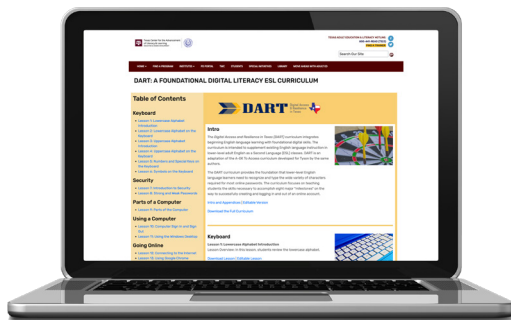


Resource Review

Digital Alliance and Resilience in Texas (DART): A Foundational Digital Literacy ESL Curriculum

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■ <https://tcall.tamu.edu/dart-DL-ESL-Curriculum.html>

The Digital Access and Resilience in Texas (DART) curriculum, which is freely available online, is a robust foundational resource that integrates English language learning with foundational digital skills. This curricular resource is an adaptation of the A-OK To Access curriculum developed for Tyson by the same authors. It is designed for beginning English learners (i.e., National Reporting System ESL levels 1-3), specifically for immigrants and refugees with no/low English literacy or familiarity with the Latin alphabet and with no or limited digital literacy skills.

DART was developed to offer the fundamental building blocks necessary for enhancing basic digital skills among English learners at lower proficiency levels. The curriculum covers all of the essentials that lower-level learners need to effectively create and log in and out of an online account. Since many learners rely solely on smartphones as their primary device, DART proposes using phones as the initial platform to teach keyboarding skills before students apply those skills to computers. Later lessons engage students in comparing and contrasting various elements of a Chrome window on both their computer and smartphone.

DART sets out eight curriculum milestones, each of which addresses digital literacy and English language prerequisite skills. For example, the milestone **Identify digital scams in the form of email and text messages and web page pop-up windows and advertisements** requires students to use English to identify messages and advertisements that are scams and act (e.g., close the window and if need be, restart the computer). Seemingly prosaic, this activity combines ESOL instruction with real world situations that can make the curriculum more topical and engaging to the student. It is important to note, however, that DART is neither a stand-alone ESOL nor digital literacy curriculum. The authors recommend using it to supplement available digital literacy resources for lower-level English learners.

DART is easy to access and navigate. Users can explore the components of the curriculum online or download and print the whole editable resource. It is particularly useful to become familiar with DART online, allowing one to effortlessly access the basics of the curriculum including its milestones, lesson objectives, methods to differentiate

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to address learners' needs, and additional digital resources. The appendices provide a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum. For example, Appendix D is solely dedicated to vocabulary instruction and features a list of key vocabulary for each lesson and is chock full of strategies for teaching vocabulary before and during a lesson.

The DART lessons are scaffolded effectively to integrate language development with digital literacy skills, ensuring learners simultaneously enhance their language skills while acquiring digital competencies. DART features 20 lessons addressing topics students need to know grouped into 10 categories: *Keyboard, Security, Parts of a Computer, Using a Computer, Going Online, Creating Accounts, Safety, Security, Troubleshooting, and a Final Review of Digital Skills*. This grouping of lessons makes it easy for teachers to use all 20 lessons or to identify individual lessons that best fit the purpose or audience.

DART's lesson plans follow a consistent structure. Each lesson begins with a succinct overview and clear learning objectives. There is then a list of materials and set-up instructions as well as instructional tips. Each lesson enumerates alignment to relevant standards, including the U.S. Department of Education English Language Proficiency Standards, CASAS Basic Skills Content Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking, and the Seattle Digital Equity Initiative Digital Skills. The vocabulary needed for each lesson is listed and methods to differentiate instruction to address learners' needs are spelled out. Easy-to-follow steps, including needed links and media, make implementing the lesson effortless for teachers.

One of the most robust parts of this curriculum is the manner in which it follows the 5E instructional model developed by the Biological Science Curriculum Study. This is an inquiry-based lesson model which engages students in meaningful learning experiences, fostering critical thinking and long-term retention of information in five stages:

- Engage: The teacher captures students' attention and curiosity, presenting the topic in a relatable and intriguing way.

- Explore: Learners actively participate in hands-on activities, experiments, or discussions to discover concepts on their own.
- Explain: The teacher provides clear explanations and introduces formal concepts, building upon students' explorations.
- Elaborate: The instructor encourages learners to apply their newfound knowledge to real-world scenarios, promoting deeper understanding.
- Evaluate: Both the teacher and students assess learning outcomes through various assessments, such as tests or projects.

DART offers ESOL instructors effective instructional materials specifically focused on lower-level English learners. DART goes beyond simply navigating the internet. It offers well-crafted foundational real-world lessons focused on developing the digital and language skills needed to create and perform a login process, typing a website address into a browser, practicing basic digital security, identifying and avoiding suspicious emails and text messages, and becoming familiar with basic troubleshooting techniques.

Teachers who are looking for an effective resource that incorporates digital literacy while simultaneously developing language skills for beginning English learners will want to consider exploring DART. The DART lesson plans can be an excellent resource to augment existing curricular materials. Through its well-scaffolded and comprehensive learner-centered approach, DART has great potential to equip English learners with the essential digital literacy skills they need.

Since digital literacy obviously relies on access to technology tools and the internet, programs with limited resources may face challenges in fully implementing the DART curriculum. Accordingly, adapting the curriculum to different technological environments would require additional support and flexibility. Finally, while beginners are the intended audience for DART, it would be useful to expand the curriculum to address topics for higher-level English learners.