

Overview

IN November 1998, the Toronto Catholic District School Board was awarded the contract to develop the curriculum guidelines for LINC 4 and 5. The purpose of these guidelines is to establish measurable outcomes based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks so that LINC 4 and 5 programs in Ontario will be consistent and well co-ordinated and reflect the needs of ESL learners throughout the province.

Computer tasks have been included in these guidelines to encourage instructors to use the LINC computer labs to their fullest capacity. The benefits of this are twofold: language learning is enhanced and computer skills needed to obtain employment and function effectively in Canadian society are acquired.

The themes, topics and resource materials presented here are based on questionnaires distributed to LINC 4 and 5 instructors across the province to seek their opinions about what would be useful in a curriculum. Questionnaires were also sent to LINC 4 and 5 learners to find out what themes, topics and computer tasks interested them. Because these curriculum guidelines are a continuation of the guidelines for LINC 1-3, an additional questionnaire was sent to LINC 1-3 instructors to determine what changes, if any, needed to be incorporated into the new document.

All or parts of the document were critically examined by various groups at different stages of its development. Forty-nine instructors from nineteen different centers across the province participated in field-testing most of the topics and provided feedback on many of the resource sections of the guidelines. The document was also examined by an expert panel, comprised of four members with expertise in computers, the Canadian Language Benchmarks, curriculum development and cultural appropriateness. An advisory committee provided input on an ongoing basis. Additional feedback was obtained from workshop presentations in Windsor, Ottawa, London and Toronto.

Theoretical Framework

This document is based on the theoretical foundation of communicative competence. The Canadian Language Benchmarksⁱ document refers to language as a means of communication. Communicative competence is the ability to use language to function effectively in society. It is composed of four competencies:ⁱⁱ

1. **Grammatical Competence** is concerned with mastery of the language code. It involves both accuracy and fluency in the use of vocabulary, in word and sentence formation, in pronunciation and spelling as well as in linguistic semantics.
2. **Discourse Competence** is the mastery of combining grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text as in oral and written narratives, business letters, or instructions. Unity of text is achieved through cohesion in form (e.g. the use of pronouns, synonyms) and coherence in meaning (e.g. the relationships among the different meanings in a text). These may be literal meanings, communicative functions, or attitudes.
3. **Sociolinguistic Competence** involves understanding the social context and significance of language use (e.g. recognizing formal and informal registers, hidden meanings or performing different language functions effectively, such as interrupting, disagreeing, and ending a conversation).
4. **Strategic Competence** requires mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication or to enhance the effectiveness of communication (e.g. gesturing or paraphrasing to convey meaning).

The topic pages, which include **Topic Outcomes**, **Language Focus** items, **Classes might want to learn more about ...** and **Learners find it useful to...** support the development of communicative competence by including elements of grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic competence.

ⁱ Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 1996.

ⁱⁱ Modified from Canale, From "Communicative Competence to Communicative Language Pedagogy" in *Language and Communication*. Eds. J. Richards & R. Schmidt, London: Longman, 1983. 2-27.

Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)

The LINC 4 and 5 Curriculum Guidelines are consistent with the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), the national standard by which a learner’s proficiency in English as a second language is measured. The CLB describes the learner’s ability to perform particular language tasks at increasing levels of complexity from Benchmark 1 to Benchmark 12 in three skill areas: listening/speaking, reading and writing. It also outlines the specific performance and situational conditions under which these tasks are to be performed. The levels of proficiency in the Benchmarks range along a continuum from “initial basic competence” to “advanced fluent competence”. LINC 4 and 5 are at the intermediate level of this continuum.

LINC levels 4 and 5 correspond to the Benchmarks in the following way:

Benchmarks/Skill Area	LINC 4	LINC 5
Listening/Speaking	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6
Reading	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5
Writing	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5

For the purpose of these curriculum guidelines, a learner’s communicative performance is measured by Level Outcomes (for LINC 4 and 5) and Topic Outcomes (for each topic) based on the specific competencies outlined in the Canadian Language Benchmarks. The Level Outcomes describe what the learner can do at the end of each level and the Topic Outcomes contextualize the competencies within various topics from which instructors can choose.

The CLB and Curriculum Development

Using the Canadian Language Benchmarks to develop these curriculum guidelines imposes certain limitations. Competencies that may be more suitable to particular topics could not be used because they do not correspond to the Benchmarks assigned to LINC 4 and 5. For example, International Human Rights, Native Peoples and National Unity do not easily lend themselves to the pragmatic, functional competencies described in the CLB at these levels and are more suited to competencies such as critical analysis (Reading, Benchmark 9) or expressing and analyzing opinions (Listening/Speaking, Benchmark 8). Consequently, these topics may not have been addressed as profoundly as the issues warrant but were included anyway because learners expressed an interest in them.

Spiralling

The spiralling aspect of the Canadian Language Benchmarks is evident in these curriculum guidelines. Some Benchmark competencies such as giving and following instructions, getting information from formatted and unformatted texts and expressing ideas in writing are repeated in both LINC 4 and 5 at different levels of complexity. For example, in level 4, learners are expected to read and identify the main idea and supporting points in 2-3 paragraphs of simple narrative, biographical or descriptive prose, while in level 5 they are expected to understand the main ideas in authentic texts and general daily prose. Spiralling linguistic tasks and thematic content gives instructors an opportunity to review competencies and skills on an on-going basis within different contexts.

Computer Integration

The availability of computer labs across Ontario has made it possible for computers to be used in LINC classrooms as tools to facilitate the language learning process. The integration of computer training with language development in these guidelines provides instructors with a reliable resource for using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in their lessons while giving learners the opportunity to acquire useful skills for entering the workforce.

Computer tasks are included with every topic in this guide at three levels of proficiency: Novice, Experienced, and Advanced. Many computer tasks relate either to the language tasks or the language focus for the particular topic. **These tasks are merely suggestions.** They provide ideas for instructors and should be adapted to meet the specific needs and abilities of their learners. Most of the computer activities are generic tasks that can be adapted for use with any of the themes and topics.

For more information on the computer tasks and other computer resources in this document, please see the section “**How to Use the Computer Tasks**” in this guide.

Organization of the LINC 4 & 5 Curriculum Guidelines

These guidelines are organized in the following manner:

- How to Use the LINC 4 & 5 Curriculum Guidelines
- How to Use the Computer Tasks

Each Level (LINC 4 and LINC 5) includes the following:

- Suggested Themes and Topics
- Level Outcomes
- Legend
- Topic pages which include 12 themes and 36 topics

The Topic Pages include the following:

- Classes might want to learn more about...
- Learners find it useful to...
- Suggested Resources (see Classroom Resources for complete references)
- Topic Outcomes
- Language Focus
- Sample Language Tasks
- Sample Computer Tasks

The Additional Resources section is divided into four subsections:

a) Strategies for Instructors

b) Planning which includes:

- Needs Assessment
- Planning Grids
- Suggested Grammar Items
- Sample Long Range Plan
- Two Sample Lesson Plans
- Learner Techniques and Strategies for Improving Efficiency
- Checklist of Computer Skills
- Classroom Resources

c) Assessment and Evaluation which includes:

- Evaluation Checklists
- Learner Self-Evaluation Form
- Program Evaluation Sample

d) Glossaries including:

- Glossary of Computer Terms
- Glossary of Grammar Terms
- Glossary of General Terms

For more detailed information about each section, see **How to Use the LINC 4 & 5 Curriculum Guidelines and How to Use the Computer Tasks**.

How to Use the LINC 4 & 5 Curriculum Guidelines

THESE GUIDELINES include all the elements needed to develop a program including long range and daily lesson plans. Each item in this section is listed in the same order as in these guidelines.

Please note that these are guidelines only and have been developed with flexibility and adaptability in mind. Every group of learners is unique, with a range of interests, abilities and needs. These guidelines should be adapted to meet those needs. Tips (➔) have been included throughout this section to provide additional information on how to use each section of the guidelines.

At the beginning of each level, you will find:

- An alphabetical list of **suggested themes and topics** that features twelve themes with three topics per theme chosen on the basis of a province-wide survey.

 - ➔ *You do not have to cover all the topics. Choose only those which are relevant to your learners' needs.*
 - ➔ *You can develop your own themes and topics based on the results of a class needs assessment.*
 - ➔ *Ideas for adapting topics or creating new ones can be found in "Classes might want to learn more about..."*
- **Level Outcomes** that provide an overview of the Benchmark competencies learners are expected to master at LINC 4 and 5. These are a **minimum** set of outcomes.

 - ➔ *You can introduce competencies from higher benchmarks if they suit your learners' needs.*
 - ➔ *Competencies from the lower benchmarks can be reviewed and reinforced at a more complex level.*

➔ *To develop topic outcomes for themes and topics not included in these guidelines, you can refer to the **planning grids**.*

- A **legend** explaining what each icon on the topic pages represents.

Next come 36 topics for each level:

- The **TOPIC PAGES** consist of two facing pages with the theme on the top left of each page and the topic on the right.

 - ➔ *It is not necessary to teach the topics in alphabetical order the way they appear in the list of themes and topics.*
 - ➔ *Some topics may require several class sessions and the length of time needed to complete a topic is entirely at your discretion.*

The **left pages** include:

- **"Classes might want to learn more about..."**: information relevant to the topic.

 - ➔ *Use this information to develop additional topics related to the theme or to get ideas about lesson content.*
- **"Learners might find it useful to..."**: tips and strategies to help learners develop the language skills they need to cope with various situations. It also includes basic survival strategies for difficult situations.

 - ➔ *This list may also provide some ideas for lesson content.*

- **Suggested Resources:** information for lesson planning ranging from books and places to obtain authentic materials to guest speakers, videos, websites, and ideas for fieldtrips.

- ➔ *More detailed information about the resources listed here can be found under Classroom Resources in the Planning section.*
- ➔ *Since Internet websites and URLs often change or become obsolete, key search words have been included to locate additional sites.*

The **right pages** include:

- **Topic Outcomes:** the specific competencies related to the topic. The outcomes for each of the skill areas are listed in the order of listening/speaking, reading and writing.

- ➔ *You can teach the skills in any order.*
- **Language Focus:** suggested vocabulary, expressions, grammar and pronunciation items to help learners achieve the topic outcomes.

- ➔ *You can adapt the language, structure, and pronunciation to suit your learners.*
- **Sample Language Tasks:** suggested tasks to achieve the topic outcomes. A listening/speaking, reading and writing task is included in that order.

- ➔ *These are samples only. Feel free to modify them based on your learners' needs.*
- **Sample Computer Tasks:** activities that either reinforce one of the sample language tasks or make use of one of the three software packages (Ellis, Tense Buster, and Explore Canada) when they relate to a particular theme or grammar point.

- ➔ *Again these are sample tasks and you are free to choose other computer tasks that are more appropriate to your learners' needs and computer literacy level. You can also create your own tasks.*
- ➔ *The inclusion of a sample computer task on each topic page does not imply that a computer segment be taught every day since many topics may take several sessions to complete.*

Following LINC 5 is the Additional Resources section:

This section includes additional materials that instructors may find useful. It is divided into four subsections: Strategies for Instructors, Planning, Assessment and Evaluation, and Glossaries.

- **Strategies for Instructors:** answers some common questions instructors may have about needs assessment, lesson planning and learner evaluation.

- ➔ *This information may be useful to new instructors.*

Planning includes:

- **Needs Assessment:** describes elements needed to conduct a successful needs assessment.

- ➔ *A sample needs assessment is included.*
- **Planning Grids** for LINC 4 and 5: useful grids incorporating all of the competencies learners need to master during the course.

- ➔ *You can use the grid to check off the competencies to be taught within each topic. This will ensure that all the competencies in the three skill areas are covered.*
- ➔ *You may need to check off a particular competency a number of times over the duration of a program until learners have mastered it.*
- **Suggested Grammar Items:** a compilation of the grammar items from the topic pages for LINC 4 and 5.

- ➔ *This is not an exhaustive list of structures. You may add structures as needed to achieve the topic outcomes.*
- ➔ *You are not expected to teach all of the grammar mentioned.*
- ➔ *Some structures included here appear in the CLB at higher levels. Learners may be introduced to these structures at this level but are not expected to master them.*

- A **Long Range Plan** and two **Sample Lesson Plans**, one for each level. These plans show how sections of the topic pages can be incorporated into a comprehensive lesson plan.

➔ *You are not required to follow these lesson plan formats. Use any format that works for you.*

- **Learner Techniques and Strategies for Improving Proficiency:** tips to help learners learn English more effectively both inside and outside the classroom. Some of the techniques include paraphrasing, guessing the meanings of words from the context and recognizing signals such as facial expressions and intonation that indicate misunderstandings.

- **Checklist of Computer Skills** which has a variety of computer skills relevant to either the Novice, Experienced or Advanced computer user.

➔ *The list is extensive and you are not required to cover all the skills on the list.*

➔ *You can use the list to keep track of the skills already covered in class and to obtain ideas for future lessons.*

- **Classroom Resources:** an extensive collection of all the resources mentioned on the topic pages organized by theme. The list includes brochures, books, films, guest speakers, websites and the addresses of places where you can obtain authentic materials.

Assessment and Evaluation includes:

- **Evaluation Checklists:** grids describing the competencies learners have to master for each level and some of the conditions under which they are expected to perform them.

➔ *You can make a copy of the checklist for each learner and check off the competencies as learners master them.*

➔ *You can use the items in the checklist as a set of exit criteria when assessing learners for promotion to the next level.*

- **Learner Evaluation Form** which gives learners the opportunity to evaluate their own progress in the class.

➔ *Learners can complete the questionnaire as an exercise in self-evaluation but are not required to return it to the instructor.*

- **Program Evaluation Sample** which is for a general evaluation of the course by the learner.

➔ *This may be collected by the instructor and used to plan future lessons.*

The Glossaries section includes:

- **Glossary of Computer Terms** for explanations of the computer terms.

- **Glossary of Grammar Terms** for explanations of grammatical terms.

- **Glossary of General Terms** for detailed explanations of some general terms.

How to Use the Computer Tasks

LANGUAGE AND COMPUTER INTEGRATION simulates language learning environments and enhances language learning. The purpose of using computers in an English as a second language class is to facilitate second language learning via a different medium. As language instructors, our responsibility is to teach language through meaningful, real life, authentic tasks, and the computer is yet another tool for facilitating such learning.

- ➔ *The inclusion of sample computer tasks for every topic in the guidelines does not imply that you must incorporate them in your lessons or need to include a computer lesson with every topic. For example, if a suggested task is too advanced or too simple for a group of learners, modify the task or create an appropriate task.*
- ➔ *For centres without Internet connection, Internet tasks may be completed at public facilities such as libraries or Employment Resource Centres.*

Types of tasks

Pedagogic tasks:

use computers to reinforce a specific language point such as:

- grammar (see Citizenship)
- spelling (see Cultural Diversity)
- vocabulary (see Environmental Issues and Starting a Small Business)

Real life tasks:

use computers to perform tasks that have real life applications such as:

- word-processing a letter (see Social Issues)
- using the Internet (see Adult Continuing Education and Immigration Law)
- creating a flyer (see A Child's Education) or invitation card (see Celebrations)

- accessing information in public places (see Public Libraries)

➔ *Feel free to create your own tasks if the suggested tasks are not suited to your learners' interests and needs.*

Types of software

LINC Software:

there are three educational software packages installed in all LINC labs across Ontario. These are Explore Canada, Tense Buster, and Ellis.

Explore Canada is divided into two sections: History and Geography, and is mainly suitable for gathering information and data about Canada. The History and Geography sections are further divided into subsections with text at two levels of complexity (**Level 1 and Level 2**). Level 1 is equipped with audio capability and is one paragraph long. Level 2 features longer, more complex text, and does not include audio. Other features of Explore Canada include:

- The Index-helpful in locating topics listed in alphabetical order within the software. By clicking on any topic in the Index menu, a list of references (section and page number) to that topic appear in a window on the screen.
- Two exercises within each topic. Both exercises require mouse skills (drag and drop).
- Writing Pad: a simple text editor allowing learners to type their own ideas or copy text from parts of the units and save or print.
- Mouse Tutorial: a hands-on activity to practise basic mouse skills (point, click, and drag).
- Help feature with tips on parts of the screen.

Tense Buster features grammar at five levels of complexity from Elementary to Advanced. Each level is divided into several grammar points. Included for each grammar focus within the levels are:

- Explanation of the grammar item.
 - Practice.
 - A number of self-marking tests.
 - Vocabulary.
 - Other features of Tense Buster include:
 - Scratch Pad, a simple text editor which allows learners to type their own ideas or copy text from parts of the units and save or print.
 - Five Authoring Kits (one for every level) which allow instructors to add their own activities, based on the theme or topic they are covering, to the software.
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- ➔ *The authoring kit is an excellent feature, which can be used by an average computer user, as it does not require sophisticated computer skills.*

Ellis is the most comprehensive of the three LINC software. This multimedia package includes five CDs: Ellis Intro, Middle Mastery, Senior Mastery, Master Pronunciation, and Ellis Placement.

Ellis Intro, Middle Mastery, and Senior Mastery are divided into units. Each unit includes a set of:

- Video dialogues.
- Games.
- Tests.

The time required to complete each unit varies according to the proficiency level of learners and the number of hours spent in the computer lab. In addition, Ellis can be used extensively for pronunciation practice since learners are able to work on the aspects of pronunciation they need to improve individually and at their own pace via headsets. The **Master Pronunciation** CD includes five sections:

1. Pronunciation
2. Minimal Pairs

3. Speech Acts

- Social Interactions
- Getting Things Done
- Dealing with Language Problems
- Conversing

4. Master Tutor

5. Tongue Twisters

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- ➔ *The suggested Ellis tasks in the guidelines are not meant to be completed in one lesson. Learners should be given adequate time for the completion of tasks in the units.*
 - ➔ *The video dialogues provide an opportunity for the learner to:
 - ➔ *role-play the characters in a chosen video*
 - ➔ *choose a character in a video, listen to the lines, record the same lines in his/her voice, and play back to compare.**
 - ➔ *Use Master Pronunciation with any topic that calls for pronunciation practice.*

Application Software:

also known as Productivity Tools, these are types of software which enable the user to perform daily tasks using computers at home and in the office. Examples include Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel, which are available in all LINC labs across Ontario.

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- ➔ *Use these software packages to engage the learner in meaningful, real life tasks such as preparing letters, writing reports, memos, essays (Word), performing simple calculations, and creating charts (Excel).*

Planning

Before engaging learners in computer tasks:

Before introducing a computer task, make sure that learners have been introduced to the skills needed. It is also helpful to remember that the suggested computer skills can be modified or used partially when learners have not developed them adequately. Sensitivity towards mature students helps them overcome their fear of technology.

- ➔ *Assess both learners' computer needs and computer literacy levels before attempting any of the suggested tasks.*
- ➔ *Start the course with an orientation session to the computer lab.*
- ➔ *Establish ground rules (e.g. check to see computers are switched off properly at the end of the day, no food or drinks in the lab) to sensitize the learners to sharing the responsibility of maintaining the computer lab.*
- ➔ *Prepare a **basic computer skills lesson** before attempting any of the suggested tasks in the guidelines.*
- ➔ *Make sure that learners are familiar with the computer skills listed for that task in order to meaningfully and comfortably engage them in the task.*
- ➔ *Modify the computer tasks to accommodate learner needs.*

Instructor-Made Material:

This term is used often throughout the document. It refers to the materials that you need to develop for a specific computer task that ties in with the suggested language task(s). These materials should be made available to learners in a format that is best suited to carrying out the suggested tasks:

- Hard copy formats (see Telephone, LINC 4 & Education System in Ontario, LINC 5)
 - On diskettes or hard drive (see Business Networking, LINC 4 & Counselling and Advocacy, LINC 5).
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- ➔ *The networking capabilities of LINC labs allows instructors to copy instructor-made files onto the Master computer to distribute to other stations in*

the network allowing other users to gain access to those files in the lab.

Samples of instructor-made materials to be posted on the Internet. Website is still under construction.

Computer Resources:

There are two computer resources at the back of these guidelines: **Glossary of Computer Terms** and **Checklist of Computer Skills**. The Computer Glossary provides a list of the computer terminology used throughout the guidelines. The Checklist of Computer Skills lists many skills required to use the software available in LINC labs. This checklist is useful in identifying skills suitable for a specific computer level (e.g. Novice). It can also be used to keep track of the skills already taught and the ones to be taught in future lessons.

Computer Levels:

- **Novice:** users with little or no computer literacy skills. Examples include people who have not worked with computers at all, or people who have used computers in a limited capacity, e.g. word-processing a simple letter at home, using a library computer to locate a call number, or accessing the Internet. Novice users have very little knowledge of how computers work, or what the role of an operating system is.
- **Experienced:** users with some computer skills. Examples include people who are familiar with application software (productivity tools) such as word processor, spreadsheet, and database. They work with home computers regularly, access and browse the Internet to locate sites through search engines, and have basic understanding of operating systems (are able to manage file handling such as copying, deleting, moving, etc.). Experienced users have developed the skills to locate navigation and menu features of new software and browse and experiment on their own.

- **Advanced:** users with extensive computer skills. Examples include people who regularly use application software (at home or at work), can conduct various types of searches on the Internet, and are able to troubleshoot and manage their system efficiently and effectively. Advanced users have knowledge of advanced system specifications and can customize tasks and functions.

See the **Checklist of Computer Skills** to identify the level for which a computer skill is suitable.

Preparing learners to perform tasks related to Word and Excel:

Learners must be familiar with the computer skills needed to perform a computer task, in order to maintain interest and feel competent. Therefore, when introducing a computer task, make sure that the computer skills needed to perform that task have already been taught. For example, when involving learners in a task that uses columns (in Word), such skills as creating a specific number of columns, changing the number of columns, or editing columns should be taught prior to the task. Similarly, in order to have learners create charts (in Excel) or calculate a budget, basic spreadsheet skills must be taught.

- ➔ *Display Word or Excel Cards (see **Glossary of Computer Terms**) in the computer lab to help learners remember previously taught functions.*

Preparing learners to perform tasks related to LINC software:

When introducing tasks that use LINC software, instructors must give an orientation to each software before assigning tasks in that software. General orientation includes:

- features of the screen
- mouse skills
- a navigation exercise to teach navigation techniques (selecting options through menus or buttons on screen)

- teaching specific features in a software such as the Index (Explore Canada)
- use of headsets (Ellis & Explore Canada)
- use of Writing Pad (Explore Canada) and Scratch Pad (Tense Buster)

- ➔ *Develop tracking sheets (see **Glossary of Computer Terms**) for learners to learn a function through a set of steps and display wall cards (see **Glossary of Computer Terms**) so that learners can remember how to access function keys.*

Preparing learners to perform Internet tasks:

Before introducing Internet tasks, it is a good idea to prepare:

- a basic Internet lesson
- a hands-on orientation session to the Internet
- ➔ *Local libraries have excellent resources about the Internet and they often provide orientation sessions that can be booked in advance to accommodate a group of learners.*
- ➔ *Teaching basic Internet skills and giving an overview of the Internet provide learners with the skills needed to engage themselves in authentic and real life Internet tasks. For centres without Internet connection, instructors are encouraged to use the suggested tasks as a follow-up to a lesson so that learners can conduct research on their own at public facilities such as libraries or Employment Resource Centres.*