



Bridging the Gap Package:

**Activity Ideas for  
Competency-  
Based  
Instruction**

## **A Note to the Tutor**

As a tutor, you will play a very important role in competency-based instruction. You will help the learners set realistic goals and determine ways to achieve them. Furthermore, you are responsible for observing and assessing the performance of different competencies. Most adult literacy tutors know that negative experiences in the classroom may have provoked a sense of alienation or resentment towards learning amongst adult learners. Typical characteristics of such individuals are lack of self-confidence, lack of motivation, and/or a fear of failure. This means that the support provided in literacy instruction must be both pleasing and valuable to the learner. Adult learners must feel encouraged to overcome negative feelings towards education by recognizing that there is no such thing as failure. Furthermore, they have the right to progress at their own rate. It is also important that they have a personal sense of progression. This is where the competency-based assessment will be of particular use (i.e. they will let the learners see how are they are progressing). Having assessment material that acknowledges learner progression will prove to be a key motivator in a learner's quest for independence and superior learning.

## **Authentic Material**

One of the primary motivations for learning is to cultivate knowledge and skills that will improve one's quality of life. Lesson design, therefore, should seek to develop basic life skills through interaction with *authentic* material – or material that would be used in the lives of learners outside of the classroom. When selecting an authentic text for instruction, the different purposes for using that text should be kept in mind. The primary purpose for using the material should be the same as it would be outside of the classroom.

**You may wish to encourage students to interact with authentic texts, such as:**

- ◆ a newspaper
- ◆ hazard symbols
- ◆ shopping lists
- ◆ phone messages
- ◆ graffiti, street names
- ◆ warranties
- ◆ receipts
- ◆ cheques
- ◆ a speeding ticket
- ◆ job applications
- ◆ business cards

**Tips for Choosing Authentic Material:**

1. Consider the learner’s level before choosing material
2. Try to use material that will engage the learner. Think of the kind of material that the learner would be interested in.
3. Ask the learner for suggestions.
4. “Start small”– Bringing in material that is not too complex in the beginning is a good confidence building strategy.
5. Try to use authentic material that the learner will, at some point, have to deal with.  
(Examples: classified ads, newspaper articles, signs, job applications, bank slips, etc.)

**Activity Ideas for Competency-Based Learning**

The activity suggestions that follow are ideal for competency-based instruction for several reasons. Each of these activities has a real-world purpose. Furthermore, a number of different competencies may be achieved through implementing these activities. Keep in mind, however, that because competency-based learning respects the goals of the individual, you may wish to modify these activities to better address the needs of your learners. Furthermore, you will need to work with individual learners to select which categories of competence you are going to focus on. Choices should always reflect the learners’ goals for learning.

## Activity One: Setting Goals

**Description:** This activity requires the learner to brainstorm different reasons for setting goals. They have to identify their values (i.e. what is important to them) and then make a list of short-term and long-term goals. This is followed by a reflection activity where the learner should re-examine their goals to see if they match their values. Finally they must prepare a timeline to reach their goals, anticipate obstacles in reaching their goals, and explain why these goals are important to them.

**Real-World Purpose:** Research shows that a person is far more likely to reach their goals if they write them down. Setting goals is about individual needs and ambitions. Being able to identify one’s goals will not only help the learner make plans for the present, but for the future as well. Being able to set personal goals is a skill that that can be applied to many other areas of one’s life. Furthermore, planning for the future is a powerful self-motivator.

**Materials Needed:** Student handouts “Setting Goals”

**Follow-Up:**

1. Review the learners’ goals with them. If possible give them ideas on how to better attain their goals.
2. Discuss what it means to have goals.

**Assessment Possibilities:**  
(see competency-based assessment charts)

- Chart 1.A. Setting Goals
- Chart 1.B. Organizational Strategies
- Chart 2.A. Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation
- Chart 4.A. Speaking
- Chart 7.A. Self-Reliance
- Chart 7.B. Attitude

# Setting Goals

"Goals are dreams with deadlines." ~Diana Scharf Hunt



Setting goals is an important step in getting what we want out of life. Each person's goals should be a reflection of who they are and what they want to become. In order to set goals that are right for you, you should first consider your values in life.

## Knowing My Values:

Knowing your values involves thinking about who you are, what you respect, and what you want out of life. Look at the list below and check the things that you value.

I value...	
1. Family	
2. Husband/wife	
3. Friendships	
4. Work	
5. My Community	
6. Being a citizen	
7. My Education	
8. Travel	
9. My Health	
10. Money	
11. Honesty	
12. Independence	
13. Learning new things	
14. Respect	
15. Romance	
16. Religion	
17. Other: _____	
18. Other: _____	

**Now look at the checklist and put your values in order, starting with your most important value first.**

Note: *You do not have to complete the list.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

### Setting My Goals

**Now, you are going to see if your values match your goals. But before you set goals, explain what a “goal” means to you.**

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**Examples of goals for learning:**

*Add to my learning, take on new challenges, develop skills to face everyday challenges, learn how to sell myself, get a job/ get a better job, etc.*

**Now, make a list of your goals for learning.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any other short-term goals? What are they?

**Examples:** *Get a pet cat, lose 5 pounds, eat healthier, etc.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



What are your long-term goals?

**Examples:** *Become a nurse, run a marathon, learn how to speak French, etc.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Planning

Now, start planning to reach your goals.

My Goal	Short-term or long-term goal?	When I want to reach this goal	How I will reach this goal
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			



**Reflection:**

Now that you have thought about your goals and how you plan to reach them, go back to look at your values. Answer the following questions.

1. Do your goals reflect your values? Explain.

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2. Do any of your goals interfere with your values If so, how?

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3. What should you do if you face challenges when trying to reach your goals?

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## Activity Two: Discovering My Community

<b>Description:</b>	This activity asks the learner to discover the community in which they live. To begin, they will have to reflect upon what it means to be part of a community. Following this, they will need to find out about different community services, groups, and events available to members of their community. To conclude, they will go through the steps of finding pertinent details about three community services, three community groups, and two community events.
<b>Real-World Purpose:</b>	Being an active member in one’s community fosters a greater sense of self-confidence and well-being. Many people are unaware of the different community services and programs that they may take advantage of. This activity serves the real-world purpose of making learners more aware of what it means to be part of a community.
<b>Materials Needed:</b>	Student handouts “Discovering My Community”
<b>Authentic Material:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Community pamphlets and brochures.</li><li>➤ Telephone book</li></ul>
<b>Follow-Up:</b>	Discuss the value of getting involved in your community.
<b>Assessment Possibilities:</b> (see competency-based assessment charts)	Chart 2.A. Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation Chart 2.C. Reading Everyday Print Chart 4.A. Speaking Chart 4.B. Listening Chart 7.A. Self-Reliance Chart 7.B. Attitude Chart 8.C. Community Awareness

# Discovering My Community

"We were born to unite with our fellow men, and to join in community with the human race." - Cicero



Have you ever thought what it means to be part of a community. People in communities join together so that they may support and enjoy one another.

**Brainstorm different Types of Communities in the box below.**

Community



## **What I Already Know About My Community**

1. Describe the community where you live.

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2. Do you know of any groups that exist in your community? What are they?

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3. Do you know of any services that exist in your community? What are they?

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4. Do you know of any special events that take place in your community? What are they?

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Communities have a lot to offer. Look at the examples of some common community services, groups, and events. Do you know about anything like this in your community?

### Examples of Community Services:

- Community Policing
- Daycare
- Night classes
- Leisure classes
- Emergency Services
- CLSC
- Emploi Québec
- Environment/  
Conservation Services
- Family Services
- Health Services
- Violence Prevention

### Examples of Community Groups

- Community cleanup
- Seniors groups
- Support group for new mothers
- Historical societies
- Community protection
- Theatre Company

### Examples of Community Events

- Church picnics
- School concerts
- Local festival
- Harvest festival
- Holiday festivities



# Discover Your Community

Most communities have different groups, services, and events. It is now your job to find out what your community has to offer to you.



## STEP 1:

Examine the chart on the next page to find out what you need to know about your community.

## STEP 2:

Decide how you will find out about services, groups, and events in your community.

### Where you can find information:

#### **The Telephone Book:**

You may wish to begin your search with the blue government pages (in the middle of the book). You could also call your local CLSC for information on services in your community.

#### **The Internet:**

Just put in the name of your community and see what comes up.

#### **Public Library:**

Your local librarian should be familiar with the services, groups, and events in your community.

#### **Bulletin Boards:**

Events and services may be advertised on bulletin boards at your local grocery store, community centre, schools, etc.

## Step 3:

Fill in the “Discovering My Community” tables on the next page.



# Discovering My Community

*Find three community services, three community groups, and two community events for your community.*

## Community Services

Type of Service	What it is	Contact Information	How I found out about it
1.			
2.			
3.			

## Community Groups

Group Name	What they do	Contact Information	How I found out about them
1.			
2.			
3.			

## Community Events

Community Event	What it is	When and Where	How I found out about it
1.			
2.			
3.			



**Reflection:**

1. What new things did you discover about your community?

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2. Do you think community services and groups are important? Why or why not?

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3. Will you get more involved in your community in the future? Why or why not?

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4. Would you feel comfortable finding information about community services, groups, or events in the future? Explain.

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## Activity Three: The World of Advertising

**Description:** This activity asks the learner to think about popular advertising and how it affects us. The lesson begins with an analysis of different mainstream ads and advertising techniques. The learner will proceed to keep a log of advertisements that they encounter in their daily lives. Finally, they will choose one ad and analyze it in detail. They will conclude their analysis with a written paragraph on the effects of advertising.

**Real-World Purpose:** Advertising is a pervasive force in today's world. Every day, we are bombarded with an array of advertisements that are designed resourcefully to get our attention. Not only are advertisements excellent examples of everyday print, but they also serve as excellent tools to develop media awareness and foster critical thinking skills.

**Materials Needed:**

- Advertising images (see examples)
- Different types of advertisements – preferably some that perpetuate common stereotypes.

**Warm-Up:** Examine and discuss different advertisements

**Follow-Up:** Discuss the impact that advertising can have on children or teenagers.

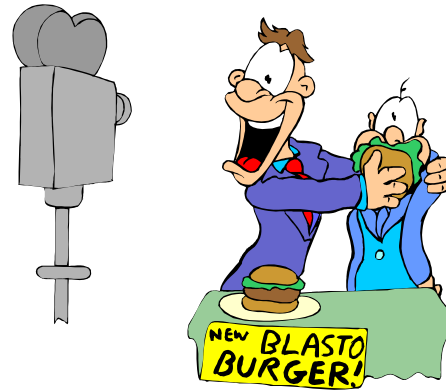
**Assessment Possibilities:**  
(see competency-based assessment charts)

- Chart 2.C. Reading Everyday Print
- Chart 3.B. Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation
- Chart 3.C. Academic Writing
- Chart 4.A. Speaking
- Chart 4.B. Listening
- Chart 6.D. Media Literacy

**Useful Source:** <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm>

# The World of Advertising

Ads have an effect on how we see ourselves and those around us. Some ads make people feel insecure about their bodies. Others portray gender in negative ways. Still, some ads are positive; they promote love, pride, and friendship. Whatever the ad, it is important to consider what kind of effect it is meant to have on you.



## Warm-Up:

1. List all the different types of ads that you know.

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2. Do ads ever affect you? If so, how?

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3. Do you think most ads have a positive or negative impact on people?

Explain.

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## Advertising: Brands and Logos

Most people are not aware of how brands and logos have become part of our everyday lives. Fill in the chart below to see how familiar you are with brands and logos.

Brand or Logo	Who is the product intended for?	I know this brand/logo because...	Have you tried this product? Yes/No	Do you like this product? Yes/No/Don't know
				
				
				
				
				
				
				

**Reflection:**

1. Do you know most of the brands and logos?    **Yes**            **No**
2. Do you know more than you thought you would know? Explain.


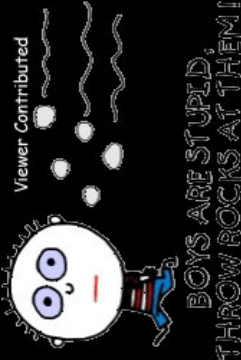

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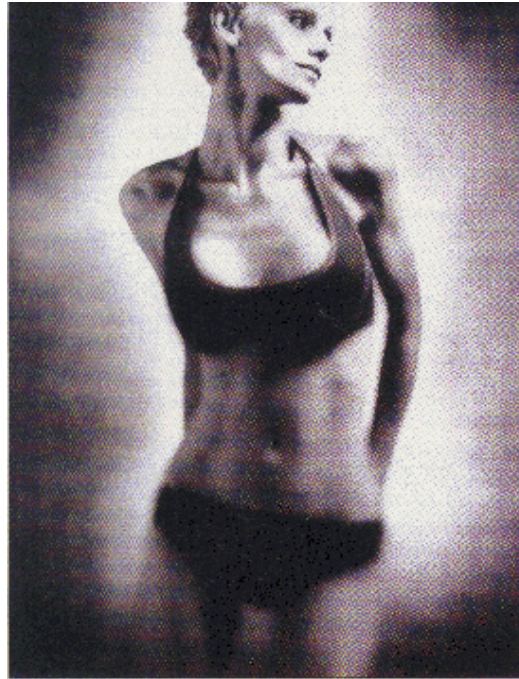
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# Analyzing Ads

Look at the ad.	What product is this ad promoting?	Who is this ad trying to attract?	Does this ad send a positive or negative message?	Do you like this ad? Why or why not?
				
				
				

# A Positive Message?



**IF THIS IS BEAUTY, THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER**

The above ad is for Special K cereal. What do you think this ad is trying to say?

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Do you like this ad? Why or why not?

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## ACTIVITY:

Keep a one-week log of advertisements that you see around you.

## Steps:

1. Keep track of the different ads you see in your daily life for one full week. Write all your observations in the log (next seven pages).
2. Reflect on your observations.

## PURPOSE:

This activity will help you to see how advertising plays a role in your everyday life.



"Advertising is the art of convincing people to spend money they don't have for something they don't need." - **Will Rogers**

# Advertisement Observation Log

**Example:**

Type of Ad	Who is this ad trying to attract?	Messages/images in the ad
McDonalds Commercial	Families	The ad showed a happy family eating at McDonalds. The parents were good-looking and the children were smiling.

Day 1:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Ad	Who is this ad trying to attract?	Messages/images in the ad



Day 2:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Ad	Who is this ad trying to attract?	Messages/images in the ad

Day 3:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Ad	Who is this ad trying to attract?	Messages/images in the ad



Day 4:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Ad	Who is this ad trying to attract?	Messages/images in the ad

Day 5:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Ad	Who is this ad trying to attract?	Messages/images in the ad



Day 6:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Ad	Who is this ad trying to attract?	Messages/images in the ad

Day 7:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Ad	Who is this ad trying to attract?	Messages/images in the ad



## **Follow-Up**

*Go back and look at your log and answer the following questions.*

1. What do you think of advertising now? Explain.

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2. What were most images/messages in ads like?

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3. How do advertisers try to get us to buy their products?

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4. How should a person look at ads? Explain.

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# My Ad Analysis

"A picture is worth a thousand words."

## **ACTIVITY: Analyze an ad.**

### **Steps:**

1. Find an ad (of any sort) that you find interesting.
2. Closely examine the ad.
3. Answer the questions (below) about your ad. *Use correct grammar, vocabulary, and spelling.*
4. Attach the ad (or a copy of it) to this assignment.

1. Describe the ad you chose. Be specific!

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2. Why did you choose this ad?

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3. What kind of an effect does this ad have on you? (i.e. How does it make you feel?)

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4. How is this ad trying to get you to buy their product?

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5. Do you think this a negative or a positive ad? Explain.

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## More Activity Ideas

Activity	Description	Authentic Material
<b>My Dream Job</b>	<p>Have the learner describe their ideal job. Find out what a person would have to do in order to get this kind of job. Once this background work is complete, find an employment ad for this kind of work (in the classifieds or on the Internet). Then have the learner go through the steps of applying for this job. (Note: the learner does not have to really apply for the job.) Have the learner update their resume to better fit what the employer is looking for. Then have them write a cover letter to go with their resume. If applicable, get a copy of the application form for this employment and have them fill it out. You may also wish to perform mock interviews to help the learner practice selling themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Classified ads</li> <li>➤ Job application</li> <li>➤ Resume</li> <li>➤ Cover letter</li> </ul>
<b>Home Sweet Home</b>	<p>Finding an apartment or house can be a daunting ordeal. To prepare the learner for this experience, create lessons that cover the steps to finding a new apartment or house. If the learner is more interested in apartments, bring in recent apartment ads. Go through them and circle possibilities. Have the learner call the rental office to clarify questions about the apartment. Once you know how much rent would be, have the learner create a monthly budget that factors in rental expenses and additional fees (hydro, cable, phone, etc.). Once this background work is done, have the learner fill out a sample rental agreement.</p> <p>If the learner is more interested in the process to buy a house, follow the same steps, but add information on applying for a mortgage and calculating down payment and interest rates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Classified ads</li> <li>➤ Rental agreement</li> <li>➤ Telephone conversations</li> <li>➤ Mortgage application</li> <li>➤ Interest rates</li> </ul>

- Dinner Time!** There is an abundance of authentic material that has to do with food and nutrition. To begin this activity, have the learner define what they consider to be nutritious and then examine the *Canadian Food Guide* to see if their notion of nutritious is accurate. Next, examine the parts of a nutrition label. Try to distinguish between “healthy” and “unhealthy” just by looking at different nutritious labels. Try to use labels from a range of different foods (chocolate bars, crackers, chips, dried fruit, nuts, etc.). Once the learner is comfortable with identifying what’s healthy and what’s not, have them prepare a grocery shopping list by using a recent grocery store flyer. Calculate savings whenever possible. Once the grocery list is prepared, have the learner plan a week’s worth of meals for their household. They should be able to defend the healthfulness of each meal choice at the end of this lesson.
- Canada Food Guide
  - Nutrition label
  - Grocery store flyer
  - Shopping list
- Planning a Trip** There are many great places to travel to in Quebec, Canada, the United States, and beyond. Most tourist destinations offer free tourist brochures and maps. To begin this activity, have the learner think of three places that they would like to visit. Then, have them conduct a search to see if they can get tourist information sent to them on each of their choices. Once the information arrives, have them examine it closely and decide which place they would like to plan a trip for. Have them find out their travel options to get to this area. They should consider cost and convenience of different travel methods. Then, have them indicate exactly where they will go on a map. Finally, have them plan a one-week itinerary for their travel destination. They should calculate the total cost for this trip and use the travel brochures to justify their choices.
- Websites
  - Tourist brochures
  - Maps
  - Telephone inquiries