

**Consumer.gov / Consumidor.gov Teacher Resources  
Teacher Resource Series #1**

**Using the College and Career Readiness Standards in  
Instruction Based on Consumer.gov**

*Miriam Burt, Center for Applied Linguistics*

Many adult learners study in programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTAE). In 2013, OCTAE sponsored the publication of the *Promoting College and Career Ready Standards in Adult Basic Education* (Pimentel, 2013), which details a set of College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards for adults. The purpose of these standards is to link adult education, postsecondary education, and the world of work. The standards address the critical skills and knowledge expected and required for success in colleges, technical training programs, and employment in the 21st century.

The CCR Standards are part of an effort in the United States to provide consistent expectations across K–12 and adult education systems so that all students have access to the preparation they need to participate effectively in credit-bearing post-secondary education. The CCR Standards are also part of a broader effort to articulate standards that reflect the content most relevant to adult learners preparing for college, technical training, work, and citizenship. To identify these standards for adult education, two independent panels were convened, one for English language arts and literacy (ELA/literacy) and the other for mathematics, to look at the K-12 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) from the perspective of adult educators.

In addition to stating explicitly the skills needed for success in postsecondary education or on the job, the CCR Standards for ELA/literacy stress the close connection between comprehension of text, both oral and written, and acquisition of knowledge. They reflect shifts toward more rigorous expectations of adult learners in the areas of content, complexity, and evidence.

- Complexity: Regular practice with complex text and its academic language
- Evidence: Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational
- Knowledge: Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction

Because of the focus on the CCR Standards in adult education programs across the nation, in developing lesson plans and materials for Consumer.gov CAL sought to address these three areas of emphasis.

- Complexity: Activities give adult learners practice with authentic text whose level of complexity is geared toward readers with developing levels of proficiency, but reflects the nature of the consumer protection and financial literacy topics presented.
- Evidence: Exercises ask learners to locate information on the website and then cite evidence from the text to support their responses. They also ask learners to compare or

synthesize information across two or more pages of the site, and extension activities provide opportunities to compare and synthesize information across topic areas.

- Knowledge: Each lesson plan includes content learning objectives; the purpose of the lesson plans is to enable adult learners to build their understanding of consumer protection and financial literacy topics while developing their English language skills.

Each lesson plan references specific relevant ELA/Literacy Standards. The ELA/Literacy Standards referenced in most lesson plans are these:

#### Language

- L1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- L3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
- L4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
- L6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

#### Speaking/Listening

- SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- SL2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- SL4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### Reading Foundations

- RF2: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).
- RF3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- RF4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

#### Reading (Informational Text):

- RI1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- RI2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- RI5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other

and the whole.

- RI7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- RI9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

In some lesson plans, the standards for writing are also referenced in the activities for adult learners at the low intermediate level and above. Most lesson plans also reference three key Mathematics Standards: Number and Operations- Base 10; The Number System; and Ratios and Proportional Relationships.

The developers of the standards articulated each of the ELA/Literacy Standards in terms of five grade-level groupings: A (K–1), B (2–3), C (4–5), D (6–8), and E (9–12). These are intended to align with the levels commonly used in adult education programs: Beginning Adult Basic Education Literacy, Beginning Basic Education, Low Intermediate Basic Education, High Intermediate Basic Education, and Low Adult Secondary and High Adult Secondary Education. Specific descriptions of what learners should know and be able to do at each level for each standard can be found in Pimentel (2013). Teachers using the Consumer.gov lesson plans with learners at the Basic and Beginning levels should therefore refer to the standards as articulated at Level A and Level B. Teachers whose learners are at the low intermediate level and above should refer to the standards as articulated at Levels C and D, being aware that the Level B descriptions may be more appropriate for some learners with respect to some standards because of the characteristically uneven nature of adult learners' knowledge base.

Research for adult learners supports the need to involve them at every step of instruction to meet their goals and needs. It is recommended for all classes, but especially those that are federally funded, that the instructor identify the standards being practiced in each lesson and discuss with the learners how and why that standard is addressed in the activities.

In addition to addressing the CCR Standards, the activities outlined in the Consumer.gov lesson plans are based in research and practitioner experience in the language learning and literacy development of adults, and build on the evidence-based principles outlined in the Framework for the Consumer.gov/Consumidor.gov Lesson Plan Series. For more information on the evidence base on adult literacy acquisition, see the following resources:

Kruidenier, J. R. (2002). *Research-based principles for adult basic education reading instruction*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation. Available at <http://www.sabes.org/info-center/research-resources/>

Kruidenier, J. R., MacArthur, C. A., & Spruck Wrigley, H. (2010). *Adult education literacy instruction: A review of the research*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy. Available at <http://www.sabes.org/info-center/research-resources/>

Vinogradov, P., & Bigelow, M. (2010). *Using oral language skills to build on the emerging literacy of adult English language learners*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied

Linguistics. Available at <http://www.cal.org/caelanetwork/resources/using-oral-language-skills.html>

For detailed information about the CCR Standards, see

Pimentel, S. (2013). *College and Career Readiness Standards for adult education*. Washington, DC: MPR Associates. Available at <http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CCRStandardsAdultEd.pdf>