BASIC COMPUTER LESSON • 4

Introducing CALL

Computers can be used as effective tools in any ESL classroom. Whether you teach a LINC One or a LINC Five class, the use of computers can enhance learning and construction of knowledge. LINC computer labs are equipped with specialized programs for teaching English, a program for learning about Canada, and productivity software which enables users to do word processing, spreadsheets, and prepare computer presentations. All of these programs can be used to aid in the teaching of English. This guide focuses on using the LINC software and word processing as aids in ESL instruction. A summary of language outcomes for LINC Four is included to help you integrate computer tasks and language functions.

In order for the learners to benefit from the LINC software, they must first feel comfortable sitting at a computer, learn the basic start-up and shutdown procedures, and follow simple, routine instructions. It is best not to make any assumptions about the learners' computer skills. LINC learners are assessed according to their language levels only. Therefore, it is not unusual to find a LINC One learner with advanced computer skills and a LINC Five learner with none. Before exposing the learners to any software, we recommend that you introduce basic computer concepts, terminology, and the hands-on skills necessary to perform basic operations on a computer.

Suggested activities

We encourage you to read Before Using Software and the suggested activities in Basic Computer Lesson for previous LINC levels before reading this section. The following activities will help LINC Four learners master basic computer terminology:

Learners are provided with a list of questions about basic computer concepts (as a follow up to instructor's presentation). In groups, they discuss the questions and report back to class. The instructor hands out the answer sheet at the end of class.

Sample questions:
Name some peripherals that you use in your lab.
What is memory?
Name some of the things you can do in a networked lab that you cannot do on stand-alone computers.

Matching: Learners are provided with a list of computer components and their definitions. Learners match the name with the definition.

Hands-on: Learners follow instructions to perform specific computer tasks from a given list, e.g., Restart the computer by pressing Ctrl + Alt + Del.

Gapfill: Learners fill in the blanks for missing words or phrases in the description of computer tasks, e.g., To shut down the computer, first click on _____, then on _____. In the Shutdown dialog box, select _____and click _____.

Expert: One group becomes the expert for the day. Learners make a list of three questions in groups and ask the expert. The expert provides answers to the questions.

Select experts a day or two before the activity so that they can prepare. Rotate the expert role so that everyone gets the opportunity. Make sure that your activities are supported by pictures as well as text.

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LINC Four Language Competencies

Level Outcomes[1]

At the end of LINC Four, learners can discuss familiar everyday topics of personal relevance when the context is clear and predictable. They can engage in simple formal and informal conversations within routine social situations using everyday vocabulary and a very limited number of idioms. Grammar and pronunciation errors sometimes impede communication. Discourse is reasonably fluent when following predictable, learned patterns. Learners can understand simple media announcements and use the telephone to communicate basic personal information.

Learners are able to read a simple narrative, a simple 2-3 paragraph text about familiar daily life experiences, descriptive prose or a set of instructions. They can read some authentic texts such as short news items, classified ads, sales promotion coupons, and flyers. They are able to scan a text for specific, more complex information.

Learners can write simple descriptions and narratives of events (one paragraph), stories and future plans relating to self, family or other highly familiar topics using one-clause and two coordinated-clause sentences that include adjectives and adverbs. Errors in syntax, vocabulary, and spelling are common. They can write short notes and postcards and give simple directions in writing. They can fill out simple forms and bank slips.

Listening/Speaking

Instructions:
    Give and follow a range of spoken directions and instructions in person or on the telephone

Social Interaction:
    Give and respond to compliments
    Express worry
    Give and ask for permission

Information:
    Describe common daily routines and activities in some detail
    Express necessity and reason
    Agree/ disagree
    Ask for clarification, repetition

Getting Things Done:
    Attract attention and request assistance
    Give oral invitations
    Give suggestions and make requests using polite formulaic expressions
    Understand public signs with common phrases, business cards, greeting cards, labels on common store products, simple pamphlets, and flyers

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[1] LINC 4 & 5 Curriculum Guidelines, 1999.

Reading

Instructional Texts:

Follow common daily routine instructions of 1-6 steps without pictures when most words are familiar.

Formatted Texts:

Find specific information in longer application forms, pay slips, family restaurant menus, schedules, and directories

Unformatted Texts:

Identify the main idea and supporting points in 2-3 paragraphs of simple narrative, biographical or descriptive prose

Information Texts:

Understand the purpose and get information from public announcements, news items, greeting cards, flyers, and brochures by scanning

Compare facts to make choices

Writing

Copy Information:

Copy information from dictionaries, encyclopedias and manuals

Fill out simple forms:

Fill out simple forms using personal and other required information

Describe Personal Situations:

Write a short text (one paragraph) about a personal or familiar situation

Describe experiences or events in the past and plans for the future, giving reasons

Express Simple Ideas:

Convey sympathy in writing