and video. Classroom and institutional policies should address how learners claim ownership of AI generated media, with the policies revised over time.

Reflection: How do you acknowledge your learners' contributions in class, online, or during a presentation?

- ☐ I explain to learners that the author of any work owns and holds copyright to their work, which means that learners hold copyright on their own work.
- ☐ I model crediting my learners and others for their contributions.
- ☐ I ask permission from my learners before sharing their work with colleagues and in presentations.

PI 4.4. Learn about ethical use of technology and follow local, provincial, and national online privacy, copyright, and fair dealing laws and regulations.

Instructors generally have digital access to learners' personal information through the learner registration and referral system in the workplace. Learners often sign up for various online accounts requiring them to submit personal and sensitive information. Learn about the privacy laws in Canada and your province. Provide multiple examples of how to protect sensitive information in your class. Explain how your learners' personal

information is protected by yourself as well as your workplace. As an example, explain that the class register has many identifiers such as full name, address, and date of birth and that you yourself always log off as soon as you are done with the roll call to protect learner data.

Reflection: How familiar are you with your workplace copyright and privacy laws? How do they help protect your learners' privacy?

- ☐ I understand the risks to learner privacy and take care to protect learner information online.
- ☐ I stay abreast of the relevant local, provincial, and federal regulations related to privacy and copyright and follow them.

PI 4.5. Stay abreast of legal and ethical issues related to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

GenAI poses legal issues in several areas, including copyright, libel, privacy, and plagiarism. Questions are being raised about who owns the data that informs GenAI results, and who owns the results themselves. These results can be factually incorrect. When incorrect results impugn a person's reputation and those results are shared, there is a risk of libel. GenAI is based on large datasets of text. When learners enter text into a prompt, such as an essay for writing feedback, that text becomes part of the dataset. This is a privacy risk if learners are including private personal information. GenAI tools can create "deepfakes," using a person's likeness to create fake images and video. This is a serious legal and ethical issue if the deepfakes are shared. GenAI is very good at completing assignments such as reports and essays. Instructors and programs should have guidelines consistent with regional and national policies in place for ethical use of these tools, including citing the use of GenAI when submitting assignments. As GenAI becomes increasingly incorporated into digital tools of all kinds, instructors should be aware of when and how they and their learners are interacting with it.

Reflection: How are you staying abreast of GenAI tools and their uses? How are you guiding learners in using GenAI appropriately and safely?

- ☐ I understand that GenAI and other forms of AI are constantly evolving and expanding into more areas, embedded into more apps, and will continue to present new opportunities and risks.
- ☐ I pay attention to legal and ethical issues in GenAI that could affect me and my learners, such as privacy, false information and images, and easy generation of essays, reports, and images.
- ☐ I provide clear guidelines to learners about how they should and should not use GenAI in class work.
- ☐ I explain to learners how, when, and why I use AI to learners.
- ☐ I incorporate artificial intelligence as a topic in my planning to address its safe use and copyright and privacy issues.

PI 4.6. Model equitable practices by incorporating learners' wealth of linguistic and cultural resources in technology use.

Adult learners come from all walks of life bringing with them rich and diverse cultural and linguistic experiences. Tapping into these readily available assets enriches learning, exposes learners to relevant and diverse cultural experiences from around the world, and creates a level playing field for the learners to engage. Use learners as authentic resources when the opportunity presents itself. For example, acknowledge learners' cultural backgrounds. Have learners make technology-enhanced presentations about a cultural celebration or an event, such as birthdays, weddings, or holidays, using family resources such as photos to strengthen what families offer.

Reflection: How do learners' cultural experiences address equity in your class? What kind of preparations are needed to make a cultural event a positive experience for your learners?

- ☐ I incorporate learners' backgrounds and cultures in my planning for technology-enhanced discussions and activities whenever possible.
- ☐ I create technology-enhanced activities where all learners benefit from sharing languages and cultures with others.

PI 4.7. Model online behaviors that show respect for diversity in opinion, identity, and cultural practices.

Acknowledge your learners' diverse backgrounds and engage them in healthy discussion. Model how diverse and opposing arguments or opinions can be presented through respectful conversations online and in person. Discuss contributions to forums in the course and elicit learners' thoughts about whether they like/don't like the comments and why; or if they find them valuable or appropriate. Explore the process for posting ideas and responding to other posts.

Reflection: Do you go over a set of rules in preparation for a respectful class discussion? What strategies do you use when there is a communication breakdown?

- ☐ I recognize the diverse backgrounds and identities of my learners and ensure that everyone feels welcome and included, especially in fully online classes.
- ☐ I model ways that different or opposing views can be discussed respectfully online.
- ☐ I use the comments and replies posted by my learners to plan lessons on how to address issues related to inclusive, respectful, and responsible communication.

Standard 5 is about using technology to help all learners thrive.

Use technology thoughtfully to identify and address current and future needs of learners in ways that reflect diverse identities and contexts.

See Vignettes* *2: Task-based Experiential Learning

3: Culturally Relevant Computer-Assisted Language Learning

6: Blended Instruction for Learners at Emerging Levels of Literacy

PI 5.1. Be aware of the technology used by your learners and the contexts in which they use it.

Learners today are using various technology tools, websites, and related resources in a variety of ways throughout the day. They are likely to engage in social media, where they may share personal details about their lives with online friends who have shared interests. This may involve creating media or mashups that they closely identify with and help them express their individual personality. Such practices can encourage learners to engage with others more extensively than they would in other contexts. Knowing the kinds of activities that learners are engaging in outside of class can help you create compelling customized experiences that offer opportunities for extended language practice. Observe learners as they use technology and engage in ongoing dialogue with them to better understand their language goals.

Reflection: Can the learner relate to the technologies that are being used in your classroom? Do they resemble the technologies learners are using on their own?

- ☐ I ask about and observe the devices and tools my learners use and how they use them, leveraging that familiarity for language learning purposes.
- ☐ I encourage learners to make creative use of the tools they know to support their learning goals.
- ☐ I help learners connect new tools and tasks to familiar ones to minimize confusion and frustration.

PI 5.2. Be aware of and cultivate learners' individual communicative and digital competencies.

While learners are likely to have extensive experience with various technologies, each of them will be different based on the specific experiences and interests they have. Some learners may not be familiar with the kind of technologies that are designed specifically for language learning, while being more comfortable using social media platforms. Others may have extensive experience in the world of video games or use of various forms of AI. Developing a sense of the technological background of learners can help you to recognize and play to their strengths while also assisting them with the areas in which they may need more development to succeed in their language learning goals. Observe learners to identify their competencies and engage in ongoing dialogue with learners about these competencies. Acknowledge individual differences among learners' competencies. Encourage learners to share what they know with each other and the instructor.

Reflection: Do learners recognize the ways that you design or adapt instruction for their personal competencies?

- ☐ I take steps to become aware of individual differences in my learners' overall communicative and digital skills and knowledge.
- ☐ I make an effort to ensure that learners have the digital and communicative competence they need for a given technology-mediated task through training, connecting them with institutional or peer support, or offering alternatives that they can meet.
- ☐ I am familiar with the Avenue Learner Standards for TELL and help learners become aware of them and make progress toward meeting them.

PI 5.3. Leverage technology to design personalized learner-centered experiences.

With an understanding of the ways in which individual learners use technology, begin to customize learning materials and experiences to better fit their interests, abilities, and needs. For example, a learner who is interested in video games can be encouraged to write about game experiences or environments as part of their language learning practice. They can also be encouraged to engage in more extended experiences like designing a game as a collaborative activity with other like-minded learners. Engage in ongoing dialogue with learners about their learning preferences and acknowledge learners' individual identities.

Support learners' multilinguistic and multicultural selves and needs and help them understand and use technology to accommodate learners' special needs. Talk with learners about available accommodations as appropriate. Create, adapt, and personalize learner experiences that support autonomy.

Reflection: How well can you describe your learners' individual identities, abilities, and preferences?

- ☐ I am aware of my learners' interests, abilities, and needs so that I can adjust technology-enhanced assignments and tasks to better fit them.
- ☐ I use technology tools and resources to personalize learning experiences to make them a better fit for individual learners.
- ☐ I take into account individual student identities when designing learner-centered experiences.

PI 5.4. Promote learner autonomy through technology-enhanced collaborative practices.

Learner autonomy is best demonstrated by learners taking responsibility for their own learning. By engaging them in experiences that they find interesting and compelling, we can guide them to take a more active role in their own learning. This may involve encouraging them to seek out opportunities to engage in language practice with others outside of class or to target specific language weaknesses or challenges that they become aware of. An autonomous learner is a lifelong learner and always engaged in intentional and targeted self-improvement. Acknowledge learners' individual strengths and encourage learners to recognize these strengths. Encourage learners to be responsible for their own learning and provide learners with opportunities to recognize how new technologies might help or hinder them in reaching their goals as they take control of their own learning.

Reflection: Can your learners describe how their learning can benefit them in the future? Do they recognize how their own self-reflection can benefit them?

- ☐ I provide experiences to support developing learner autonomy, including training and monitoring rather than simply leaving them on their own in technology-mediated tasks.
- ☐ I provide opportunities for learners to discuss their individual and collaborative learning experiences online.
- ☐ I encourage learners to share their individual identities and experiences when contributing to group work with technology.

PI 5.5. Prepare learners to think about ways that unfamiliar technologies might help or hinder them in reaching their goals.

Learners' abilities and goals are always changing, just like the technologies that they use to practice language. As new technologies emerge or evolve to meet learners' goals, it is important to recognize their potential. Learners who are aware of their abilities and goals should always be thinking about how new technologies may better help them improve their language abilities or offer them better ways to engage in language practice. GenAI can be a help or a hinderance, so it is important to help learners be aware of and identify the difference.

Reflection: How do you help learners recognize the potential of new technologies?

- ☐ I demonstrate how digital tools can support comprehension, production, and interaction in ways that promote language learning and how the same tools can be misused to impede learning.
- ☐ I encourage learners to explore and reflect on digital tools that may help them achieve their language learning goals.
- ☐ I ask learners to think carefully about how GenAI can help or hinder them in achieving their goals.

Standard 6 is about communicating with learners and supporting their progress.

Use technology to support, monitor, and assess learner progress.

***See Vignettes** 2: Task-based Experiential Learning*

4: The "Think Aloud" Method: Technology-assisted Language Skills Enhancement

5: A Bridge to Digital Skills

6: Blended Instruction for Learners at Emerging Levels of Literacy

PI 6.1. Demonstrate knowledge of available technology resources to support learners.

Be familiar with commonly available technology resources that support language learning. The internet is a wealth of resources that can help learners in all aspects of their language development. For example, if learners need to improve pronunciation, they can use websites which offer them extensive examples of authentic English pronunciation in context from videos across YouTube. In this example, we should also be able to guide learners toward technologies they can use to record themselves to reflect on their pronunciation improvement. Encourage learners to explore resources available through Avenue as well as other online resources. Share resources with learners and engage in dialogue with them about potential technology-enhanced resources. GenAI can provide useful formative feedback, especially on writing. Be aware of the benefits and risks in using AI for assessment, including threats to learner privacy. Summative assessment is of particular concern. We know our students; AI tools do not.

Reflection: How familiar are you with the various resources available through Avenue? How familiar are you with other online resources?

- ☐ I am aware of available technology-enhanced resources to support learners, including GenAI.
- ☐ I guide learners toward helpful technology-enhanced resources.
- ☐ I encourage learners to explore potential technology-enhanced resources.
- ☐ I am aware of possibilities and risks in using GenAI or other forms of AI for summative assessment.

PI 6.2. Maintain digital communication with learners and education stakeholders about learner progress.

> Use technology to communicate with learners and others who have an interest in the learner's development. This may involve regular participation in a web forum or email exchange. Establishing open channels of communication is an obvious and easy way to demonstrate your personal commitment to a learner's improvement and to welcome feedback and reflection in a supportive manner. Maintaining these means of communication can empower learners to seek additional guidance.

Reflection: How do you communicate with learners about their ongoing development?

- ☐ I use technology regularly to communicate with learners and support their progress.
- ☐ I use technology to communicate with education stakeholders as needed.

PI 6.3. Understand and use data analysis where available and appropriate to guide learner progress.

> As learners use technology, we can gather data about their practices, success, and challenges. Digital portfolio data, for example, can help us better understand how learners approach tasks as well as what they are able to do. Use this data to design future tasks and experiences that are ideal for each individual learner as well as to design and implement varied formative and summative assessments. Assess learners in many different ways throughout the learning process knowing that there is much to gain from introducing a variety of different practices at different stages of learning. Help learners better understand their own strengths and weaknesses as well as develop a better sense of how and why they may be assessed in different ways.

Reflection: How do you use learner data? How can you use this data differently for different learner needs?

- ☐ I understand the potential of learner data, such as digital portfolios, to guide learner progress.
- ☐ I use relevant data collection tools to monitor and guide learner progress.

PI 6.4. Provide technology enhanced feedback that is varied and focused on learners' short- and long-term needs.

Feedback can be presented in multimodal ways, including text, audio and video recordings, or screencasts. Feedback can be a challenging issue for many language instructors and learners. For example, we may prioritize feedback so that the most obvious or frequent errors are highlighted while less significant errors are not. Sometimes it may be best to focus on errors that are most likely to be improved in the short term while more long-term issues will be addressed in the future. These practices can benefit from engaging in ongoing dialogue with learners about their performance and helping them recognize ways that technology can be used to improve how they interact with feedback. Providing different forms of feedback at different points in the learning process can make it more useful for learners.

Current GenAI tools can provide formative assessment, and some keep track of learner progress in order to customize suggestions. Although useful, this can be a risk to learner privacy. With appropriate prompting, GenAI can also comment on content. Again, instructors and programs should explore ways to limit data collection. Much of what GenAI does now, however, focuses on surface-level feedback rather than assessing holistically. Even with AI-generated holistic assessment, the learner does not necessarily know where a score from an AI app came from.

Reflection: How do you present formative feedback to learners? How does it vary in response to learners' needs?

- ☐ I provide learners with useful and relevant technology-enhanced feedback to support their needs.
- ☐ I use different types of technology-enhanced feedback when interacting with learners.
- ☐ I am aware of the limitations in feedback from different AI tools.
- ☐ I recognize that feedback should address both learners' short-term and long-term needs.

PI 6.5. Use technology to enable learner reflection, self-evaluation, and peer-evaluation.

Guide learners to technology resources and tools that enable reflection and evaluation, while protecting privacy. Learners can use technologies like Big Blue Button to record themselves speaking to one another and then listening in order to identify aspects of their own speech, as well as peers' speech, that can be improved. Rubrics with common speech characteristics can help learners to critically engage in such practices. Help learners contribute to and use digital portfolios that demonstrate their actual language abilities in context and engage them in ongoing dialogue about the benefits of reflection and evaluation.

Reflection: Are your learners capable of peer and self-evaluation? How do you promote this?

- ☐ I show learners how to use technology to help them reflect on their work.
- ☐ I encourage learners to use technology such as digital portfolios for self-evaluation.
- ☐ I enable learner peer-evaluation through technology.

Standard 7 is about establishing and maintaining professional connections online.

Use technology to connect with peers in a community of practice for pedagogical and personal support.

See Vignettes* *1: The Initial Challenge of Adopting CALL Technology

8: Providing Support to ESL Teachers New to Online Instruction

PI 7.1. Acknowledge that a professional online community forms a structure that facilitates learning through interactions and relationships with others.

Sometimes a lesson plan that had gone so well in the past didn't go as well the next time. Improve your practice by sharing such experiences with colleagues and considering new strategies that have worked for others. Make use of professional learning networks like LinkedIn and Facebook groups to share and learn. Interacting with likeminded colleagues helps build professional relationships that will strengthen practices over the years. There are many online communities that are safe to share your thoughts, ask for advice and get feedback. As an example, talk with colleagues at work about a lesson that didn't go as planned or share the frustration you experienced during a class session.

Reflection: Think about an online community in which you take part and have established relationships with colleagues. How has this impacted you as a person and as a professional?

- ☐ I participate in online communities of practice that share tools and resources for teaching and learning.
- ☐ I seek online input and feedback from colleagues when I need support and advice.

PI 7.2. Engage in meaningful online collaboration with your colleagues to create authentic learning experiences.

We all know how much time goes into preparing materials or brushing up on old skills. Sometimes we spend hours learning a new skill on our own only to find out that there were easier ways to learn the same thing. Getting together with colleagues to develop an activity or a lesson, or simply brainstorming an idea can be a fun and enriching experience. It is much quicker for a colleague to show you how a new app, function, or shortcut works. Discussing why a lesson that was recommended by a colleague didn't work for your class can lead to a practical and meaningful alternative. Taking a deeper dive into mindful conversations about your teaching augments learning experiences and helps build confidence. The newness and rapid changes in AI make the use of AI a good topic for online collaboration.

Reflection: How has working with a colleague helped you create better resources?

- ☐ I find materials to use and adapt for my class that others have shared on online platforms.
- ☐ I collaborate with colleagues online to create or adapt resources for authentic learning experiences.
- ☐ I regularly exchange ideas with colleagues on how to use AI tools better for teaching and learning.

PI 7.3. Share online practices, resources, and research with peers.

It takes courage to respond to a comment or to share an opinion, a research article, or an activity in an online community such as an Avenue forum. Whether we think that our opinions may not be worth sharing or it is just easier to keep them to ourselves, it is important to be comfortable expressing them in a respectful and responsible manner. You'd be surprised how many others share your triumphs and tribulations, appreciate your thoughts, and can offer practical strategies that you can adapt to your own context.

Reflection: How did discussing a research article that you found interesting with a colleague enrich your learning?

- ☐ I share relevant online practices and resources with colleagues.
- ☐ I share thoughts and reflections about webinars and online presentations with colleagues as well as on online platforms.
- ☐ I review online publications such as *TESL Canada Journal* and provincial publications such as *Contact*, sharing the articles that I find interesting with colleagues.

PI 7.4. Take advantage of practice-focused online professional development opportunities.

Many professional development opportunities exist at the local and provincial level. Understanding the importance of the professional community in advancing teaching methods can help shape effective teaching practices. Most workplaces offer paid professional development days. This is especially important in the era of GenAI, where instructors need to learn about major changes in available tools. Some TESL affiliate conferences are government sponsored and open to instructors free of charge. Workshops offered locally at your institution or in your region may be more targeted to your community needs and are either affordable or free. Take advantage of these opportunities to attend practice-focused sessions. Attend plenary or panel sessions to learn about new research, policies, and practices. Bring back and apply what you learned in your classroom and see if it made a difference. If you are ready to take it a step further, present at your local or provincial conference. If this is your first time, try co-presenting with another colleague to hone your skills and gain confidence.

Reflection: How did activities and other practices that you learned and incorporated in your class after attending a professional development event affect your teaching?

- ☐ I regularly take advantage of relevant online professional development opportunities.
- ☐ I use some of the resources and practices from online professional development sessions in

APPENDIX A: SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

This tool can be used as a self-assessment to identify your technology strengths and gaps.

Standard 1. Understand and use personal and institutional devices, device system settings, and networks to support quality technology-enhanced language teaching and learning.

PI 1.1. Be comfortable with technology in your settings: home, institutional, and mobile.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I am comfortable using my own devices on a daily basis and do not normally have to rely on others to help.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I am proficient with at least one web browser (Chrome, Safari, Firefox, etc.) that I use regularly for connecting to websites.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I am proficient with at least one search engine (Google, Bing, etc.) that I use regularly to locate information on the web.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know how to install and delete apps on my devices.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 1.2. Understand the primary features of the systems on devices you use and how to change them as needed.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I know how to operate the basic device controls, such as adjusting the display, adjusting the sound, and making wi-fi, data, and Bluetooth connections	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know how to locate the system settings menu on the devices I use for teaching and understand what the categories in that menu refer to.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know how to check to see if my system is up to date and update it as needed.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I have noticed announcements about AI elements when I upgrade the system on my devices..	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 1.3. Be familiar with the vocabulary that describes the technology devices and systems you use.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I understand most of the terms related to my devices that other instructors, learners, and tech support use.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know how to find definitions for relevant terms I am not familiar with.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 1.4. Know how to organize applications and files (documents, spreadsheets, photos, etc.) so that they are easy to locate when needed.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I am satisfied with how my files and apps are arranged.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know how to use the search function to find my files on my device and in the cloud.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 1.5. Know how to look up information about your devices, systems, and networks.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I know how to use the help feature on my device to get information.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know how to search online for information about how to use my device.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know how to find useful videos to show me how to do things I want to with my device.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 1.6. Be able to perform basic troubleshooting/problem-solving for devices and systems.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I recognize that some problems can be fixed simply by restarting the device having issues.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I have experience looking up solutions online to problems that arise and recognizing when I need to seek help from others.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I keep track of problems I have had with my device or network and how they were fixed so that I can help myself and others in the future.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

Standard 2. Understand and use a basic set of relevant technology resources and tools for language teaching and continue to update and expand this set regularly.

PI 2.1. Recognize that tools and resources can not only enhance but also diminish learning effectiveness depending on how they are used.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I am aware that technology, including AI, may diminish learning effectiveness.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I ask learners about their technology use for language learning to ensure that it is as accessible, convenient, and effective as possible	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I focus on learner goals, objectives, and outcomes rather than the use of a particular technology.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 2.2. Know how to use foundational tools for content creation and communication, especially those included by default with most devices.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I am aware of the content creation tools, such as word-processors, and communication tools, such as email, available on my devices.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I try out functions in these tools to better understand them.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know about some AI elements in content creation and communication tools that I use.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 2.3. Be able to perform basic troubleshooting/problem-solving for the tools you use.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I know how to adjust the settings of the tools I use for language teaching.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I am aware that browsers and apps may behave differently on different devices.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I try to solve problems that I encounter with language teaching tools by myself before I seek assistance from others.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 2.4. Teach language with and through technology across a range of online, in person, and blended modes, recognizing the differences in effective practice for each.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I am aware that there are various ways to communicate with learners and use different forms of communication as needed.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I try out different ways of using technology when teaching in different modes	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I model effective technology communication practices for learners in different modes.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 2.5. Use Avenue or another learning management system if feasible to set up and manage an online or blended course.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I am aware of different functions in the LMS and how they may be used for online and blended lessons.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know how to set up online courses, including selecting appropriate content for my course.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know how to manage online and blended courses, such as monitoring student progress.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 2.6. Evaluate technology tools and applications for their potential.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I am aware that technology tools do not always fit well with teacher approach and learner needs.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know how to evaluate the learner fit of technology tools and applications.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I try out technology tools to determine if they will provide a better fit than the tools I am already familiar with.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 2.7. Seek to adapt tools and resources to meet teaching and learning needs.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I know where to learn about new tools and resources for teaching and learning.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I understand how to adapt new tools and resources to address my learners' needs.	☐	☐	☐

PI 2.8. Carefully consider and implement AI and GenAI tools.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I am aware that GenAI tools can be helpful for designing and delivering instruction and that they need to be used cautiously.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I try out new GenAI tools to determine how they may be used in my courses.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I ask my learners which GenAI tools they are using and how they may be beneficial	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

Standard 3. Thoughtfully integrate technology in your teaching, informed by exemplary practice and relevant theory and research.

PI 3.1. Seek out and make use of sources of exemplary practice.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I look for exemplary practices related to technology use from peers or in online sources, including Avenue.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I incorporate exemplary practices related to technology use that I have learned online or from others into my classes.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 3.2. Stay abreast of current theory and research related to technology use.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I pay attention to what is happening with technology use in teaching (including GenAI) by reading articles, watching videos, going to webinars and conference sessions, and/or hearing from others with expertise.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I learn about relevant theory and research related to technology.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I think about how I might apply the theory and research I've learned about to my teaching, or why it's not a good fit.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 3.3. Create technology-enhanced learning environments that provide multiple types of media and modes for learning.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I use a variety of media when I'm presenting information to my learners.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I know about adaptive technology for learners with visible or hidden disabilities, and I am proactive in designing digital material to address disabilities.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I have learners work individually, in pairs, and in groups at different times when using technology.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 3.4. Use technology-enhanced active learning and task-based approaches that incorporate authentic learner experiences.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I think about my learners' contexts when creating technology-enhanced or online activities.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I have learners incorporate their own lives and contexts in online or technology-enhanced task-based activities.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I create technology-enhanced activities that encourage learners to get out of the classroom and gain or use real-world experience.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 3.5. Use technology tasks to build creativity, reflection, and community.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I encourage learners to use technology in creative and collaborative tasks.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I guide learners in reflecting on their choices about how they learn with technology.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I ensure that everyone feels welcome and included, especially in fully online classes.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 3.6. Identify, adapt, and create effective prompts for GenAI.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I know where to find information about creating prompts or using a prompt-generating app for teaching purposes.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I adapt prompts created by someone else or an app to better fit my context.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I create effective prompts by providing the role for GenAI, context (type of learner/setting), topic, format, and learner proficiency level or use a prompt-generating app to do so.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

Standard 4. Be aware of and model the use of technology in safe, legal, ethical, and equitable ways.

PI 4.1. Guide learners to make positive and socially responsible contributions online.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I help learners understand how to be respectful and collaborative in synchronous or asynchronous online sessions.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I encourage my learners – especially those who are quiet – to actively participate online.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I revisit recurring issues that my learners experience to ensure that an online interaction feels as comfortable as an in-person one.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 4.2. Know how to access and select safe resources online and share this knowledge with learners.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I encourage learners to turn Safe Search on and enable virus and spam detectors.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I show and discuss types of false and fraudulent online information with my learners.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I encourage learners to think about the personal information they are sharing and how it might be used.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 4.3. Acknowledge learners' ownership of their online work.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I explain to learners that the author of any work owns and holds copyright to their work, which means that learners hold copyright on their own work.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I model crediting my learners and others for their contributions.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I ask permission from my learners before sharing their work with colleagues and in presentations.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 4.4. Learn about ethical use of technology and follow local, provincial, and national online privacy, copyright, and fair dealing laws and regulations.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I understand the risks to learner privacy and take care to protect learner information online.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I stay abreast of the relevant local, provincial, and federal laws and regulations related to privacy and copyright and follow them.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 4.5. Stay abreast of legal and ethical issues related to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I understand that GenAI and other forms of AI are constantly evolving and expanding into more areas, embedded into more apps, and will continue to present new opportunities and risks.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I pay attention to legal and ethical issues in GenAI that could affect me and my learners, such as privacy, false information and images, and easy generation of essays, reports, and images.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I provide clear guidelines to learners about how they should and should not use GenAI in class work.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I explain to learners how, when, and why I use AI.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I incorporate artificial intelligence as a topic in my planning to address its safe use and copyright and privacy issues.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 4.6. Model equitable practices by incorporating learners' wealth of linguistic and cultural resources in technology use.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I incorporate learners' backgrounds and cultures in my planning for technology-enhanced discussions and activities whenever possible.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I create technology-enhanced activities where all learners benefit from sharing languages and cultures with others.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 4.7. Model online behaviors that show respect for diversity in opinion, identity, and cultural practices.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I recognize the diverse backgrounds and identities of my learners and ensure that everyone feels welcome and included, especially in fully online classes.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I model ways that different or opposing views can be discussed respectfully online.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I use the comments and replies posted by my learners to plan lessons on how to address issues related to inclusive, respectful, and responsible communication.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

Standard 5. Use technology thoughtfully to identify and address current and future needs of learners in ways that reflect diverse identities and contexts.

PI 5.1. Be aware of the technology used by your learners and the contexts in which they use it.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I ask about and observe the devices and tools my learners use and how they use them, leveraging that familiarity for language learning purposes.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I encourage learners to make creative use of the tools they know to support their learning goals.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I help learners connect new tools and tasks to familiar ones to minimize confusion and frustration.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 5.2. Be aware of and cultivate learners' individual communicative and digital competencies.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I take steps to become aware of individual differences in my learners' overall communicative and digital skills and knowledge.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I make an effort to ensure that learners have the digital and communicative competence they need for a given technology-mediated task through training, connecting them with institutional or peer support, or offering alternatives that they can meet.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I am familiar with the Avenue Learner Standards for TELL and help learners become aware of them and make progress toward meeting them.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 5.3. Leverage technology to design personalized learner-centered experiences.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I am aware of my learners' interests, abilities, and needs so that I can adjust technology-enhanced assignments and tasks to better fit them.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I use technology tools and resources to personalize learning experiences to make them a better fit for individual learners.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I take into account individual student identities when designing learner-centered experiences.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 5.4. Promote learner autonomy through technology-enhanced collaborative practices.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I provide experiences to support developing learner autonomy, including training and monitoring rather than simply leaving them on their own in technology-mediated tasks.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I provide opportunities for learners to discuss their individual and collaborative learning experiences online.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I encourage learners to share their individual identities and experiences when contributing to group work with technology.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 5.5. Prepare learners to think about ways that unfamiliar technologies might help or hinder them in reaching their goals.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I demonstrate how digital tools can support comprehension, content creation, and interaction in ways that promote language learning and how the same tools can be misused to impede learning.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I encourage learners to explore and reflect on digital tools that may help them achieve their language learning goals.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I ask learners to think carefully about how AI can help or hinder them in achieving their goals.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

Standard 6. Use technology to support, monitor, and assess learner progress.

PI 6.1. Demonstrate knowledge of available technology resources to support learners.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I am aware of available technology-enhanced resources to support learners, including GenAI.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I guide learners toward helpful technology-enhanced resources.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I encourage learners to explore potential technology-enhanced resources.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I am aware of possibilities and risks in using AI for summative assessment.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 6.2. Maintain digital communication with learners and education stakeholders about learner progress.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I use technology regularly to communicate with learners and support their progress.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I use technology to communicate with education stakeholders as needed.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 6.3. Understand and use data analysis where available and appropriate to guide learner progress.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I understand the potential of learner data, such as digital portfolios, to guide learner progress.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I use relevant data collection tools to monitor and guide learner progress.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 6.4. Provide technology enhanced feedback that is varied and focused on learners' short- and long-term needs.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I provide learners with useful and relevant technology-enhanced feedback to support their needs.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I use different types of technology-enhanced feedback when interacting with learners.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I am aware of the limitations in feedback from different AI tools.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I recognize that feedback should address both learners' short-term and long-term needs.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 6.5. Use technology to enable learner reflection, self-evaluation, and peer-evaluation.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I show learners how to use technology to help them reflect on their work.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I encourage learners to use technology such as digital portfolios for self-evaluation.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I enable learner peer-evaluation through technology.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

Standard 7. Use technology to connect with peers in a community of practice for pedagogical and personal support.

PI 7.1. Acknowledge that a professional online community forms a structure that facilitates learning through interactions and relationships with others.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I participate in online communities of practice that share tools and resources for teaching and learning.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I seek online input and feedback from colleagues when I need support and advice.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 7.2. Engage in meaningful online collaboration with your colleagues to create authentic learning experiences.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I find materials to use and adapt for my class that others have shared on online platforms.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I collaborate with colleagues online to create or adapt resources for authentic learning experiences.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I regularly exchange ideas with colleagues on how to use AI tools better for teaching and learning.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 7.3. Share online practices, resources, and research with peers.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I share relevant online practices and resources with colleagues.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I share thoughts and reflections about webinars and online presentations with colleagues as well as on online platforms.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I review online publications such as *TESL Canada Journal* and provincial publications such as *Contact*, sharing the articles that I find interesting with colleagues.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

PI 7.4. Take advantage of practice-focused online professional development opportunities.

	Fully meets or exceeds expectations	Making progress	Does not yet meet expectations
I regularly take advantage of relevant online professional development opportunities.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			
I use some of the resources and practices from online professional development sessions in my teaching.	☐	☐	☐
Explain:			

APPENDIX B: VIGNETTES

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VIGNETTE 1: BONNIE NICHOLAS
THE INITIAL CHALLENGE OF ADOPTING CALL TECHNOLOGY

Précis

The Idea

Bonnie Nicholas, currently a New Language Solutions technology adoption mentor for TESOL instructors, returned to university at age 50 to pursue a Master's degree in TESOL at the University of Alberta. Motivated in part by an interest in social justice issues, Bonnie was impressed with Canada's way of offering language training free to newcomers as a way to help them settle successfully in Canada. What Bonnie didn't know when she enrolled was that TESOL was rapidly entering the brave new world of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The steep learning curve that Bonnie experienced convinced her of the need for technology-savvy mentors to assist new *instructors* in making effective use of CALL technologies for teaching and to help *newcomers* use technology to enhance their language learning experience.

The Learners

The learners Bonnie has helped throughout her career are divided into two groups. The TESOL *instructors* she assists often have an undergraduate degree, may already have years of classroom teaching experience, and are highly motivated to succeed in their TESOL studies and career. Typically, they are lifelong residents of Canada, ranging in age from their mid-20s to early 40s. What they lack is familiarity with current-generation educational technologies that can be employed in a blended learning approach to instruction. Language learners often share some of the same characteristics – strong motivation to succeed but limited familiarity with learning technology. In Bonnie's case, these learners have been newcomers to Canada at CLB levels 3-8. Typically, a class of 20 students includes males and females, the ratio differing from class to class. Student age varies widely, with the majority aged 20 to 45.

The Approach

Teaching instructors and students to use CALL technologies is highly individualized and often ongoing. Studies might begin with the definition of unfamiliar terms and familiarization with basic computer and software capabilities. Step by step, learners are introduced to CALL technologies such as learning platforms supported by a learning management system (LMS), facilitated online learning (i.e., virtual classrooms), webinars, on-demand tutorials, search engines, social media support for online chat sessions, assistive devices in the classroom (e.g., interactive whiteboards), and, increasingly, AI-powered chatbots such as ChatGPT – to name but a few. As learning technology continues to advance, it's especially important for instructors to take time to keep up with developments. Mentorship is particularly important in developing digital skills by cultivating a community of people who can all contribute something and support one another. technology-assisted learning.

Interested in Learning More?

Instructor Profile **Context** **In Bonnie's Own Words** **Application of Technology Standards**

Instructor Profile:

From the time she was a child, Bonnie wanted to be a teacher. However, it took a long time to realize that dream. Fresh out of high school – in the pre-personal computer era – Bonnie embarked on a BA (Honours) in English literature. After marrying and beginning a family, financial necessity led her to take a variety of jobs, including bookstore manager, healthcare aide, and office manager of a private surgical centre. In 2007, at age 50, Bonnie was finally able to return to school to pursue a Master's degree in TESOL at the University of Alberta. What followed were 13 fulfilling years as a full-time instructor at Edmonton's NorQuest College, where she taught English for Speakers of Other Languages – specifically LINC – at CLB levels from 3 to 8.

In May 2023, Bonnie retired from full-time work at NorQuest. Today, she works with New Language Solutions (NLS) as a technology-adoption mentor for TESOL instructors.

Context:

Technology adoption is often a significant challenge for TESOL instructors and their students.

Many instructors entering TESOL programs have had limited exposure to computer-assisted language learning (CALL) technologies before enrolling. Within an already demanding TESOL curriculum, coming to grips with CALL hardware, software, and teaching approaches presents a particularly demanding challenge.

Students in the LINC program are usually dealing with daunting challenges of their own such as understanding a new culture, finding work, searching for accommodation, accessing services, raising a family, and learning a new language. The need to learn how to use unfamiliar learning technologies adds yet another hill to climb.

For new instructors and language learners alike, being able to look to others for advice, suggested resources, and problem-solving strategies can make the climb so much easier.

Today, Bonnie is often asked to help others use technology to enhance their language teaching. However, when she left a career in healthcare in 2007 to begin a Master's program in TESOL, Bonnie had only the most limited understanding of computers and computing. She struggled so much with the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) course she took during her first year that she briefly considered dropping out of the program. However, Bonnie persevered, earned her degree, and has continued learning about and applying CALL technologies ever since. The experience of going back to school and facing a steep technology-learning curve has given Bonnie an appreciation for the circumstances faced by many of the people she teaches.

In Bonnie's Own Words

In 2007, at age 50, I was at last in a position to return to school to pursue a Master's degree in TESOL at the University of Alberta. Part of my motivation was an interest in social justice issues. Canada is unique in the way we welcome newcomers. We offer language training free to the newcomer because we want them to settle successfully in Canada. We want newcomers to feel that Canada is their home. That philosophy really appealed to me.

From Elmer's Glue to CALL Empresario

Returning to school turned out to be a bigger challenge than I was expecting. I was looking for a framework of educational theory and methodology to help me move forward in my new career. The requirement to learn how to use educational technologies was a surprise. I had used computers for simple tasks such as word processing, but I had never, for instance, made a PowerPoint presentation. It was all new to me. Software was a mystery. I didn't know about the Internet or Internet service providers, and Google was just a funny word. In my undergraduate studies, I remember using scissors to cut excerpts from my typewritten pages and paste them using Elmer's glue as a means of editing essay drafts.

The Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) course I took in my first year of the Master's program was a revelation – and nearly the end of my TESOL career – because there was so much to learn, and I had so little basic understanding. At times, it seemed beyond my capabilities. Even the language presented barriers. Words like software, hardware, upload, download, hover, scroll, window – and so many others – had new meanings in the context of digital technology. This is a problem shared by new language instructors and learners alike.

Overcoming my fear of making a mistake and messing things up was important for me as a learner. It was a big AHA! moment for me when I realized that the computer wasn't going to explode if I made a mistake. Eventually, I was intrigued rather than intimidated by the potential of computer-assisted language learning. Today, it is a source of amazement to me that I am viewed as an expert in educational technology use. As language instructors, I think a big part of our job is allaying those fears. It's important to tell learners that technology is a tool, something they can use in whatever way works. We hope to open our students' minds to possibilities without ever demanding that they seize those possibilities immediately.

Bonnie's Drop-in Hour

A lesson I now like to share with others facing the technology barrier is: PERSEVERE. Don't give up. Keep trying. You will sometimes fail, but with time and commitment, it will become doable. I have so much sympathy for people who say, "I will never be able to do this." I can reassure them that, having been there, they will be able to do it. That's one of the reasons I so much enjoy being a mentor for New Language Solutions. Knowing how difficult it can be for newcomers to master educational technologies, it's important for us to teach with compassion and be as flexible as we can with students who are trying their best but face almost insurmountable challenges.

How important is mentorship in developing digital skills? It's essential. Having a mentor when I returned to school would have saved me so much time and frustration. Mentorship isn't just about a one-on-one relationship. It's about cultivating a community of people who can all contribute something and support one another. The more we can rely on each other, the better it is, not just for our own workload and mental health as teachers but for our students, who benefit from better learning experiences.

As a mentor to my students, one of the things I have employed successfully is to reserve an hour every day to attend an online chat session using Blackboard Collaborate. I called it Bonnie's Drop-in Hour. I would go into a private room with each student who wanted to speak with me to talk, perhaps explain some grammar points, give them help with their

work, or show them how to use some unfamiliar software. Anything they needed, I would try to help. Students who might have been reluctant to ask a question in front of the whole class were often the ones to use the Drop-in Hour to reach out.

Resources for Life-long Learning

These days, there are so many ways to find answers – especially from Google, YouTube, Twitter, and other social media. If you're having a problem, chances are that others have had the same problem and have shared the solutions they found. Of course, this raises the issue of content curation. Students need to learn critical thinking – how to analyze things to determine what makes sense among the many opinions or solutions proposed. Content curation is also about determining what is relevant in your situation. These are topics that I raise at higher CLB levels - usually beginning around levels 5 or 6.

There are also many opportunities for informal professional development, both face-to-face and online. Since COVID, the availability of development opportunities online has increased dramatically. For instance, there are many free webinars. Contact North in Ontario is fabulous. LearnIT2teach has first-rate webinars, as does TESOL International. These are just a few of the many online resources available.

The New Normal

In years past, the "normal" for language training was face-to-face classroom instruction. As new technologies became available, "normal" expanded to include access to online studies that often existed in isolation from what happened in the classroom. In recent years, the paradigm has shifted to blended learning. In 2014, I stumbled upon a website called WizIQ, which operated in somewhat the same way as Zoom. NorQuest College used it to create its very first blended classroom and online course. They haven't looked back.

A particular challenge for LINC teachers is finding the right blend – integrating online components with whatever face-to-face approach they adopt to enrich the learning experience. In doing that, it's important to create one class, not online studies and resources that exist in isolation from what happens in a face-to-face class. Blending learning components in this way greatly enriches the learning experience.

A Final Word

CALL technology has proven to be a valuable tool for TESOL teachers as a means of enhanced engagement, personalized learning, increased practice opportunities, and greater flexibility and convenience.

However, it's essential to use CALL judiciously and integrate it effectively into the curriculum. As teachers, we have a responsibility to be aware of the potential drawbacks, such as overreliance on technology, accessibility issues for some students, and choosing relevant material from the wealth of resources available. Balancing traditional teaching and learning methods with technology can lead to remarkable outcomes.

To that end, it is essential that language instructors and students become conversant with technology. At the outset, this requires determination in the face of an often-steep learning curve. In the longer run, it requires a commitment to stay current with constantly evolving language learning innovations. TESOL never stands still!

Technology Standards and Performance Indicators

Do Bonnie's early efforts to become competent in the use of CALL technologies – and later efforts to introduce such technologies to other instructors and in the classroom – demonstrate how New Language Solution's standards for technology-enhanced language teaching and learning can be incorporated into TESOL? According to the performance indicators highlighted below, two of the seven standards – and the standards' Guiding Philosophy – are strongly represented.

Guiding philosophy

It is notable that Bonnie's motivation for choosing a TESOL career, her approach to developing CALL skills, and the understanding of learning technology pros and cons that she brings to teaching and mentoring are so much in accord with the Guiding Philosophy behind the Technology Standards for Settlement Language Instructors.

Guiding philosophy

Implement the Technology Standards by engaging constantly in thoughtful consideration, healthy skepticism, and reflective practice, balanced by a willingness to suspend judgment and persist in the face of initial frustration.

Enabling Strategies

Be curious	**Think about what might work; think about why it might not be a good choice.**	**Try it and think about what did and didn't work.**	**Give it more than one chance.**

Standard 1: Using devices and systems skillfully.

Standard 1 is about understanding and learning to use personal and institutional devices, operating systems, and networks to support quality technology-enhanced language teaching and learning.

- When Bonnie took her first CALL course, she faced a steep learning curve because the technologies, strategies, and vocabulary were new to her. To become comfortable with learning technology, she had to work her way from the ground up, eventually acquiring enough knowledge to teach and mentor others. Overcoming her fear of making mistakes and "messing things up" was an early barrier that, when overcome, cleared the way to fascination with the potential of technology to deliver more effective instruction and learning.

- Lacking access to a mentor during her early CALL studies, Bonnie became adept at finding information online about devices, systems, and emerging technologies. The experience convinced her that strong research skills are important, but mentorship is even more so as a means not only of finding answers to urgent questions, but also of creating a sense of community and mutual support.

Standard 2: Tools and digital resources.

Standard 2 adds understanding of a basic set of relevant technology resources and tools for language teaching, learning to use them, and continuing to update and expand this set regularly.

- Bonnie's experience as a TESOL instructor has given her an appreciation of the balance that has to be struck between technology-assisted and conventional teaching approaches. The key is to find a blend of the two approaches that enriches the learning experience. As Bonnie remarks, it's important to create one class, not online studies and resources that exist in isolation from what happens in a face-to-face class. Blending learning components in this way greatly enriches the learning experience.

- Inevitably, instructors employing learning technologies will run into technical problems that require basic troubleshooting/problem-solving skills. In the absence of a mentor, Bonnie's go-to strategy has been to "ask" Google, YouTube, Twitter, and other social media for help. If you're having a problem, chances are that others have had the same problem and have shared the solutions they found.

VIGNETTE 2: PAUL CARTER
TASK-BASED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Précis

The Idea

When Paul Carter began developing his lesson plans for a class of CLB 5-7 learners in fall 2015, he took special note of the *Home and Community* curriculum unit outlined in the LINC activity guide. Aware that many newcomers end up in "first language bubbles" they are reticent to leave, the Home and Community theme offered a way to get students out of the classroom to learn about community groups, services, and activities. To make further use of their language skills, the students could share what they had learned with each other and with other classes verbally and in print. Thus was born the idea of a Community Fair. After three weeks of preparation, two- and three-person student teams, each "representing" an organization they had researched, presented their findings at display tables in their home classroom to more than 200 enthusiastic visitors.

The Learners

Paul's students were newcomers to Canada at CLB levels 5-7 – students who had already acquired intermediate English language proficiency. The class of 25 students, made up of 10 men and 15 women, were urban dwellers attending an Immigrant Services Society (ISS) of BC school located on Terminal Avenue in East Vancouver. The students ranged in age from their early 20s to mid-40s, with one man in his early 70s. Most were from Asia, specifically China, Japan, and Vietnam, with others from Mexico, Chechnya, Iran, and Nigeria. The students generally had a high level of digital skills. The oldest student at first had difficulty navigating online but, after spending time in the weekly computer lab and receiving generous help from fellow students, acquired the skills he needed to participate in online preparations for the Community Fair.

The Approach

The course in which the Community Fair took place was presented in a blended learning format that included approximately twelve hours weekly of face-to-face classroom time and three hours of digital skills learning and English practice in a language lab equipped with desktop computers. In keeping with prescribed Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs) for the students' stage of development, the objective of the Community Fair assignment was to have students demonstrate speaking and writing competencies and document them in their ePortfolios. The speaking competency was demonstrated by interviewing representatives of a community organization, sharing the information with fellow students, and recording a self-assessment feedback session on video. The writing competency was demonstrated by preparing a printed information sheet distributed at the Fair. In preparing for the Fair, students enhanced their online research skills, made use of resources posted to the Avenue eLearning platform, and learned how to use new apps, for instance the Moodle Choice activity which allows users to make selections from multiple possible responses.

Interested in Learning More?

Instructor Profile **Context** **In Paul's Own Words** **Application of Technology Standards**

Instructor Profile:

Paul Carter's career as an ESL instructor and online resource developer began soon after graduating from the University of Winnipeg with a B.A. in English. After dreams of being a professional musician ("I wanted to be Leonard Cohen") didn't pan out, he enrolled in a Teaching English as a Second Language course offered by the University of Manitoba School of Continuing Education. Following a successful practicum at the conclusion of the course, he was recruited by the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS of BC) in 2008 to teach LINC classes at what would eventually include all CLB levels. During the 9 years he spent with ISS of BC, Paul was also active in finding ways to harness technology to improve language learning. Beginning in 2010, he and several colleagues participated in a pilot project using Moodle to create an in-house learning management system (LMS), develop some early online courses, introduce online Portfolio-based Language Assessment (PBLA), and pioneer the delivery of blended learning instruction to ISS of BC students. In Paul's words: "I tried to leverage the learning management system to support language learning as much as I could. I thought at the time "This could really take off" – and it did!"

Today, Paul works as a New Language Solutions/LearnIT2Teach mentor, and builds interactive LINC course activities for Avenue and related platforms.

Context:

For many good reasons, newcomers to Canada often gravitate towards communities where sizeable numbers of people from their home country already reside. Moving to a new country can be daunting. Settling in a community where people share their language, culture, and traditions offers newcomers much-needed comfort and support. The downside to seeking this familiarity is that newcomers may find themselves in a "bubble" where they communicate, work, socialize, and access

services primarily in their first language. This can limit exposure to their new country's predominant language – and to organizations, activities and support services in the wider community that could benefit them. For Paul Carter, a Community Fair that required students to venture into the community, use their English language skills to make new contacts, and share their experience with other ESL learners was a great way to help his students move beyond the bubble.

Context:

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In Paul's Own Words

The Community Fair exercise was probably the most successful task-based classroom project in which I was involved.

The idea came from the *Home and Community* curriculum unit outlined in the LINC 5-8 activity books used in the mid 2010's. The unit offered an opportunity get students out of the classroom and into the community, then bring what they had learned back to the school to share with other students.

The assignment I developed would take approximately three weeks to complete. To show what I had in mind, I created an example based on a community organization I knew – the Swim Club at the local community center. I prepared a sample information sheet, set up a mock exhibit table, and demonstrated the kind of language that students would use to tell classmates about the organization they would eventually choose. The sample information sheet was placed on the Avenue learning management system for access as needed. In previous units, we had worked on topics such as online research, presentation skills, and writing correspondence, so we were able to recycle that learning. I was confident that the class would be able to apply skills from past lessons to the new assignment.

The exercise began with a couple of preparation classes in which students paired up, identified a community group or business they would like to represent, did some online research, sent a letter or email to the organization explaining what they wanted to do, then made arrangements to meet face-to-face with one or more representatives of the organization. For the most part, learners chose their own partners. However, in a few cases, I paired a student who needed technical help with someone who was tech-savvy, or a shy student with someone who was outgoing, kind, and giving.

Initially, there were a couple of students who didn't see the value in the exercise. I took them aside to talk about the value of getting involved in the community, learning and applying new communications skills, then reaping the rewards of being more connected with the community and more confident in communicating with new contacts. The enthusiasm of fellow students for the assignment was also persuasive.

During the three-week exercise – which took place about four months into the program – we began by taking the last 20 minutes of each class to plan and prepare. As we got closer to the event, we found ourselves devoting a quarter, then half, of each class to preparations. One group activity early on was using a SmartBoard connected to a laptop to design a poster advertising the Community Fair. Students gave their input on how the poster should look as I captured their ideas on the SmartBoard. We used language appropriate to CLB-3 students to make sure it would be accessible to most learners in the school.

Early in the week before the event, each student pair used one of our class periods for a self-guided field trip to meet face-to-face with representatives of the community group or business they had contacted. The students used the meeting to gather additional information about the organization and pick up items such as brochures and give-aways. The students came back glowing with excitement at how well it had gone, how welcoming their contacts were, and how successful their English had been. With that came an epiphany: I can do it! It's the kind of moment that sticks in your mind.

We then took two full days of class time during which students practiced how to introduce themselves, make small talk with visitors, explain the purpose and activities of the organization they represented, and answer follow-up questions. To simulate the event, we set up display tables and students took turns playing the roles of presenters and visitors.

Some 200 students from the school attended our Community Fair. Many of the visitors signed up for community programs and joined community groups as a result. They became Big Brothers and Big Sisters. They enrolled their kids in martial arts programs. They signed up for library programs. They gathered handouts about community services they had not previously known about. It became a community building exercise as much as a language learning exercise.

I facilitated the exercise, but the students lead the charge. I had envisioned that they would all have a table with a single-page information sheet. But, as things ended up, everyone's table was covered with things to take away. They made multiple-page English information sheets. Some tables raffled items such as T-shirts and mugs, requiring students to write their name and contact information on the ticket (building on the CLB writing competency). Everyone at the event was speaking English. There was lots of food and drink as well – food prepared at home by participants and drinks donated by a grocery store where one of our students worked. To avoid the possibility that everyone would bring sweets, I had set up a Choice activity in Moodle. After a short tutorial on how to use the activity, students were given a list of choices to select from, with a limit on how many students could choose any one item. That way, we got some carrots and broccoli in addition to cookies and pastries. Students found the idea of creating a custom activity for this purpose intriguing!

In the weeks following the Community Fair, I arranged a time for each student pair to tell me about their experience – the best part, the worst part, what they would do differently next time. Using the BigBlueButton video meeting platform, I video-recorded each self-assessment feedback session, then placed the video file in each team member's private ePortfolio as a permanent memory.

The number one thing I heard in the feedback was that the students felt empowered. A lot of them said "I didn't know I could do that!" I remember two students in particular, who had chosen to represent a library reading group. As a result of this experience, they said they began to realize that they could get people to join them in an activity or cause. Their reading group ballooned, which was a source of great pride for them.

Were there any downsides to the exercise? When we far exceeded our attendance expectations, things got very crowded in the classroom used as the venue. On the fly, we had to assign students to keep visitors moving along more quickly than they might have liked. When the next class arrived to

use the space, our after-event cleanup was still in progress. In hindsight, a bigger venue available for a bit more time would have been a better choice.

I also observed that, in some groups, one partner deferred to the other when it came to talking with visitors. I mark that down to different personalities. It would be better to assign each partner a role – perhaps one talking about the history of their organization, the other about how to get involved today, as a way to ensure more equal participation.

It was a really heady thing – task-based experiential learning at its best. I had wanted to see if the class could make it happen. They totally exceeded my expectations.

Technology Standards and Performance Indicators

Paul's Community Fair exercise for students at CLB levels 3, 4, and 5 demonstrated in a number of ways how NSL's standards for technology-enhanced language teaching and learning can be incorporated into ESL instruction.

Standard 2: Tools and digital resources.

- The exercise required students to make extensive use of digital skills they had learned earlier in their language studies, such as how to conduct online research, post and download artifacts from the Avenue.ca eLearning platform, reach out to others using email, and prepare illustrated documents using word-processing software.
- Within the framework of a 30-week LINC program, the three-week Community Fair exercise made use of in-person, online, and computer lab instructional modes, taking advantage of the strengths of each modality to deliver an effective blended learning experience.
- The Avenue.ca eLearning platform was used to make course documents, supplemental learning materials, publications, and a selected bibliography available to students. It was also used to archive artifacts for each student's ePortfolio.
- During the exercise, Paul introduced technologies that most students had not encountered before, such as the BigBlueButton video meeting platform, and the Moodle Choice activity used to create item selection lists.

Standard 4: Digital literacy and digital citizenship for yourself and your learners.

- An important dimension of the Community Fair exercise was ensuring that all class members had the technology skills to meet exercise objectives. For students who did not have the requisite digital skills, Paul modelled the practices in class, encouraged students who had strong digital skills to help those who did not, and assigned online tutorials and practice sessions to help students acquire and polish specific skills.

Standard 5: Using technology to help all learners thrive.

- From a student perspective, the Community Fair project provided an opportunity for collaborative, task-based experiential learning. Once they understood the objectives of the exercise, each team worked autonomously – with help from Paul and fellow students only when required – to develop the required digital skills, identify and approach a suitable organization, gather information, capture it in a handout, and present it to others during the Fair.

Standard 6: Communicating with learners and observing their progress.

- As students were working in-class on their Community Fair booths, Paul circulated unobtrusively, using a rubric sheet to note and assess the language skills they were employing. The completed assessment sheets – which were shared with the students in their personal Avenue ePortfolio – helped Paul understand where individual learners might need additional help.

- In the days following the Community Fair, Paul invited each student pair to tell him about their experience. Using the BigBlueButton video meeting platform, he video-recorded the self-assessment feedback session, then posted the video as a permanent artifact in each team member's ePortfolio.

VIGNETTE 3: ROBIN PEACE
CULTURALLY RELEVANT COMPUTER-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING

Précis

The Idea

Robin Peace, an instructor with the LINC program at the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association, became aware some years ago of her learners' interest in – but lack of information about – local Indigenous history and culture. While enrolled in a *LearnIT2Teach* training program, Robin was introduced to the idea of creating a technology-assisted WebQuest. It impressed her as an engaging way to teach listening, speaking, writing, and technology skills while introducing learners to a culturally relevant topic. The result was a four-week, 100-hour WebQuest module within the 30-week LINC program, using videos depicting aspects of Indigenous culture – trapping, beadworking, ribbon skirts, and collecting maple sap – as the subject matter.

The Learners

Robin's students are newcomers to Canada at CLB levels 2-4 – the basic level of English language ability. Typically, a class of 20 students is about equally divided between males and females. The age range is wide – from 18 to 80 – with the majority in the 20 to 45 range. The course referenced in this vignette included learners from Eritrea, Sudan, Syria, Mexico, and Myanmar, among other countries. The learners represent a range of technology skills from limited (e.g., can use a Smartphone to make calls and take photos) to moderately advanced (e.g., can use a laptop to access games, conduct searches, exchange email, and use software for tasks such as wordprocessing).

The Approach

The two main goals Robin set for the WebQuest were to help learners understand a short video and a Google Slides presentation about Indigenous cultural traditions (listening), have them collaborate with classmates to prepare and deliver a presentation about a cultural tradition (speaking), and post a reflection on a cultural tradition from their own experience (writing). In addition, the WebQuest required learners with limited digital skills to learn computer basics such as how to use a desktop computer, access information on the Avenue eLearning platform, participate in an online forum, and develop a short presentation using Google Slides software. The course in which the WebQuest

takes place is presented in a blended learning format that includes approximately 15 hours weekly of face-to-face classroom time, 7 hours of online learning, and 1.5 hours bi-weekly of digital skills learning and English practice in a language lab equipped with desktop computers.

Interested in Learning More?

Instructor Profile **Context** **In Robin's Own Words** **Application of Technology Standards**

Instructor Profile:

Robin Peace's journey as a language instructor began in 1991 when she enrolled in the *French Teaching Specialization Program* offered jointly by the University of Waterloo and Brock University. Simultaneously, she earned a qualification as an ESL instructor. Graduating in 1996, she taught French in Canada for two years before travelling overseas, where she taught English language learners in Djibouti and Yemen and facilitated teacher training programs. Returning to Canada in 2011, Robin completed an MA in TESOL through Trinity Western University (TWU), followed by employment at Lakehead University, then at Confederation College in Thunder Bay, Ontario, teaching *English for Academic Purposes*. Today, Robin is an instructor with the LINC program at the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association.

Context:

Newcomers to Canada living in Thunder Bay soon become aware of the city's large percentage of Indigenous residents and sometimes participate in local Indigenous cultural events. However, most newcomers, while curious, have little information about Indigenous history or cultural traditions, and limited direct contact with Indigenous community members. The WebQuest presented a means to raise cultural awareness, enhance language skills, and teach technology skills. To complement the WebQuest, Robin endeavours to invite an Indigenous person from the local community to attend at least one class per course for a presentation and discussion session.

In Robin's Own Words

The idea of developing a WebQuest was suggested to me by my mentor while I was enrolled in Stage 4 of the LearnIT2Teach training program. A WebQuest impressed me as a good way to teach listening, speaking, and technology skills while introducing learners to a culturally relevant topic. I had been thinking about course materials on Indigenous cultural traditions because of the curiosity my LINC students had often shown about Thunder Bay's Indigenous population.

When I began my search for videos on cultural traditions, I found that few resources were geared to our locality. I didn't want my students to learn just about Indigenous peoples elsewhere in Canada. I wanted them to learn about the Indigenous people they see on the bus every day – about the richness of their traditions. I hoped that becoming familiar with Indigenous cultural strengths would balance other conversations we have about topics such as residential schools and the process of reconciliation.

A Four-Week Quest

From start to finish, the Indigenous Cultural Traditions WebQuest took about four weeks. That gave students lots of time because they are in class or online about 25 hours a week.

Week 1 focussed on vocabulary and the presentation example. The whole class watched the video on dancing, talked about how we felt after seeing the video and how the dancer described how she felt, practiced listening for specific information, and discussed the features of a good presentation.

Week 2 was about listening and preparing group presentations. Each group watched one of the videos together. They worked out responses to questions I had prepared in advance. They identified one or two new words in the presentation and looked up their meaning in the dictionary. They then created a Google Slides presentation to explain the cultural tradition they had viewed. If students ran into technical issues, a volunteer (Robin's son, Daniel) helped them sort things out.

Week 3 saw the delivery of the presentations – a few slides presented by each group member – followed by class discussion.

Week 4 used the course's online Forum to give each student an opportunity to share a description of a tradition from their own experience. I provided students with a template to take simple notes during their classmates' presentations.

An assessment of each student's progress was conducted at the end of each week based on rubrics provide to the class in advance.

In short, each group watched only one of the videos, learning about one of the traditions. They would then share what they had learned and learn about the other traditions through the group presentations. There were particular things I was looking for and there were test tools to enable the students themselves and me as their teacher to assess whether they were meeting the objectives.

The Search for Culturally Relevant Videos

It took some time to assemble the videos. Through friends and contacts in the local Nokiiwin Tribal Council, Lakehead University, and elsewhere, I eventually found – and sought permission to use – locally relevant videos on trapping, beadwork, ribbon skirts, and collecting maple sap that would be accessible to students at CLB levels 2-4. The videos were mainly in English, with some including presenters speaking their Indigenous language. For instance, in the video on collecting maple sap, the on-screen host introduces herself in her first language, then in English, so the students got to hear the sound of her language. She also explained some Indigenous vocabulary.

In dividing the 20-member class into work groups of 4-5, I first asked students which topic interested them the most. In grouping students according to interest, I also made sure that at least one member of each group had a laptop and some digital skills to help others who did not.

I explained to the students that, on first viewing, they didn't have to understand every word spoken in the videos. They could log in to the Avenue.ca eLearning platform to review the videos as often as they liked before answering questions. For learners at CLB 2 and 3 levels, I posed simple yes-no self-assessment questions such as "I can understand the main idea of the video," I can understand the feelings connected to the tradition," "I can understand why the tradition is important," and "I can write down a few new words."

Outcomes

After all the presentations had been made, I asked the students to reflect on the experience. What did they learn? What was their favourite activity? All of them said that they have a much greater appreciation for Indigenous culture as a result of the exercise. Their favourite activity was the collaborative presentation. They had a real sense of satisfaction that they had learned to create and deliver a presentation in a professional way – an accomplishment they can draw on as they move on to work or academic endeavours. They also enjoyed meeting and talking with an Indigenous person from the local community during one of their classes.

What would I do differently for the next WebQuest? Finding at least one more appropriate video would allow more groups to be created, giving each member more time to speak during the presentation. Group sizes of four or five meant that each person spoke only briefly concerning perhaps one or two slides. Group sizes of three or four would give each person more time to participate.

I would also ask the presenters to bring something physical to class relating to their presentation. For instance, during a presentation on gathering and processing maple sap, the students could bring some maple syrup. That is something that I could do as well. When I talk about the dance video, I could bring an example of a jingle dress. During the development of the presentations, it would also be helpful to have more than one volunteer to help the students with technical issues. My son and I did a lot of running around from group to group.

Finally, videos with subtitles would better support those with different learning styles. If I can't find videos that are already subtitled, I will be looking for software to help me do that. Subtitles could also be used to prepare written transcripts that learners can review for greater comprehension.

All in all, I was pleased with the outcomes and will use the WebQuest again at the first opportunity.

Technology Standards and Performance Indicators

Does Robin's WebQuest demonstrate how New Language Solution's standards for technology-enhanced language teaching and learning can be incorporated into TESOL? According to the performance indicators highlighted below, four of the seven standards are strongly represented.

Standard 2: Tools and digital resources.

- The exercise required students to learn some basic digital skills, such as how to use a desktop computer, log in to and navigate Avenue.ca, use presentation software, and post to an online forum.
- Within the framework of a 30-week LINC program, the four-week WebQuest exercise makes use of in-person, online, and computer lab instructional modes, taking advantage of the strengths of each modality to deliver an effective blended learning experience.
- The instructor set up the course on Avenue.ca to provide students with a continuously available resource to support their language learning. Students were shown how to log in to and navigate Avenue as part of their language/digital skills learning.
- Observation of student use of technology tools such as Google Slides and Avenue enabled the instructor to evaluate the potential of those tools for further and possibly expanded use. A class debriefing at the end of the course provided a student perspective on the value of their WebQuest experience.

Standard 3: Technology-enhanced pedagogy.

- In keeping with current learning theory, the Level 4 LearnIT2teach training program acquainted Robin and other program participants with approaches such as a well-designed WebQuest designed to combine language and digital skills learning with culturally relevant subject matter.

- The WebQuest created a rich learning environment that drew on the affordances of in-person, facilitated online, and self-paced language lab learning.

- The WebQuest excelled in particular at engaging students in active learning, epitomized in learning how to create and deliver presentations with the aid of Google Slides. The exercise also invited learners to draw on their own experiences and knowledge to share traditions of their own.

- Once students had acquired the technology skills needed to create a presentation, their creativity came to the fore. No two group presentations were alike, each demonstrating creative touches such as original graphic treatments, text styles, and illustrations captured from the Internet. Further, the Forum Post assignment encouraged each individual to reflect on – and share – a cultural tradition from their own experience using the language skills they had learned in the unit.

Standard 4: Digital literacy and digital citizenship for yourself and your learners.

- Robin's outreach to the Nokiiwin Tribal Council for guidance in acquiring culturally relevant videos and her commitment to securing permission to use the selected videos demonstrated an awareness of the legal and ethical practices required of a responsible digital citizen.

- In developing a presentation on a cultural practice, one of the requirements was to include a "Resources" screen crediting any third-party source materials used. This illustrated the Standard 4 performance indicator regarding awareness of authorship, ownership, and copyright.

Standard 5: Using technology to help all learners thrive.

- Taking note of class members' use of Smartphones for personal communication even if they had limited computer skills, Robin referenced Smartphone skills as a way to ease the transition to desktop computers and introduce new software to accomplish assigned tasks.

- In a diverse class representing a range of technology and English language skills, building support and flexibility into the WebQuest exercise was important. That took the form of group composition that included stronger and weaker members, questions customized by CLB level, and different assessment rubrics geared to CLB level. For instance, a Forum Post for an individual at CLB Level 4 would require at least a paragraph, while Level 2 would require individual sentences. Students with strong digital and communications skills were invited to share them with the rest of the community.

- Students were able to personalize their learning experience by sharing a cultural tradition from their own experience, in some cases taking the initiative to find illustrative images online. This approach illustrated a key Standard 5 performance indicator – learner autonomy.

- Several students said the experience of preparing a presentation using Google Slides opened their eyes to how technology can contribute to their success in future endeavours.

VIGNETTE 4: JENNIFER CHOW
THE "THINK ALOUD" METHOD: TECHNOLOGY-ASSISTED LANGUAGE SKILLS ENHANCEMENT

Précis

The Idea

When Jennifer Chow began teaching English as Another Language (EAL) at Vancouver Community College (VCC) in 2007, giving students effective feedback on self-paced *spoken* assignments was a challenge. When students learn to *write*, the mistakes they make are recorded on paper, making it easy to point out errors and assign remedial practice. Not so with speaking. If there is no way to record self-paced spoken exercises, errors are gone as soon as they are spoken. The search for a solution led Jennifer on a quest for a technology-assisted way to record, review, annotate, and help students reflect on spoken assignments. After trying several potential solutions over the years, she now uses a *Think Aloud* method – a software-based multimodal feedback-reflection loop to improve speaking skills.

The Learners

Jennifer's most recent blended learning class of 24 CLB-4/5 students ranged in age from 20 to 55, with the majority between 35 and 50. Class composition was diverse, with students from Ukraine, Turkey, Japan, Korea, Syria, Azerbaijan, Morocco, Afghanistan, and China. Coming from across the greater Vancouver area, the majority of daytime learners are female. Evening classes have a larger proportion of men. Unlike LINC, the VCC's Pathways EAL program is open to Canadian citizens as well as newcomers. In the class of 24, three learners were citizens who had been in Canada for more than five years.

The Approach

The Pathways program for CLB 5-8 learners is divided into two courses – Speaking and Listening and Reading and Writing. About 70% of students take both courses at the same time, devoting 3 hours in the morning to one course and 3 hours in the afternoon to the other. During a 13-week course, students attend face-to-face classes two days a week. On the remaining three days, learning is asynchronous.

In the Think Aloud method, which is used mainly in the Speaking and Listening course, students record a speaking assignment as either a voice or video file, then upload it to Kaltura Media Assignment in their own protected folder on VCC's Moodle-based learning management system. Kaltura automatically creates captions of what the student said. Jennifer then listens to the assignment and adds notations to the video using screen casting technology. Students listen to the feedback and make their own notes, enabling Jennifer to see what they have understood from the feedback. Students use their notes to devise a plan for improvement, perhaps committing to several self-paced homework sessions to improve their use of, for instance, verb tenses.and develop a short presentation using Google Slides software. The course in which the WebQuest

Interested in Learning More?

Instructor Profile **Context** **In Jennifer's Own Words** **Application of Technology Standards**

Instructor Profile:

After graduating with an undergraduate degree in English from Simon Fraser University, Jennifer Chow enrolled in the university's Professional Development Program, where she earned her B.C. Ministry of Education certificate to teach in the province's K-12 system. Beginning as a Grade 1 teacher, Jennifer soon progressed to teaching high school where, in addition to teaching English and Social Studies, she helped newly immigrated students improve their English skills. The experience was so positive that she decided to make English as Another Language (EAL) teaching a full-time job. In 2007 she began her second career as an EAL instructor for adult learners at Vancouver Community College (VCC). Today, Jennifer teaches in the provincially-funded Pathways EAL program at VCC's Broadway Campus.

Context:

When Jennifer first started teaching at VCC, cassette tapes had just been introduced as a way to record student in-class speaking practice. That meant carrying a bag of cassettes home each evening to assess each student's progress. There had to be a better way! So, Jennifer – who had no previous experience in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) – searched out and experimented with then-emerging applications that students could use to record speaking assignments, and she could use to provide feedback. The idea carried over to writing assignments. To replace the time-consuming process of providing written comments, Jennifer experimented with screen casting technology that enabled her to record verbal comments on what a student had written. That way, students could hear her talk about what they did well and how to correct mistakes. The technology enhanced both teaching and learning.

In Jennifer's Own Words

When students are learning to write, any mistakes they make are recorded on paper. That makes it easy for an instructor to see the mistakes and point them out to the student. Things are different with speaking. If you are doing self-paced work and don't have a way to capture speech, it's gone as soon as it's spoken. So, students aren't aware of what they need to work on. For example, students sometimes think they're fluent because they speak quickly – when it might be difficult to understand what they are saying because they aren't using any intonation. You need to capture what is said in order to point out areas for improvement.

Portable recorders and cassette tapes were a break-through when they appeared. Digital recorders were even better. But both limited the ways in which feedback could be provided. I had no way to insert my comments into a student's audio file, so the recording and my feedback weren't linked directly. I really felt the need for something better.

Eventually, it arrived – online audio recording software such as *Vocaroo, Audio Recorder, Audacity, Voicecoach,* and others. When I assigned an in-class exercise or homework, students could use the software to record and upload it to a file for my review. Later, during COVID, we adopted Moodle as a learning platform and Zoom as our conferencing software. Zoom not only enabled me and other instructors to deliver online classes but could be used by learners to record speaking assignments. That enabled us to observe how students were forming words with their mouths and lips.

At first, students needed a lot of help getting acquainted with the software. Before using Zoom, I would deliver in-classroom instruction on how to record sessions. But, as it proved difficult for CLB-4 students to follow the instructions in real time, I prepared an instructional video to clarify the procedures. That worked quite well.

When we went back to blended classes, our use of Zoom dropped off. Instead, students would video-record speaking exercises using their phones or laptops, then upload them to *Kaltura Media* Assignment in their own protected folder in Moodle. Kaltura automatically creates a text file of what the student said. To provide feedback, I use *ScreenPal* (formerly called Screencast-O-Matic) to capture the video, highlight where a problem occurred, and record an audio/video comment. The student can see at a glance where feedback has been provided and can relate it directly to the captured text and video. This was the beginning of the *Think Aloud* feedback-reflection method now used to improve both speaking and writing skills, while reducing demands on instructor time.

To help students make use of new software, I have come to rely more and more on instructional videos. For every app, I make an instructional video using ScreenPal. I also use H5P to create interactive HTML5 content which allows students to pause an instructional video in order to try out a software feature themselves. For most students, the video or H5P tutorial is enough, but I check during synchronous classes to make sure they fully understand.

Even with these approaches, I still find myself spending a lot of time at the beginning of the term front-loading technology instruction so that we can then focus on language learning. My twice-weekly Zoom drop-in sessions really help. Students can share their screen and show me where they're having trouble so I can help them directly.

The Think Aloud Method

At the beginning of a new intake of students, it's mainly me using the Think Aloud method to provide audio and video comments as I review student exercises. However, as the term progresses, I want students to use the same method to do their self-assessments and to comment on other students' work when asked to do so.

The Think Aloud method is also used when students do an experiential task. We have six speaking assessments throughout the term. Students unable to complete one of the assessments can choose to do an experiential task as a make-up assignment. For example, the assessment task might have been to record an 8-1-1 role play in which a nurse and a caller interact. For a student who does not successfully complete the assessment task, the make-up experiential task might be to seek information from a professional – for instance, a pharmacist, an exercise coach, or a nurse – record the conversation (optional) and add a self-reflection commentary using the Think Aloud method: "I made a mistake here. I was a bit nervous when I asked this question. I didn't use the auxiliary verb here. I didn't ask for clarification often enough."

The student was also required to record a reflection based on this experiential task. In their reflection, they would comment on how they planned the task, when and how they conducted the conversation, and how it went. Typically, the experiential tasks are about 9-10 minutes in length.

On the whole, I have found that students really like the two-way Think Aloud approach because it helps them see where they have made a mistake and learn what they need to do to correct it. It allows us to have an interactive asynchronous conversation about their strengths, weaknesses, and progression of skills.

I love being in the classroom. I love meeting students and seeing them gain confidence in what they're doing. I always say I have the best job in the world. What other job allows you to meet people

from many different countries all in one place? Each has a unique story about how they came to Canada and how they've overcome the barriers and challenges they've faced. I have such respect for what they've gone through and what resilience they have. During breaks, you hear many different languages being spoken. It's beautiful music. All these things make coming to work each day a pleasure.

Technology Standards and Performance Indicators

Here are some key ways in which Jennifer's Think Aloud method demonstrates how NSL's standards for technology-enhanced language teaching and learning can be incorporated into EAL instruction.

Standard 2: Tools and digital resources.

Understand and use a basic set of relevant technology resources and tools for language teaching and continue to update and expand this set regularly.

- As most students have had only limited exposure to online technology, Jennifer makes extensive use of instructional videos – created using *ScreenPal* – to walk learners through hardware and software functions step by step.
- Jennifer also uses H5P to create and share interactive HTML5 content which allows students to pause instructional videos while they try out a software feature themselves.
- For the *Think Aloud* method to work, students must learn to record voice and video files on their personal Smartphones or laptops using an app of their choice (e.g., *Vocaroo, Audio Recorder, Audacity, Voicecoach,* etc.). Jennifer recommends suitable software, provides self-paced video tutorials, and gives students one-on-one help, as needed.

Standard 3: Technology-enhanced pedagogy.

Understand and use a basic set of relevant technology resources and tools for language teaching and continue to update and expand this set regularly.

- As most students have had only limited exposure to online technology, Jennifer makes extensive use of instructional videos – created using *ScreenPal* – to walk learners through hardware and software functions step by step.
- Jennifer also uses H5P to create and share interactive HTML5 content which allows students to pause instructional videos while they try out a software feature themselves.
- For the *Think Aloud* method to work, students must learn to record voice and video files on their personal Smartphones or laptops using an app of their choice (e.g., *Vocaroo, Audio Recorder, Audacity, Voicecoach,* etc.). Jennifer recommends suitable software, provides self-paced video tutorials, and gives students one-on-one help, as needed.

Standard 6: Communicating with learners and observing their progress.

Use technology to support, monitor, and assess learner progress.

- The essence of the *Think Aloud* method is to provide feedback on student spoken assignments that highlights and comments on issues at the moments where they occur – but also noting successes and improvements since the last assignment. In contrast to more generalized written comments, this gives students a better sense of where progress is being made and improvements are needed.

- Student self-improvement plans are part of the *Think Aloud* post-assignment assessment process. After students listen to the specific spoken feedback they receive on an assignment – for instance, about ending consonant sounds – they might work out a plan to make additional recordings, and use the captions generated in *Kaltura Media Assignment* to identify any ending consonant sounds that they missed. Alternatively, they might plan to meet with a VCC Learning Center tutor to work on the pronunciation of ending consonant sounds. When it comes time for their next assessment, they can report on whether or not they carried out their plan as intended.

VIGNETTE 5: BO NING: *A BRIDGE TO DIGITAL SKILLS*

Précis

The Idea

When COVID-19 brought an abrupt halt to face-to-face language learning at the Halifax office of the *Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)* in February 2020, the necessity of shifting quickly to online learning presented a huge challenge for instructors and learners alike. At first, many instructors struggled not only to learn the new digital skills they would need, but also to help students with limited computer experience venture online.

In response, the ISANS leadership team reached out to a core of technology-savvy instructors to create and deliver a three-day *Digital Skills Bridging Program* that every new student would be required to take prior to beginning online language studies. That's where Bo Ning came in. A recently hired language instructor with strong technology skills, Bo became a key contributor to the program's implementation. Working with a small group of similarly skilled Bridging Program instructors, he helped students develop a mental picture of the digital learning space – where to find their instructor and fellow students, how to locate resources, and where to place assignments for review and feedback. The program proved to be so successful that, even post-COVID, it remains an essential point of entry to online learning for all new ISANS students.

The Learners

Learners in the Bridging Program range in age from 22-45, with a few younger and older outliers. There are generally more female (60%) than male (40%) students, with educational backgrounds varying from little or no formal education to highly educated professionals. Learner technology skills range from limited (e.g., may use a Smartphone) to moderately advanced (e.g., some familiarity with laptop computers and applications such as email or word processing).

The Approach

The three-day *Digital Skills Bridging Program* begins seven days before the start of a new language learning term. To accommodate specific learner needs, each program is offered to approximately 15 students at a particular language learning level – for instance, 1L (literacy level 1) or Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs) 3-4. Day 1 is about understanding the basic terminology of digital devices, websites, web conferencing tools, and LMS navigation. On Day 2, students practice using the software that will be used in their LINC classroom. Day 3 is about program expectations, online and classroom etiquette, communicating with the instructor, viewing feedback from peers and instructors, and tracking personal progress. Instruction is the same at each language level, regardless of how "tech-savvy" some learners may be. For students with little online experience, the instructor and more experienced classmates give them the support they need.

Today, the program is delivered in one of three modes: eight hours of in-class instruction for literacy, CLB 1-2 and CLB 3-4 learners; hybrid for some more advanced CLB 3-4 learners; and entirely online as a five-module self-paced course for CLB levels 5 and up. In-person support is provided for students at any level who encounter problems.

Interested in Learning More?

Instructor Profile **Context** **In Bo's Own Words** **Application of Technology Standards**

Instructor Profile:

Bo Ning's journey as a language instructor began at Hunan University of Arts and Science (HUAS) in the south-central Chinese city of Changde. After graduating from HUAS with a Bachelor's Degree in English Teaching in 2013, Bo's interest in language instruction led him to Buffalo, New York, where he enrolled in a Masters program in Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at the University at Buffalo. In 2016, degree in hand, he returned to China to teach English to adult learners while polishing his skills in the online learning technologies introduced to him during his Master's studies.

Eager to return to North America, Bo moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 2018, where he applied successfully to teach in the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) LINC evening program. "English is my second language after Mandarin, so I see English language instruction from a different perspective from a native speaker," Bo says. "I think that has been helpful in my TESOL career because my own experience helps me to understand the issues that people learning a new language face. When COVID forced instruction online, I was well placed to serve as a "digital navigator," combining my technology skills and experience as an English language teacher and learner to help newcomers move online with confidence."

In recent years, Bo, who now lives in Mississauga, Ontario, has moved from the classroom into a new mentorship role with New Language Solutions. As Bo explains, "I now mentor instructors, giving them insights and practical advice on how to use technology to support language instruction." One of Bo's emerging areas of expertise is the application of artificial intelligence (AI) to help students learn more autonomously while reducing administrative burden on instructors.

Context

The majority of newcomers to Canada entering government-sponsored language-learning programs arrive with limited computer and Internet navigation skills. When COVID-19 forced language learning online, these became must-have capabilities. At first, instructors and students coped as best they could with the many unfamiliar demands of teaching and learning a language online. It soon became clear that a more systematic approach was urgently required. For the leadership team at the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), the answer was a three-day Digital Skills Bridging Program designed to impart basic digital navigation skills to students before they begin online ESL classes. In the hybrid (classroom and online) post-COVID learning environment, the need for computer and Internet skills remains – as does ISANS's highly successful bridging program.

In Bo's Own Words

The *Digital Skills Bridging Program* starts with basic computer vocabulary and concepts. What is a password? A browser? An email address? An online chat? A breakout room? Students need to understand concepts like these to learn online. Most have had some classroom experience if only a few grades of elementary school. I used that experience to help them understand parallel concepts in the virtual world. I communicated the concepts using photographs, graphics, and videos I found, created, or recorded myself. Without too much verbal commentary, I used these tools during the first few hours of class to visualize concepts and vocabulary, making the material equally accessible to people with a range of English language comprehension. I circulated within the class to provide extra help for students who were having problems with their device or any of the concepts.

Learning during the remainder of the program is task-based. The objective is to help students understand the tools that will be used at their language learning level. They learn about tools that teachers will use to send and receive information and that students will use to find information, communicate with classmates, and do assignments. They learn *about* the tools, practice using the tools, and *demonstrate* their understanding by completing tests or other assessment activities.

I'm a visual learner myself, so I created a simulator using Articulate Storyline. The simulator allowed students to click through screen grabs from programs they would be using. For instance, we wanted them to have Microsoft Teams on their phones. The Teams tutorial on the simulator walked them step-by-step through the process of downloading Teams to their Smartphone. Each screen modelled one step they have to perform. The step was explained using plain-language English narration, but the actions shown on the screen were understandable even to someone who had little English. I also used Flipbook to create simple tutorials that look like booklets. Students "flip through the pages" to advance through the tutorial. On each page, an action is described and demonstrated. The images in the Flipbook were created using PowerPoint, Adobe Illustrator, or are captured from the Internet.

Harnessing Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Technology changes rapidly. To keep up to date, I attend a lot of webinars on trending technology. I also watch videos on new product releases, tutorials on how to use new programs, and similar topics. I find that YouTube videos and free online tutorials work really well for me. One advantage I have is that I speak Mandarin. In addition to resources in English, I can draw from a wealth of Chinese-language tutorials.

I'm particularly interested in current and future applications for AI. It is still early days, but AI has been used for some time in language assessment for such things as evaluating what students write (e.g., TOEFL iBT test), helping them with the pronunciation of written words (e.g., Poodll Read

Aloud), or comparing audio clips that students record with AI pronunciation of the same words.

AI resources such as Siri, Alexa, or Google Assistant can also be used for language exercises. For instance, I assign students to ask one of the Assistants what the weather is like today, listen to the pronunciation of words in the answer, and report back on the answer that was received. As an aid to comprehension, I frequently use text-to-graphics software such as Canva to create visuals that illustrate written text. These are a few examples of the many current AI tools that can enhance language learning while saving instructor time. Eventually, AI language learning tools may be able to adapt instruction to each individual's specific language objectives, level of proficiency, and learning style.

Filtering External Tools

Instructors encounter a variety of external tools and content sources, but some of them are not very appropriate for students. One of my current roles as a technology mentor is to support instructors regarding which resources are more or less appropriate in a teaching environment. For instance, some browsers and some websites have a lot of advertisements, which can be confusing and distracting for students. Some websites and tools are complicated to use, which creates barriers for entry-level computer users and adds stress to the already demanding task of getting up to speed with technology. Any new tool or content source should be viewed from a student perspective before it is adopted. Because I have a background in learning technology and have been teaching for more than ten years, I bring a teacher's perspective to the understanding of how to use technology in the classroom.

It's About the Smiles

The thing I like best about second-language teaching is the smiles on students' faces when they make a breakthrough or connect with their instructor or fellow students in a positive way. I've heard from a number of students that learning how to use a computer has given them a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment. They especially like being able to supplement their classroom sessions with learning online at their own place and time of choosing.

The work also gives me satisfaction because I know that the skills students learn in the bridging program will open the door to the virtual world, enabling them to use the wealth of tools and resources on the Internet for their own purposes in future years. Once you've made a successful Google search for the first time, a world of possibilities opens up.

Technology Standards and Performance Indicators

Here are some key ways in which the *Digital Support Bridging Program* demonstrates how NSL's standards for technology-enhanced language teaching and learning can be incorporated into TESOL instruction.

Standard 3: Technology-enhanced pedagogy.

Thoughtfully integrate technology in your teaching, informed by exemplary practice and relevant theory and research.

- As many new language learners struggle to understand spoken or written instructions and explanations in English, Bo located or created self-explanatory illustrations (e.g., slides, PDFs, and images), instructional videos, and interactive content (e.g., H5Ps, lessons authored in Storyline,

and Flipbooks) to explain basic concepts, vocabulary, and procedures. He also directed students to accessible supplementary resources available on YouTube, Youglish, ESLVideo.com, Tutela, and Avenue.

- As students progressed in their studies, Bo used AI technology in assignments (e.g., having students use Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa, or Google's Assistant to search for specific information) and comprehension improvement exercises (e.g., Poodll ReadAloud on Avenue).
- To stay abreast of current theory and research related to technology use, Bo attends webinars on trending technology, watches videos on new product releases, takes tutorials on how to use new programs, and networks with other instructors to share information on how they are using technology to enhance language learning.

Standard 6: Communicating with learners and observing their progress.

Use technology to support, monitor, and assess learner progress.

- To demonstrate knowledge of available resources to support learners, Bo takes pains to match student needs with appropriate language-learning tools. This entails "filtering" software and websites to make sure they are at the right level of complexity for the language level being taught and don't include distracting or inappropriate advertising or other distractions.

- Bo maintains communication with learners and education stakeholders using a variety of one-way and two-way communication tools. Examples of one-way information-sharing tools are Forum pages and Avenue Blocks. Two-way communication includes Email, instant messaging (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Avenue Message Drawer), and virtual meetings (e.g., MS Teams, Zoom, Google Meet).

- Bo uses data analysis when appropriate to guide learner progress. This may entail:
  - Using file storing tools to secure artifacts (e.g., File, E-portfolio).
  - Applying appropriate tagging system to categorize artifacts by type, skill level, and assessment criteria.
  - Using software tools to track student progress and participation (e.g., Progress Tracker, Checklist, Gradebook, and class logs).

- Bo also uses technology to support learner reflection, self-evaluation, and peer evaluation. This includes encouraging the use of private and open Blogs, Wikis, Forum posts, and Moodle's *Workshop* peer assessment activity.

VIGNETTE 6: NATALINA L'ORFANO
BLENDED INSTRUCTION FOR LEARNERS AT EMERGING LEVELS OF LITERACY

Précis

The Idea

Most newcomers to Canada who arrive with a high level of fluency in their own language – and perhaps basic English skills – can expect, with the help of LINC language instruction, to make steady progress toward acquiring functional proficiency in English. The situation is quite different for newcomers who are illiterate or semi-literate in their own language and have had no previous exposure to English. Consequently, ESL literacy learners need an entirely different level of support, instruction, and guided practice. Natalina L'Orfano, a Foundation Level ESL instructor with the Ottawa Catholic School Board since 2017, is constantly looking for better ways to engage literacy learners and accelerate their progress. In recent years, teaching basic computer skills to literacy learners as a precursor to using computer-assisted language learning to augment classroom instruction has become an exciting new focus of her work.

The Learners

Natalina's students have limited literacy skills in their own language, and have not yet reached the basic Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)-1 level for English proficiency. Most arrive in class able to speak only single words in English. In Natalina's most recent class, the four men and eleven women from Somalia, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan ranged in age from their mid-20s to mid-60s. A third of the class had from 0-3 years of schooling, often due to civil strife in their home country when they were children. The remaining class members had from four to twelve years of education. Most of the students were able to use Smartphones for a variety of functions, but none of the students knew how to use laptop or desktop computers, which require a different set of skills.

The Approach

For foundation-level students, blended learning (i.e., a combination of classroom and online learning) is not possible until they have acquired basic computer and language skills. The importance of acquiring these skills in tandem means that students are introduced to laptop computers as early as possible. In Natalina's classes, the laptop of choice is the Google Chromebook. At first, Chromebooks are brought to class once a week. Making her instructions and demonstrations as straightforward as she can, Natalina explains how to "navigate" a computer, beginning with how to enter the multi-character password assigned by the school board. For students who don't yet recognize some of the characters they are being asked to enter, this is not a trivial task. Natalina and support staff walk around the class, helping any student who is having problems. As Natalina tells it, they'll say, "Teacher, password no good. They're convinced there's something wrong with the password or the computer." She and her assistants patiently demonstrate the skill once more, watching over the student's shoulder as they try again. It may take a few tries, but once students have figured it out, they are one step closer to taking full advantage of the world of technology-assisted learning.

Interested in Learning More?

Instructor Profile **Context** **In Natalina's Own Words** **Application of Technology Standards**

Instructor Profile:

After graduating from Carleton University with a Bachelor's degree in English Literature in 1980, Natalina L'Orfano embarked on a year-long trip to her ancestral homeland, Italy. Little did she know that it would begin a life-long passion for teaching English as a second language. "While I was in Italy, everyone kept telling me that I could teach English," Natalina says. "That gave me the inspiration to think about a career in ESL teaching." When she returned to Ottawa, Natalina had just enough money to enroll in the one-year Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language (CTESL) program at Carleton, graduating in 1982. Almost immediately, she was offered work as a supply teacher at Ottawa's Willis Language School, later renamed the Language Training Centre of Ottawa (LTCO), which offered government-sponsored language training, mainly for newly-arrived landed immigrants. She was soon offered full-time employment, which continued until the LTCO ceased operations in 2017. Within a few weeks, she was welcomed as an ESL instructor by the Ottawa Catholic School Board, where she currently teaches at the Board's St. Nicholas Adult High School site on Admiral Avenue.

Context

For adult newcomers to Canada who are illiterate or semi-literate in their own language, the challenge of acquiring both literacy and language skills in English is daunting. Progress is often halting. As student experiences are so varied, no one teaching approach is guaranteed to succeed and learning timetables are, of necessity, variable. In this environment, Natalina has found that the key to success is variety and flexibility. If one strategy or exercise isn't working, try something else that might make more sense to a particular student. At the Foundation Level of language instruction, full-time face-to-face classroom learning is indispensable because students do not have the technology skills to participate in online learning and require personal support from the teacher, classroom assistants, and volunteers to understand what is asked of them and how to carry out instructions. However, if early lessons include how to use a laptop computer, it soon becomes possible to use eLearning exercises to enrich learning and accelerate progress.

In Natalina's Own Words

When I started working as an ESL instructor, computers were not used in language instruction. My introduction to computer-assisted learning came years later after I began teaching at the Willis Language Training Centre in Ottawa. The Director, a computer enthusiast, had the inspiration to refurbish some old computers. His idea was that the computers could be used to teach basic computer skills by having students use them to compose résumés as part of their job skills training. The other instructors and I first had to learn how to use the computers – those big clunkers typical of the 1980s. There was a lot of pushback from some teachers, but eventually we learned enough about computers and software to instruct our students.

The federal government-sponsored *Language Instruction for New Canadians (LINC)* program started in 1992. That changed a lot of things. The government put a lot more money into funding language programs. Schools that got contracts were provided with computers that could make use of CD-ROM-based language-learning programs. One of the early programs was called *Explore Canada*. It used the subjects of Canadian history and geography to teach language skills while also

introducing students to these important aspects of the country. Other CD-ROMs of the period included three *ELLIS* programs for language learners at introductory, middle, and senior mastery levels, and Tense Buster, which offered lessons and practice tests to help improve English grammar. As students generally did not have computers at home, I took them to our computer lab once or twice a week, where I would assign them a unit within *Explore Canada* or one of the other programs available at the time.

A key development in the history of computer-assisted language learning in Canada was the introduction of EduLinc, an online platform for language learning. I was among the first to take Stage 1 and 2 training for EduLinc because I wanted to ramp up my technology knowledge and skills. I continue do my best to keep up with new apps, websites, and strategies for making the most of blended learning. Today, wonderful tools such as the Avenue Learning Platform provide access to not only to excellent learning materials, but to opportunities for collaboration and discussion.

Whenever I can, I take on volunteers and interns to help in class. For example, if I'm explaining how to do something new on a computer, an intern will help students apply what they have just learned. A volunteer who has been helping me for some time works with students who have the greatest needs. She gives them extra help in performing tasks.

Strategies for Success

Student writing skills often lag behind their speaking skills. In the beginning, quite a few foundation-level students cannot write their names and may not have the fine motor skills needed to use a pen or pencil. Every morning, I ask students to sign in by writing their names on an attendance sheet. At first, they need a bit of help, but after days and days of repetition it becomes a matter of routine.

Another thing I do early in the program is write the day, date, temperature, and weather forecast on the board. I will then ask questions to prompt responses. What day is it today? What is the temperature? What will the weather be like today? I might also build in a simple Internet search that students carry out on their Smartphones, such as finding out what the high temperature will be today. Repetition of this kind of exercise helps to build vocabulary, improve pronunciation, demonstrate syntax, and build online search skills.

A good strategy is to teach things that are very relevant, familiar, or important to the students. Examples would be family – the names of family members such as father, mother, daughter, son, and so on. Health is another good theme – going to the doctor (appointment, hospital, clinic, the names of local hospitals, etc.), the names of medical professionals (nurse, doctor, dentist, etc.), or the names of ailments (headache, backache, cold, flu, my arm hurts, etc.)

All of this is slow going. For someone who arrives at the pre-literacy stage, there is no set time for the acquisition of basic language skills. For some, there is a breakthrough moment at which key things begin to come together in a student's mind. After that, their progress becomes more rapid. However, I've had some students repeat my class more than once and, even then, are still struggling with simple exercises.

Something I discovered is that Smartphone skills are not fully transferable to laptops. While students generally know how to use their phone to make personal calls, take photographs, watch videos, and use icons to open apps, they find that the Google Chromebooks we use require the use of a keyboard with unfamiliar keys, a mouse, and a different navigation system from the one they are used to. On their personal Smartphones, the interface language is usually their own. When you begin using the Chromebooks, everything is in English and the positioning of icons is often unfamiliar. All of these things have to be taught before students can make effective use of our computers.

The Importance of Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is an important objective from the very start. You want students to begin the journey towards digital literacy at the same time that they are beginning their language learning journey. One of the strategies I use is to reinforce classroom English lessons with a computer-based exercise. For instance, if we've been concentrating on the names of parts of the body during the week, I might look for a similar exercise within learningchocolate.com. In a basic exercise, the student may be shown the picture of, let's say, a foot, and they will hear the phrase "This is my foot" followed by selections for Yes or No. In other more advanced exercises, the student will match graphic images of body parts – the leg, the foot, the head – with their names in English. The exercise may allow them to click on either the graphic or the printed name to hear the name pronounced before they complete a match.

I remember a 65-year-old man in my class who, in the beginning, couldn't do basic tasks like writing his name. Later in the term, we were doing a learningchocolate.com exercise in which you first see images depicting various types of weather – sunny, cloudy, windy, snowy, etc. – together with the spoken pronunciation of each word. In a follow-up exercise, you are asked to match the spoken name of each type of weather with the corresponding image. He got all of them correct. We were both so pleased to see all the green checks he had received for correctly matching all of the written and spoken words. The learningchocolate.com site has many such exercises that increasing levels of difficulty. I find it a great way to build vocabulary.

What I like most about this work is the interaction with the students. Every day you're, working with people. You're trying to help them so that at the end of the day you feel like it has been time well spent. It's not a desk job. You're working with people and making a difference in their lives. They respond in such a positive and genuine way. The vast majority are just so lovely. Together, we have created a level of comfort and familiarity that they take with them as they continue their learning journey.

Technology Standards and Performance Indicators

Here are some key ways in which Natalina's teaching methods demonstrate how NLS's standards for technology-enhanced language teaching and learning can be incorporated into TESOL instruction.

Standard 3: Technology-enhanced pedagogy.

Thoughtfully integrate technology in your teaching, informed by exemplary practice and relevant theory and research.

- Natalina was an early advocate of teaching digital skills in tandem with language skills. At the Willis Language Training Centre, students were required to use a desktop computer to prepare and edit a résumé as part of their job skills development.
- As language-learning technology advanced, Natalina took courses and conducted personal research to learn as much as possible about new apps, websites, and strategies for making the most of blended learning.
- When Natalina began to teach Foundation Level courses at the Ottawa Catholic School Board, she built on her students' use of Smartphones for personal communications by introducing exercises that required them to use their phones to search online for answers to prompting questions. Developing Smartphone skills paved the way for using more challenging laptop computers to access online learning resources from platforms such as EduLinc and Avenue.

Standard 5: Using technology to help all learners thrive.

Use technology thoughtfully to identify and address current and future needs of learners in ways that reflect diverse identities and contexts.

- Recognizing that when foundation-level students first arrive in class, some cannot write their names and few have little, if any, familiarity with computers or the Internet, Natalina takes a gradual approach. Initially, educational technology is nowhere to be seen. Only when students have become familiar with classroom routines, learned to sign their name, and begun to recognize basics such as days of the week or family member designations is the use of Smartphones introduced to illustrate how technology can enhance learning.
- As her students gradually acquire the skills and confidence to venture online, Natalina augments classroom instruction on topics such as family members, health care, or parts of the body with simple Google Classroom matching exercises. The satisfaction of correctly completing online exercises builds confidence and solidifies digital skills.

Standard 6: Communicating with learners and observing their progress.

Use technology to support, monitor, and assess learner progress.

- Natalina's commitment to keeping up with new language-learning apps, websites, and strategies means that her students benefit from digital resources geared to their language level. For instance, Natalina uses exercises available from Google Classroom and learningchocolate.com to reinforce classroom lessons. As the development of students' digital and language skills permits, Natalina introduces them to additional learning materials and opportunities for collaboration and discussion through the Edulinc and Avenue language-learning platforms.

VIGNETTE 7: DIANA AGUDELO AND LAUREN HEBERT *LEARNING TECHNOLOGY FOR LOW LITERACY LEARNERS*

Précis

The Idea

For newcomers to Canada who are illiterate or semi-literate in their own language and have little previous exposure to English, learning digital skills in tandem with language learning can be a daunting task. For Diana Agudelo and Laurent Hebert – co-workers at the Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division (ECSD) LINC program – years of experience in ESL teaching for students at the literacy level has resulted in a nuanced approach in which three different streams of technology support are provided depending on learner proficiency.

The Learners

A typical class at the literacy level of language proficiency consists of no more than 10 learners ranging in age from their late teens to early 70's, with most in the 30-50 range. At present, the program draws most of its students from Eastern African countries and Syria, with a recent uptick in Afghani enrolees. Most students have less than nine years of education. Literacy classes tend to be weighted more toward female students than male – typically two-thirds female, one-third male. The number of male and female students changes depending on the time of day at which classes are

offered. Women are more represented in morning and afternoon classes, while evening classes have a greater proportion of male students. At the literacy level, few of the students have jobs. Their lack of language skills is a barrier to employment.

The Approach

Literacy students enrolled in courses at ECSD LINC are divided into three sub-streams. At the ***most basic level*** are students identified as Foundation and CLB 1. Students at this level often have SmartPhones and are often able to use WhatsApp for online communication. At the ***second level*** are CLB 2 learners who are comfortable with WhatsApp and are ready to be introduced to the Avenue eLearning platform. As an intermediate step to build their digital skills, they are also introduced to Microsoft Teams. The ***third level*** encompass CLB 3 and 4 students. Linguistically and cognitively, they able to use Avenue's essential features but need help to handle its complexities. The default communication technology at all three levels is WhatsApp because of its simplicity and familiarity to most students.

The full time program for CLB 2 learners and up consists of 25 hours a week of classroom and online instruction, plus homework spread over all five days. One of the days is reserved for online learning, which students do from home. Classes are offered at three different sites. One of the sites is female-only, allowing the program to accommodate women who are more comfortable being with just other women. Classes are kept small because learners need so much individual support. Although teachers are occasionally able to draw on a practicum student or on ESCD LINC's Digital Learning Facilitator for support, most aspects of instruction fall to the teacher.

Interested in Learning More?

Instructor Profiles **Context** **In Diana's & Lauren's Own Words** **Application of Technology Standards**

Instructor Profiles:

Diana Agudelo and Lauren Hebert have worked together in the Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division's LINC Program since 2011. Diana is currently the program's academic coordinator, and Lauren works primarily as a literacy instructor.

Diana, who began her ESL career as a language instructor, is originally from Columbia, South America. She arrived in Alberta in 2009 shortly after finishing a Master's degree in ESL at Minnesota State University. She was hired immediately to teach in the LINC program, which she continued to do for the next 13 years. In 2021, she was hired by the Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division (ECSSD) to take on a new role as the Adult ESL Program's Academic Coordinator, where she continues to work today.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) was a core class in Diana's Master's studies. While she was taking the program, she also worked as a Spanish teaching assistant, which required her to teach online using Adobe Connect and Skype – her first immersion into technology-assisted teaching. When COVID-19 arrived in 2020, this experience proved invaluable. As Diana puts it, "Pretty much every language instruction program had to move to online instruction or go out of business. We all had a lot to learn, but having some experience as an online instructor was so important in helping me plan the way forward."

Lauren first encountered English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction when volunteering overseas as a high school graduate. When people realized that she spoke English, they would occasionally ask if she would be willing to teach English. As Lauren explains, "In some informal overseas contexts, just speaking English is enough of a credential to teach. Although I didn't feel fully equipped to do so, I welcomed the challenge, enjoyed the experience, and returned to Canada looking forward to further training in TESL."

When Lauren returned to Canada, she completed a degree in Linguistics at the University of Alberta, followed by a stint as a language researcher. She developed a real love for learning, especially regarding how people learn to speak a language. How do children and infants learn to speak their first language? How do adults learn to speak a second language? That led her to take a Master's degree in TESL at the University of Alberta, which she completed in 2017. Almost immediately, Lauren was hired by ECSD LINC where she has been working primarily as a literacy instructor ever since. Lauren took on the role of Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) Lead in 2020.

Context

Working with newcomers to Canada who speak little English and are illiterate or semi-literate in their own language places language instruction in a very different context from mainstream LINC training based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs). Consequently, ECSD LINC's program has developed two streams – literacy and CLB – and several sub-streams that tailor instruction to learner needs. While CLB students may have only a few words of English when they enter the program, literacy in their own language gives them the concepts and skills related to reading and writing that allow them to acquire English more readily than students who have no such foundation.

The key to student placement in the right stream and sub-stream is an effective assessment tool. What Diana and Lauren have been finding is that fine-tuning the tool is an elusive goal. "We're finding that, although students go to an assessment center to place them in one of the streams, we get mixed results," Diana said. "After accepting a student into one of the streams, we sometimes find they aren't a good fit. Lauren and I are currently trying to come up with a new approach to discerning students who should be placed in literacy or CLB classes and what sub-streams are required for literacy learners." Figuring it out is an exciting challenge for Diana, Lauren, and their colleagues that has huge implications for learner success.

In Diana's and Lauren's Own Words

Diana: Why Only One Day of Online Learning?

One of the reasons for preferring only one day of online learning for literacy students is daycare. Monday to Thursday, children are in daycare. On Friday, when the mother is at home to learn online, the children are typically at home, too. This can make it hard to carve out time to do online learning. The technology is also an issue. Many of our students don't own laptops or tablets, so they have to work with cell phones. From a literacy learning perspective, it's very hard to see text, graphics, and navigation controls on a tiny screen.

Also, literacy students are not good at multitasking online. As soon as they are asked to do more than one thing at a time – for instance, to watch their instructor online while trying to log onto a chat group – things become confusing. So, instructors try to do only one thing at a time, which can slow down the progress of instruction.

Lauren: COVID-Era Experiments

Early in the pandemic, we were scrambling to make the transition to remote learning. We developed a system where we would prepare packages of printed resources that students would pick up from the school once a week. We'd say, "Go home, and we'll meet you online."

Instructors created materials that would include, for instance, stories, pictures, printing practice, and games based on vocabulary the students were learning. We would collect all these materials and put them in the take-home package for the week. The materials might include conversation questions for them to prepare so that when the time for our online class arrived, they would have a chance to engage a friend in conversation.

Even now, some instructors prefer giving paper-based materials to students that they can reference during their online classes. Handouts are also helpful as resources during the short asynchronous period each day when learners are expected to complete about 30 minutes of homework. During that period, they might complete a paper-based exercise, then take an image of the completed page to share with their instructor, or if it's a speaking activity, bring it to class the next day to demonstrate to the instructor.

Diana: Technology Onboarding

We have technology resources for students at the 3L and 4L and CLB 3 and 4 levels designed to introduce them gradually to the basics of learning online. The basics include what your username is, what your password is, how you use it on a computer, and how you use it on your cell phone. We also introduce things they can do within the Avenue learning platform and explain how to use BigBlueButton to join meetings. We try to make sure that each student is comfortable with all these concepts and procedures before online language learning classes begin.

When a new class instructor is assigned, I am able to report that class members have been onboarded in Avenue and other required technologies. I then spend time with the instructor making sure that they also know how to use the online technologies, resources, exercises, and assessment methods that are used in the course at the appropriate CLB level. By means of this process, we've seen our instructors and learners develop a lot of independence.

Lauren: The Total Physical Response (TPR) Teaching Method

We are also experimenting with the Total Physical Response (TPR) teaching method to reinforce digital skills.

We use TPR methods mostly when teaching what I would call pre-digital skills to literacy learners. They are not yet ready to respond to a prompt such as, "Okay everybody, click this." At this level, they may not even have the hand dexterity to work with a mouse.

We begin by teaching them basic phone skills such as tap, double click, scroll, and flip your camera. We do that using TPR full-body action demonstrations. For example, to demonstrate how to tap (i.e., single click) and double click, the instructor will begin by using exaggerated hand and arm movements: a full-hand smack on the desk indicates a single click; two hand smacks a double click. The speed and dexterity of these motions gradually becomes just the finger tapping on a phone screen. The full-body action improves their understanding of what movements are needed.

We have found that Simon Says games are a fun and effective way to help learners understand what these action words mean. For instance, "Simon Says scroll down." We are doing this in the classroom, so the instructor can show the class what to do and can then offer individual support for learners who are struggling with whatever action we are practicing.

Diana: The Joy of Teaching Literacy Students

Teaching adults is my passion. Currently, I am working mainly with literacy students. That is a different part of ESL that I had not been exposed to during my training and early career. I have since fallen in love with it. Teaching literacy students is both about introducing them to learning skills that they were not able to acquire in their home countries because of lack of access to formal education and also helping them to become literate in English.

Lauren: The Excitement of "Figuring It Out"

I like being in a classroom with learners who are highly motivated, who have overcome incredible life circumstances to be in that classroom, and who have taken on the challenge of learning how to be independent and interact in a new language. It's incredibly meaningful. They come into the classroom with what I would call a gracious spirit. It makes for a really rich learning environment. I have the chance to explore so many unique avenues of teaching. Literacy instruction is a new enough area that we're still figuring it out. It's exciting to be part of that.

Technology Standards and Performance Indicators

Here are some key ways in which Diana and Lauren's teaching methods demonstrate how NLS's standards for technology-enhanced language teaching and learning can be incorporated into TESOL instruction.

Standard 1: Using devices and systems skillfully.

Understand and use personal and institutional devices, operating systems, and networks to support quality technology-enhanced language teaching and learning.

- Diana and Lauren have been inventive in finding step-by-step methods to help literacy students feel comfortable with digital devices and software at school, in their homes, and while on the move in their communities.

Standard 2: Tools and digital resources.

Understand and use a basic set of relevant technology resources and tools for language teaching and continue to update and expand this set regularly.

- Lauren, Diana, and their colleagues at the ECSSD use a blended approach to teaching language at the literacy level. At this level, in-person classroom instruction is essential during onboarding to bring students up to a basic level of digital skills. It remains important throughout the literacy learning levels as a means of introducing new skills and providing individualized support. Once skills advance to a sufficient level, computer-assisted language learning greatly enriches the learning experience.

Standard 4: Digital literacy and digital citizenship for instructors and learners.

Be aware of and model the use of technology in safe, legal, ethical, and equitable ways.

- Diana and Lauren make a point of explaining the ethical use of technology to their students and follow local, provincial, and national online privacy, copyright, and fair dealing regulations.

VIGNETTE 8: DIANA AGUDELO AND LAUREN HEBERT *PROVIDING SUPPORT TO ESL TEACHERS NEW TO ONLINE INSTRUCTION*

Précis

The Idea

For the many ESL instructors accustomed to teaching only in the classroom, the shuttering of schools caused by COVID-19 came as a shock. Of necessity, the paradigm shifted overnight from face-to-face classroom teaching to remote instruction over the Internet. The challenge was to provide teachers without previous exposure to Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) with the new strategies and skills needed to deliver effective online instruction and help learners engage with new environment. At the Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division (ECSD) LINC Program, the answer was obvious: create and implement a crash course for instructors to give them a basic set of digital teaching skills. In the learning journey that followed, the digital skills building course rapidly improved. In the past few years – under the guidance of ECSD colleagues Diana Agudelo and Lauren Hebert – a more sophisticated onboarding program focused on how to work with BigBlueButton and the Avenue eLearning platform will soon become a standard offering for all new ESL teachers.

The Learners

The majority of ECSD LINC's current complement of ESL instructors developed online teaching skills during the COVID years. However, many newly qualified ESL instructors hired after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted have never taught online. To ensure a consistent level of online skills across the entire teaching staff, ECSD LINC will soon require all new teachers to be trained in digital skills and onboarded using ECSD LINC's method of CALL.

The Approach

ECSD LINC has adopted two online learning platforms as its principal means of delivering online instruction. BigBlueButton (BBB) is used to create online learning experiences, connect teachers with their students, and foster engagement in virtual classrooms. The Avenue eLearning Platform, developed by New Language Solutions, combines a suite of interactive LINC course activities associated with listening, speaking, reading, and writing with opportunities for collaboration and discussion. When Laura or Diana are conducting a day-long online class, a new instructor will be invited to sit with them side-by-side as they deliver the course. This teacher's perspective of the online course delivery process allows the new instructor to see what is being done and why, ask questions, and try it for themselves. In the months that follow onboarding, if an instructor encounters difficulties, they can book time with Laura, Diana, or a recently hired Digital Literacy

Facilitator to work things out. The Facilitator's main job will be to help instructors and students with their technical issues. As Diana explains, "The main objective of the onboarding program is to demonstrate that teaching online is very doable. There are things to remember, but it doesn't have to be stressful."

Interested in Learning More?

Instructor Profiles **Context** **In Diana's & Lauren's Own Words** **Application of Technology Standards**

Instructor Profiles:

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Lauren first encountered English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction when volunteering overseas as a high school graduate. When people realized that she spoke English, they would occasionally ask if she would be willing to teach English. As Lauren explains, "In some informal overseas contexts, just speaking English is enough of a credential to teach. Although I didn't feel fully equipped to do so, I welcomed the challenge, enjoyed the experience, and returned to Canada looking forward to further training in TESL."

When Lauren returned to Canada, she completed a degree in Linguistics at the University of Alberta, followed by a stint as a language researcher. She developed a real love for learning, especially regarding how people learn to speak a language. How do children and infants learn to speak their first language? How do adults learn to speak a second language? That led her to take a Master's degree in TESL at the University of Alberta, which she completed in 2017. Almost immediately, Lauren was hired by ECSD LINC where she has been working primarily as a literacy instructor ever since. Lauren took on the role of Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) Lead in 2020.

Context

When COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, and lockdowns began in Canada a week later, the ESL community – like so many others in Canada – scrambled to adapt to a new reality. Self-paced online learning was well established by 2020 and many messaging, collaboration, and social media apps had become household names. However, these online capabilities had yet to make much of an impression on ESL teaching and learning. Especially for students at the lowest levels of language proficiency, face-to-face classroom learning with plenty of over-the-shoulder assistance from an instructor was the gold standard. As teaching, of necessity, moved online, there were three immediate priorities: establish the technical infrastructure to make online learning possible; teach instructors how to use it; and help ESL learners understand, adapt to, and thrive in the new learning environment. Diana Agudelo and Lauren Hebert played key roles in responding to those initial needs. As the COVID crisis receded and students returned to the classroom, a new paradigm emerged – blended learning combining the best of classroom and online learning. Diana and Lauren continue to help instructors and learners make use of new resources and approaches.

In Diana's and Lauren's Own Words

Diana: Teacher Instruction and Collaboration

I first heard of the Avenue learning platform at a conference in Regina sometime before the pandemic. I subsequently took Avenue training and urged other trainers to take it as well. In choosing Avenue as our learning platform, we first compared it to Google Classrooms. We settled on Avenue mainly because it offered a lot of ready-made services for LINC. That meant we didn't have to create materials from scratch. We had plenty to work with from within Avenue.

Recently, Lauren and I started a pilot program in which we volunteered to show new instructors how to teach a class on Avenue. We knew that two new instructors were feeling uneasy about teaching online for the first time. So, Lauren took one of the instructors and I took the other. We each spent an entire day with them, modelling how to teach a class online. In each case, the new instructor sat next to us so that they could see what we do and how we do it. They asked questions and we provided answers.

In addition to the full-day sessions, we have the flexibility to respond to issues as they come up. When an instructor needs help, one of us will meet with the instructor, perhaps playing the role of a student in their class, to give them the opportunity to practice. A session of that kind might take no more than 10 or 20 minutes. In some cases, it will take place online. In other cases Lauren or I will visit the instructor at their worksite.

We also started using Teams for instructor discussions during the pandemic. We wanted to create a virtual space for program-wide collaboration. We do that for each of the different language levels and for topics that demand attention from time to time. For instance, we have done sessions on assessment, sharing resources, and how to honor Black History Month. When the pandemic was over, we surveyed our instructors to see if they wanted to continue collaborating online. The answer was yes, so we made it part of our programming going forward. These online meetings take place three times in a four-month session, with participants coming from all three of our schools. Each session takes approximately one hour, and participants are paid for their time. Recently, we asked instructors if they want to have some of the collaboration sessions face-to-face rather than conducting them strictly online. As the answer was yes, we're trying that now. When we do a face-to-face session, we conduct a separate session in each of our three sites. Online sessions bring participants together from all of the sites.

Lauren: Refining Our Support for Instructors

During the Teams discussion sessions, instructors often share something that they have tried out online or in class. For instance, they might explain how they have overcome a problem such as students having difficulty typing in an address by simply sending them a link. Another instructor might share a new website they have discovered, provide the link, and make suggestions on how to use it. It's about instructors helping one another find resources and solve problems. They have a lot to share. These are mandatory sessions, so the participation rate is very high. All our approximately 30 daytime instructors, plus coordinators, show up.

To better support new instructors who want help in preparing to teach online for the first time, we are creating a set lesson plan to replace our pilot program's ad hoc approach. I say "set" lesson plans, but it is understood that they would be a starting point and might need to be modified depending on the level at which the instructor will be teaching and any special circumstances that need to be taken into account.

We have recently hired a new person to be a Digital Literacy Facilitator. The role was created to offer digital training, guidance, troubleshooting, and support for instructors and students across online, blended, and face-to-face modalities. We are very happy with this development, particularly as it will allow Diana and me to focus more on our regular duties.

We are more convinced than ever that there is value in having new instructors see the "back end" of instructional delivery and student support rather than watching it just from a student's perspective. Whether the new instructor sits in the same room with an experienced instructor to see how a course is delivered and managed, or uses a program like Teams to watch another instructor working in Avenue, seeing things from an instructor's perspective is very helpful to new instructors in developing effective practices of their own.

Technology Standards and Performance Indicators

Here are some key ways in which Diana and Lauren's teaching methods demonstrate how NLS's standards for technology-enhanced language teaching and learning can be incorporated into TESOL instruction.

Standard 1: Using devices and systems skillfully.

Understand and use personal and institutional devices, operating systems, and networks to support quality technology-enhanced language teaching and learning.

- The digital skills building program – and later the onboarding program – developed by Diana and Lauren as the ECSSD Adult ESL Program transition to online learning had the express purpose of helping instructors acquire new knowledge, strategies, and skills needed to deliver effective online instruction.
- On-going assistance in addressing online issues as they arise ensures that instructors are able to solve problems and polish their skills over time.

Standard 2: Tools and digital resources.

Understand and use a basic set of relevant technology resources and tools for language teaching and continue to update and expand this set regularly

- The onboarding program focusses on a limited set of technology tools that instructors will use frequently in delivering online courses. Specifically, these include BigBlueButton, the Avenue learning platform, Microsoft Teams, and, to a lesser extent, WhatsApp.
- As an exclusive focus on online instruction during the COVID years gave way to a partial return to the classroom, teach training has expanded to include a range of online, in person, and blended modes of instruction, recognizing the differences in effective practice for each.

Standard 7: Establishing and maintaining professional connections online.

Use technology to connect with peers in a community of practice for pedagogical and personal support

- Lauren and Diana began using Microsoft Teams for instructor discussions during the pandemic. The objective was to create a virtual space for instructors to get together as a group. In addition to plenary sessions for all 30 ECSSD instructors, smaller groups of instructors teaching at the different language levels meet to discuss issues and best practices specific to their circumstances.
- Instructors' willingness to explain how they have overcome problems, share resources they have discovered, or make suggestions for innovative exercises, builds the digital capabilities and confidence of the entire teaching staff.

APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

This section of the Avenue Instructor Standards lists and defines terms within the standards that have special significance for instructors using Avenue or otherwise engaging in technology-enhanced language learning (TELL). We do not include terms that are common in non-technical English or those that relate to general teaching concepts (e.g., rubric) except when we feel their interpretation in the TELL context might need clarification.

The terms *blended learning* and *online learning* are used deliberately throughout the standards documents to indicate all combinations of online delivery in face-to-face, hybrid, HyFlex and remote situations. We encourage service providers to localize these definitions—with input from their staff—to their own contexts as it suits their needs.

Note. Some item definitions here have been adopted or adapted from TESOL (2008), *TESOL Technology Standards Framework*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL Publications, under that document's CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license. Also, we may use specific familiar product names in definitions to enhance their clarity. This does not represent an endorsement of that product.

Term	Definition
Accessibility	A quality of a website or app that makes it usable for those with disabilities.
Accommodation	An adjustment of the learning environment or expectations that allows a person with a disability to participate satisfactorily in a course, for example, by providing accessibility functions, alternative formats, or additional time on assignments or assessments.
Application/App	A software program designed for a specific purpose: for example, email, texting, web browsing, word processing, gaming, or playing audio/video.
Artificial intelligence/AI	Computer programs that use large datasets and learn from experience to perform human-like tasks, such as face recognition. See generative AI below for productive uses for language teaching and learning.
Asynchronous	Interactions that occur with time delays between the two sides. For example, an instructor records a lesson for an online class and learners watch it later to complete a homework assignment. Email is a common example of asynchronous communication.
Autonomy	Self-motivation, direction, and regulation to support independence in learning.
Avenue.ca	A rich, online Moodle-based platform providing webinars, resources, a learning management system, and collaboration and discussion opportunities for teachers and learners in the English and French-Canadian settlement language sector.
Bandwidth	The amount of data that can come to and from a device connected to a wired, wi-fi, or cellular data network. More bandwidth is needed for streaming videos and less for texts.
Blended	A course involving a combination of face-to-face and online instruction or learning, also called hybrid.
Bluetooth	A form of wireless connection from a computer, tablet, or smartphone to nearby devices such as earbuds or headsets, smartwatches, digital assistants like Alexa and Siri, and other devices.

Term	Definition
Breakout rooms	A virtual space within an online platform like Zoom or Teams where groups of two or more can gather and interact independently of others in the larger meeting.
Browser	The application that allows a user to load and read web pages, such as Google Chrome, Apple Safari, Microsoft Edge, DuckDuckGo, and Firefox.
Bug	A problem with the function of an app that causes it to fail to work as expected, often due to an error in the coding of a recent update.
Can-Do	A statement within the standards indicating whether an instructor believes they meet an expected criterion for a given standard, closely related to the performance indicators, but always presented in first person.
Cellular data	The system on a smartphone that allows it to be mobile and access the Internet and websites without wi-fi.
ChatGPT	The first publicly available generative AI program (released in November 2022) that can engage in humanlike conversations and produce coherent texts.
Cloud	Online space where servers, apps, and files can be stored and shared, reducing the need for physical servers and storage.
Collaborative writing	Using online technology such as Google Docs to support pairs or groups in co-constructing a text and providing online feedback to one another.
Community of practice	A group of people linked by common activities and interests, including work, and who learn from each other in a collaborative way.
Core application	General purpose software commonly used in work, such as word-processors, spreadsheets, email apps, and browsers.
Crafting prompts	Producing effective instructions for a generative AI program like ChatGPT, an increasingly important skill for both instructors and learners.
Data analysis	Using technology to collect and analyze information for areas like individual and collective learner performance.
Deep fake	An image, audio clip, or video clip that has been convincingly manipulated by AI to look authentic and is presented as authentic. This is often used for illicit purposes.
Device	For our purposes, any physical piece of technology that uses or is associated with a computer system—especially, desktop and laptop computers, tablets, and smartphones.
Digital	Referring to devices, processes, or products (audio, graphic, video, or text) in electronic form.
Digital portfolio	A virtual portfolio containing texts, images, audio, video, and multimodal combinations of these in electronic rather than physical paper form.
Disabilities	Physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
Effectiveness	How well technology or technology-mediated tasks work in achieving language learning outcomes as determined by the instructor's goals and reasons for using the technology
Efficiency	The degree to which a given technology, activity, or task meets its objective in terms of saving time or resources, especially for improving language learning.

Term	Definition
Embedded AI	AI components seamlessly and invisibly incorporated into a variety of apps, including browsers and word-processors.
Emergency remote teaching/ERT)=	A sudden shift from classroom or blended to fully online teaching due to circumstances that do not allow gathering in physical classrooms, as happened in spring 2020 during the COVID-19 crisis.
Fair dealing	Respecting ownership of intellectual property.
Formative feedback/ formative assessment	Ongoing evaluation of language learning progress, ideally helping learners understand what they need to know or do better.
Forum	A form of asynchronous online communication used for maintaining extensive discussions, also known as a discussion board.
Foundational tool	A general application that is often present on a device when purchased and that is used to perform common tasks; examples include word processors, email apps, and web browsers.
Fraudulent websites	Websites that appear authentic to a user but provide misinformation or attempt to get the user to disclose private information or send money.
Generative AI/GenAI	A program that draws from very large amounts of language data (datasets), generally collected from the web, to create human-like responses to prompts. The results can be text, audio, video, or images.
HyFlex	A form of synchronous instruction that brings students who are online and those in a physical classroom with the instructor together simultaneously.
Identifiers	Discrete pieces of information that are associated with a specific person and can help determine who that person is. Identifiers may include name, ID, birthdate, and other personal information.
Identity	The sense of self and group awareness that a person has; most people have complex identities made up of several different aspects.
Inclusive	Giving a sense of belonging to the group; learning activities designed to help learners feel that they belong.
Learner fit	At the appropriate level, in the appropriate medium or mode to be of best use to an individual student.
Learning management system/LMS	A program that includes a store of teaching and learning resources, a way of organizing and finding those resources, and a way to store information about users. Many include enrollment, attendance, and grade data for learners.
Leverage	Use technology in a way that creates additional opportunities.
Libel	Lying publicly about an individual in a way that harms that individual.
Mashups	Multimodal creations that may include text, audio, video and other media, often created for social media.
Multimodal	Communication that provides more than one form to present information, often allowing for richer interpretation or to aid comprehension: captioning on a video, text and graphics, graphics and audio, etc.
Networks	Systems like the Internet, wi-fi, and cellular data, that allow devices to connect with one another or to resources on the cloud.
Operating system	The program within a device like a computer or smartphone that includes both automated and user-controlled settings, such as making network connections, setting volume and display brightness, organizing apps, and so on; for example, smartphones typically use either the Android operating system for android phones or iOS for iPhones.

Term	Definition
Performance indicator	A specific, observable way that a standard can be met.
Phishing	Sending an email to gain illegal access to someone's personal information, such as a password or ID number.
Plagiarism	Use of someone else's copyrighted material without citation or permission.
Platform	A website containing a variety of useful information, tools, and resources. An example for language training is Avenue.ca.
Post	To send a message on a discussion list or email, or the message sent.
Prompt (AI)	A command input into a generative AI program to get a response. A well-crafted prompt for a language teacher will include the type of learner, the language level, and what the desired output will look like. The act of creating prompts is called prompt engineering.
Repository	An online storage site for information of different types.
Screencast	A program that records the screen while it is being used, often also recording audio from the user.
Search engine	A tool used with a web browser to find information specified by the user.
Sensitive information	Personal information that an individual would not normally share freely with others, such as medical history.
Settlement language program	A government-funded language program dedicated to helping newcomers improve their English or French.
Slider	A linear digital control to move forward and backward in an audio or video.
Smartphone	A mobile phone with the ability to go to the Internet and interact there.
Summative feedback/ assessment	Final version of feedback or assessment, usually with a grade or score. See also formative feedback.
Synchronizing	Making data consistent across devices, such as having the same browser bookmarks on a person's smartphone and tablet.
Synchronous	Also known as "in real time." This is when the teacher and learners or other people are online together and interacting. The opposite is asynchronous.
System	Can refer to either the operating system of a device or a combination of devices and their interconnections through networks.
System update	A new version of the operating system: the program within a device like a computer or smartphone that includes both automated and user-controlled settings,
Teacher fit	In harmony with an instructor's teaching style.
Technologies	Used here to mean digital devices or other digital resources.
Time stamp	The date a file was created or modified; this is automatically created by a computer program.
Troubleshooting	Trying to resolve a technology problem. Previous experience or a web search for the problem can help.
URL	Location of a page on the web, usually starting with http: or https: (Uniform Resource Locator).
Webinar	A seminar held online. It can be one session or multiple sessions.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF STANDARDS AND PIS

Standard 1. Understand and use personal and institutional devices, device system settings, and networks to support quality technology-enhanced language teaching and learning.

PI 1.1. Be comfortable with technology in your settings: home, institutional, and mobile.

PI 1.2. Understand the primary features of the systems on devices you use and how to change them as needed.

PI 1.3. Be familiar with the vocabulary that describes the technology devices and systems you use.

PI 1.4. Know how to organize applications and files (documents, spreadsheets, photos, etc.) so that they are easy to locate when needed.

PI 1.5. Know how to look up information about your devices, systems, and networks.

PI 1.6. Be able to perform basic troubleshooting/problem-solving for devices and systems.

Standard 2. Understand and use a basic set of relevant technology resources and tools for language teaching and continue to update and expand this set regularly.

PI 2.1. Recognize that tools and resources can not only enhance but also diminish learning effectiveness depending on how they are used.

PI 2.2. Know how to use foundational tools for production and communication, especially those included by default with most devices.

PI 2.3. Be able to perform basic troubleshooting/problem-solving for the tools you use.

PI 2.4. Teach language with and through technology across a range of online, in person, and blended modes, recognizing the differences in effective practice for each.

PI 2.5. Use Avenue or another learning management system if feasible to set up and manage an online or blended course.

PI 2.6. Evaluate technology tools and applications for their potential.

PI 2.7. Seek to adapt tools and resources to meet teaching and learning needs.

PI 2.8. Carefully consider and implement AI and GenAI tools.

Standard 3. Thoughtfully integrate technology in your teaching, informed by exemplary practice and relevant theory and research.

PI 3.1. Seek out and make use of sources of exemplary practice.

PI 3.2. Stay abreast of current theory and research related to technology use.

PI 3.3. Create technology-enhanced learning environments that provide multiple types of media and modes for learning.

PI 3.4. Use technology-enhanced active learning and task-based approaches that incorporate authentic learner experiences.

PI 3.5. Use technology tasks to build creativity, reflection, and community.

PI 3.6. Identify, adapt, and create effective prompts for GenAI.

Standard 4. Be aware of and model the use of technology in safe, legal, ethical, and equitable ways.

PI 4.1. Guide learners to make positive and socially responsible contributions online.

PI 4.2. Know how to access and select safe resources online and share this knowledge with learners.

PI 4.3. Acknowledge learners' ownership of their online work.

PI 4.4. Learn about ethical use of technology and follow local, provincial, and national online privacy, copyright, and fair dealing regulations.

PI 4.5. Stay abreast of legal and ethical issues related to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

PI 4.6. Model equitable practices by incorporating learners' wealth of linguistic and cultural resources in technology use.

PI 4.7. Model online behaviors that show respect for diversity in opinion, identity, and cultural practices.

Standard 5. Use technology thoughtfully to identify and address current and future needs of learners in ways that reflect diverse identities and contexts.

PI 5.1. Be aware of the technology used by your learners and the contexts in which they use it.

PI 5.2. Be aware of and cultivate learners' individual communicative and digital competencies.

PI 5.3. Leverage technology to design personalized learner-centered experiences.

PI 5.4. Promote learner autonomy through technology-enhanced collaborative practices.

PI 5.5. Prepare learners to think about ways that unfamiliar technologies might help or hinder them in reaching their goals.

Standard 6. Use technology to support, monitor, and assess learner progress.

PI 6.1. Demonstrate knowledge of available technology resources to support learners.

PI 6.2. Maintain digital communication with learners and education stakeholders about learner progress.

PI 6.3. Understand and use data analysis where available and appropriate to guide learner progress.

PI 6.4. Provide technology enhanced feedback that is varied and focused on learners' short- and long-term needs.

PI 6.5. Use technology to enable learner reflection, self-evaluation, and peer-evaluation.

Standard 7. Use technology to connect with peers in a community of practice for pedagogical and personal support.

PI 7.1. Acknowledge that a professional online community forms a structure that facilitates learning through interactions and relationships with others.

PI 7.2. Engage in meaningful online collaboration with your colleagues to create authentic learning experiences.

PI 7.3. Share online practices, resources, and research with peers.

PI 7.4. Take advantage of practice-focused online professional development opportunities.