

# A Practical Guide for the Teaching of Literacy to Adults With Learning Difficulties

Part I

MAY 2002

Québec 

# **A Practical Guide for the Teaching of Literacy to Adults With Learning Difficulties**

## **Part I**

**Introduction to the Guide  
Upgrading  
General Bibliography  
General Table of Contents**

**MAY 2002**

**Direction de la formation générale des adultes**

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

This guide contains a wealth of information that will be invaluable in your literacy work. That said, it does not provide any miracle solutions. Were it so simple! Hoping to find ready-made solutions in the face of various failed attempts is a natural impulse. But with time, one comes to understand that working with people requires constant adaptation, and that what works for one person does not necessarily work for the next.

The documents contained in this guide offer a number of tools that will help you in working with illiterate individuals and in understanding and identifying any learning problems they may face. It must be remembered, however, that an understanding of the adult learners themselves is the most critical element in detecting and resolving learning problems. This fact must never be lost sight of and must guide us in our actions.

The achievement of the objectives of the various documents contained in the guide will enable literacy instructors:

- to have a general understanding of what constitutes learning problems
- to be familiar with the nomenclature of learning difficulties\*
- to detect learning difficulties
- to use exercises that can help individuals who have learning difficulties

\* Given that the documents contained in this guide are designed to provide solutions to learning **difficulties**, this term is used instead of “problems.” The latter term is only used when referring to more general challenges related to learning.

In keeping with the objectives cited above, the guide contains three general components:

- **Introduction to the Guide, Upgrading, General Bibliography and General Table of Contents**

This document is designed to expand the use of the proposed tools and to create opportunities to exchange ideas and experiences in an effort to deepen our understanding of learning problems, both locally and regionally.

- **Learning Problems Among Adults: Difficulties or Disabilities**

This document addresses the difference between a temporary difficulty and a serious learning disability. In addition to explaining the distinction, the document illustrates the educational (including cognitive operations), social, personal and professional consequences of learning problems.

- **Nomenclature of Learning Problems (Causes and Consequences)**

This document provides the nomenclature for learning problems that may arise in English or arithmetic, describes these problems and explains how they can affect learning.

The guide also suggests tools for identifying difficulties and proposes appropriate intervention strategies. The documents related to these topics were designed based on a detection grid, a user's guide for the grid and intervention strategies. There are 11 such documents, each based on a detection and intervention model. They are as follows:

### **Remedial Field**

Module: English (Reading)

Module: English (Writing)

Module: Arithmetic (Reading)

Module: Arithmetic (Writing)

Module: Graphic Motricity

### **Cognitive Field**

Module: Attention

Module: Memory

Module: Receptive Language

Module: Expressive Language

Module: Perception

Module: Planning and Executing a Task

Each module contains a brief introduction that explains the objectives and content of the module. Questions are asked, and these are accompanied by indicators to facilitate detection. The table of contents of each module is designed to enable easy identification of specific situations. A bibliography is included at the end of each module for those who wish to pursue their research or to learn more about learning problems in general or more specific problems.

While this guide does not provide any miracle solutions, it should nevertheless enable literacy instructors to put their talents to full use, thus enhancing their priceless contribution to literacy in Québec and, by extension, allowing all Quebeckers to realize their full potential.

## UPGRADING

Since learning problems are closely tied to the human condition, which itself is in constant flux, those working to resolve these problems, or at least reduce their impact, must update their knowledge on a regular basis. That is why upgrading for literacy instructors should include the theme of learning problems. New knowledge should not be derived exclusively from institutions of higher learning, but from what is being learned out in the field. In this sense, upgrading could take any number of forms based on the needs of the moment and the resources available.

This document provides strategies for upgrading that will enable those responsible in the school boards to plan activities according to various models. Of course, the originality and specific content of these upgrading activities will depend on the particularities and disparities of each milieu. The following upgrading strategies are presented under four headings:

- when to embark on upgrading
- forms of upgrading
- possible content of upgrading
- available resources for upgrading sessions

### WHEN

- Andragogical days
- Colloquia
- Conferences, such as the one held by the Learning Disabilities Association of Quebec (LDAQ)
- Co-teaching workshops with remedial teachers

### FORMS

- Upgrading:
  - ◊ local (training institution, school board)
  - ◊ regional (literacy board)
  - ◊ provincial (literacy department)
- Internships (exchange of ideas and experience between training institutions or school boards)
- Supervised practical work during training
- Conferences
- Forums
- Research-action
- Research

## CONTENT

- Causes
- Manifestations
- Interventions
- Approaches
- Leaders in the field
- Outside expertise
- Current research

## RESOURCES

- Bibliography included in this guide
- LDAQ
- Resource persons:

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Luc Lacroix  
Commission scolaire de Victoriaville  
(on sequential and simultaneous learning styles)

Nicole Van Gruenderheek  
Université de Montréal  
(on reading procedure)

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This bibliography contains most of the reference works cited in each of the module's bibliographies. If you are looking for a work related to a specific topic, it would be best to consult the module addressing that topic. Consult this bibliography, however, if you are seeking an overall sense of the references available on learning problems.

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- \* A copy of this work can be found in the *Concerted Literacy Councils of Quebec Learning Disabilities Trunk*, available at the Centre for Literacy of Quebec (3040, rue Sherbrooke ouest, Montréal).

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2. Can the adult write:	
2.1. isolated sounds?	
2.1.1. when writing freely? .....	9
2.1.2. from dictation? .....	11
2.2. isolated syllables:	
2.2.1. when writing freely? .....	12
2.2.2. from dictation? .....	14
2.3. isolated words:	
2.3.1. when writing freely? .....	15
2.3.2. from dictation? .....	17
2.4. isolated sentences:	
2.4.1. when writing freely? .....	18
2.4.2. from dictation? .....	20
2.5. a text comprising a few sentences:	
2.5.1. when writing freely? .....	21
2.5.2. from dictation? .....	23
3. In regard to sounds, when the adult writes are there any:	
3.1. confusions:	
3.1.1. linked to problems in hearing differences? .....	24
3.1.2. linked to problems in seeing differences? .....	27

3.2. additions? .....	30
3.3. inversions? .....	30
3.4. omissions? .....	31
3.5. substitutions? .....	31
3.6. repetitions? .....	32
4. In regard to syllables of a word, when the adult writes are there any:	
4.1. confusions? .....	35
4.2. additions? .....	35
4.3. inversions? .....	36
4.4. omissions? .....	36
4.5. substitutions? .....	37
4.6. repetitions of the same syllable in a word? .....	38
5. In regard to sentences or a text, when the adult writes are there any:	
5.1. additions of words? .....	39
5.2. omissions or forgotten words? .....	39
5.3. substitutions of words? .....	40
5.4. repetitions of the same word in a sentence? .....	41
5.5. omissions of whole parts of a sentence? .....	43
5.6. omissions of whole sentences? .....	44
6. When writing from dictation, does the adult have difficulties with:	
6.1. spelling? .....	46
6.2. grammar? .....	48
7. When writing freely, does the adult have difficulties with:	
7.1. spelling? .....	50
7.2. grammar? .....	52
8. When writing freely, does the adult have difficulties with:	
8.1. putting ideas together? .....	54
8.2. the coherence of ideas? .....	56
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**VI – REMEDIAL FIELD**  
**MODULE: ARITHMETIC (READING)**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1. Does the adult learner know the symbols 0 to 9? .....	3
2. Can the adult learner count:	
2.1. from 1 to 10? .....	5
2.2. from 1 to 100? .....	5
2.3. from one group of 10 to the next without difficulty? .....	8
2.4. from one group of 100 to the next without difficulty? .....	8
3. Can the adult learner read:	
3.1. the numbers 0 to 9? .....	11
3.2. the numbers 10 to 99? .....	14
3.3. the numbers 100 to 1000? .....	16
3.4. from one group of 10 to the next without difficulty? .....	18
3.5. from one group of 100 to the next without difficulty? .....	20
4. When reading numbers, does the adult learner:	
4.1. hesitate? .....	23
4.2. confuse different numbers? .....	23
4.3. make inversions? .....	24
5. Does the adult learner know the place value of digits in a number, in terms of:	
5.1. ones? .....	29
5.2. tens? .....	29
5.3. hundreds? .....	30
6. Does the adult learner know the symbols for the four basic operations:	
6.1. addition (+)? .....	34
6.2. subtraction (-)? .....	34
6.3. multiplication (x)? .....	35
6.4. division ( $\div$ )? .....	35

7. Does the adult learner have a sufficient understanding of the symbol to carry out the operation of:

7.1. addition (+)? .....	37
7.2. subtraction (-)? .....	40
7.3. multiplication (x)? .....	43
7.4. division (÷)? .....	46

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**VII – REMEDIAL FIELD**  
**MODULE: ARITHMETIC (WRITING)**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1. Can the adult learner write, without guidance:	
1.1. the numbers 0 to 9? .....	3
1.2. the numbers 10 to 99? .....	5
1.3. the numbers 100 to 1000? .....	7
1.4. numbers consecutively from one group of 10 to the next without difficulty? .....	9
1.5. numbers consecutively from one group of 100 to the next without difficulty? .....	11
2. When dictated, can the adult learner write the numbers:	
2.1. 0 to 9? .....	13
2.2. 10 to 99? .....	15
2.3. 100 to 1000? .....	17
3. When writing numbers, does the adult learner:	
3.1. hesitate? .....	19
3.2. confuse different numbers? .....	19
3.3. make inversions? .....	20
4. Can the adult learner perform the four basic operations:	
4.1. addition:	
4.1.1. without carryover? .....	25
4.1.2. with carryover? .....	26
4.2. subtraction:	
4.2.1. without borrowing? .....	33
4.2.2. with borrowing? .....	34
4.3. multiplication:	
4.3.1. with single-digit multipliers and multiplicands? .....	42
4.3.2. with multi-digit multipliers and multiplicands? .....	43

4.4. division:	
4.4.1. with single-digit dividends and divisors? .....	49
4.4.2. with multi-digit dividends and divisors? .....	50
5. Can the adult learner solve mathematical problems related to everyday activities? .....	56
6. Can the adult learner perform mental calculations? .....	63
7. Does the adult learner know:	
7.1. the addition tables? .....	65
7.2. the subtraction tables? .....	68
7.3. the multiplication tables? .....	70
7.4. the division tables? .....	73
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**VIII – REMEDIAL FIELD**  
**MODULE: GRAPHIC MOTRICITY**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1. Is the adult learner:	
1.1. right-handed? .....	2
1.2. left-handed? .....	2
1.3. ambidextrous? .....	2
2. Does the adult learner have good seated posture for writing or for any other activity? .....	5
3. Does the adult learner hold writing instruments in a way that facilitates writing? .....	7
4. Does the adult learner show any signs of hypertonia (muscular rigidity)? .....	8
5. Does the adult learner show any signs of hypotonia (muscular relaxation)? .....	10
6. Does the adult learner write at a good pace? .....	12
7. Does the adult learner write too slowly? .....	14
8. Does the adult learner have problems with rhythm? .....	16
9. Can the adult learner reproduce all the letters of the alphabet:	
9.1. when not copying an example? .....	18
9.2. when copying an example? .....	18
10. Can the adult learner reproduce all the letters of the alphabet:	
10.1. in printing? .....	21
10.2. in cursive script? .....	23
10.3. using a keyboard? .....	25
11. When asked to write in English, does the adult learner produce:	
11.1. legible work? .....	28
11.2. work that is well organized on the page, in terms of use of space? .....	30

11.3. disorganized work:	
11.3.1. diagonally oriented? .....	33
11.3.2. half well oriented and half diagonally oriented? .....	33
11.3.3. beginning in the middle of the page? .....	33
11.3.4. beginning correctly (at the upper left-hand corner), stopping in the middle of the page, at an imaginary vertical line, and continuing in this way right to the bottom? .....	34
11.3.5. beginning in the middle of the page, at the right-hand side of an imaginary line, and continuing in this way right to the bottom? .....	34
11.3.6. with no order whatsoever, that is, with no starting point or any apparent direction? .....	35
11.4. work with flawed graphic forms:	
11.4.1. misshapen and disproportionate letters? .....	38
11.4.2. irregular size and orientation? .....	38
11.4.3. overlapping? .....	38
12. Can the adult learner reproduce the numerals 0 through 9:	
12.1. when not copying an example? .....	42
12.2. when copying an example? .....	42
13. When writing numerals, does the adult produce:	
13.1. legible work? .....	44
13.2. work that is well organized on the page, in terms of use of space? .....	46
13.3. disorganized work:	
13.3.1. misaligned columns (ones, tens, hundreds, etc.)? .....	49
13.3.2. an inability to reproduce the mechanical flow of an operation? .....	49
14. Does the adult learner's work show evidence of the smudging problems associated with left-handed people? .....	52
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**IX – COGNITIVE FIELD**  
**MODULE: ATTENTION**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1. Does the adult learner appear to be mentally alert (ready to work without displaying signs of mental fatigue)? .....	2
2. Is the adult learner attentive:	
2.1. in a quiet environment? .....	6
2.2. in the presence of noise? .....	8
3. Is the adult learner capable of selective attention; that is, is he or she able to focus exclusively on the auditory, visual or other element requiring his or her concentration in a perceptual, auditory, visual or other field? .....	10
4. Is the adult learner sensitive to all types of potentially distracting elements (whispering, sneezing, noises outside the classroom, the sound of pen on paper, etc.)? .....	12
5. Is the adult learner capable of concentrating:	
5.1. for several seconds? .....	13
5.2. for several minutes? .....	13
5.3. for a training period of about one hour? .....	15
5.4. for a half-day of training, or approximately three hours? .....	15
5.5. for a full day of training, or approximately six hours? .....	16
6. Does the adult learner tire quickly in a learning situation? .....	18
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**X – COGNITIVE FIELD**  
**MODULE: MEMORY**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1. Does the adult learner have a good:	
1.1. visual memory? .....	2
1.2. auditory memory? .....	4
1.3. tactile memory? .....	5
1.4. kinesthetic memory? .....	6
2. In learning situations, does the adult learner use:	
2.1. visual memory? .....	7
2.2. auditory memory? .....	9
2.3. tactile memory? .....	10
2.4. kinesthetic memory? .....	11
3. Does the adult learner have a good:	
3.1. short-term (immediate) visual memory? .....	12
3.2. long-term visual memory? .....	13
4. Does the adult learner have a good visual memory:	
4.1. without recall clues? .....	14
4.2. with recall clues? .....	15
5. Does the adult learner demonstrate strategies:	
5.1. for encoding visual information? .....	16
5.2. for recalling visual information? .....	17
6. Does the adult learner have a good:	
6.1. short-term (immediate) auditory memory? .....	18
6.2. long-term auditory memory? .....	19

7. Does the adult learner have a good auditory memory:	
7.1. without recall clues? .....	20
7.2. with recall clues? .....	21
8. Does the adult learner demonstrate strategies:	
8.1. for encoding auditory information? .....	22
8.2. for recalling auditory information? .....	23
9. Does the adult learner have a good:	
9.1. short-term (immediate) tactile memory? .....	24
9.2. long-term tactile memory? .....	25
10. Does the adult learner have a good tactile memory:	
10.1. without recall clues? .....	26
10.2. with recall clues? .....	27
11. Does the adult learner demonstrate strategies:	
11.1. for encoding tactile information? .....	28
11.2. for recalling tactile information? .....	29
12. Does the adult learner have a good:	
12.1. short-term (immediate) kinesthetic memory? .....	30
12.2. long-term kinesthetic memory? .....	31
13. Does the adult learner have a good kinesthetic memory:	
13.1. without recall clues? .....	32
13.2. with recall clues? .....	33
14. Does the adult learner demonstrate strategies:	
14.1. for encoding kinesthetic information? .....	34
14.2. for recalling kinesthetic information? .....	35
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**XI – COGNITIVE FIELD**  
**MODULE: RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1. Does the adult learner have a good understanding of English? .....	2
2. Does the adult learner have a good vocabulary? .....	4
3. Is the adult learner able to distinguish sounds and words:	
3.1. in a quiet environment? .....	6
3.2. in a noisy environment? .....	6
3.3. when facing the person speaking? .....	9
3.4. when near but not facing the person speaking? .....	9
3.5. when his or her back is to the person speaking? .....	12
3.6. when far away from the person speaking? .....	12
4. Is the adult learner able to follow simple instructions:	
4.1. without them having to be repeated? .....	15
4.2. without visual support? .....	15
5. Is the adult learner capable of following several instructions at a time:	
5.1. without having them repeated? .....	18
5.2. without visual support? .....	18
6. Is the adult learner capable of:	
6.1. following a conversation? .....	21
6.2. understanding the meaning of a conversation? .....	21
7. Does the adult learner ask the person who just spoke to repeat himself or herself:	
7.1. within the context of a conversation? .....	24
7.2. within the context of an explanation of a lesson? .....	26
8. Does the adult learner easily grasp jokes? .....	28
9. Does the adult learner understand nonverbal language such as gestures or facial expressions? .....	29
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	30

**XII – COGNITIVE FIELD**  
**MODULE: EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1. In terms of motor skills, is the adult learner able to pronounce words without difficulty? .....	2
2. In terms of motor skills, does the adult learner have a problem with:	
2.1. articulation? .....	4
2.2. stuttering? .....	4
3. Is the adult learner able to formulate a short message? .....	7
4. Is the adult learner able to actively participate in a conversation in a logical manner? .....	9
5. For the most part, does the adult learner engage in conversation by responding and communicating using:	
5.1. isolated words? .....	11
5.2. sentences? .....	11
6. Is the adult learner's speech marked by:	
6.1. missing words? .....	14
6.2. errors in syntax? .....	16
6.3. absence of syntax? .....	16
7. Does the adult learner use nonverbal language to communicate (gestures, facial expressions, etc.)? .....	19
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	21

**XIII – COGNITIVE FIELD**  
**MODULE: PERCEPTION**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1. Does the adult learner have a good ability to perceive:	
1.1. visual phenomena? .....	2
1.2. auditory phenomena? .....	4
1.3. tactile phenomena? .....	5
2. Does the adult learner have a good ability to distinguish among:	
2.1. visual phenomena? .....	6
2.2. auditory phenomena? .....	7
2.3. tactile phenomena? .....	8
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	9

**XIV – COGNITIVE FIELD**  
**MODULE: PLANNING AND EXECUTING A TASK**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1. Is the adult learner capable of organizing himself or herself in a learning situation, that is, of planning a step-by-step approach to executing a task? .....	2
2. Does the adult learner know general and specific problem-solving strategies that facilitate learning? .....	4
3. Is the adult learner capable of checking his or her own work (self-checking)? .....	5
4. Is the adult learner capable of correcting his or her own work (self-correction)? .....	7
5. Is the adult learner capable of putting into practice advice from a specialist in a particular field? .....	9
6. Is the adult learner a potential guide in a particular field? .....	11
7. Does the adult learner resort to internalized language to regulate his or her conduct? .....	12
8. Does the adult learner show signs of:	
8.1. impulsiveness? .....	14
8.2. apathy? .....	16
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	18

