LU GUIDE TO REMOTE TUTORING

Tips, Tools, Activities and Resources

Contents

Welcome to Your Guide to Remote Tutoring

This manual was developed in response to feedback from LU tutors and learners gathered through a survey in the summer of 2020. We gathered best practices, tapped our own experience and learned a few new things along the way to bring you what we hope is a comprehensive guide to tutoring remotely.

Our goal is to give you the guidance and resources that will make remote tutoring smoother and easier, enjoyable and effective.

Some of you may be using a telephone to tutor remotely. Others may be tutoring via smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer. Regardless of which device you are using, we have suggestions for making your sessions rich, engaging and fun.

The manual will walk you through the process of planning for remote tutoring with information, practical tips and guidance on:

- Remote tutoring – definition of remote tutoring, benefits, challenges
- Safety when tutoring remotely – guidelines for safety and security in a digital environment, activities to do with your learner
- How to get started – choosing a learning mode online and offline
- Tips for planning your session – lesson planning, sample lesson plans
- Finding suitable materials to use – from LU/home/online, accommodating learning difficulties, incorporating multisensory approaches
- Activities that you can use remotely – for phone, text and videoconferencing
- Creating a positive learning experience at a distance – communication, motivation, rapport, anxiety, online etiquette
- Transitioning to blended learning – models of blended learning

We invite you to read this manual with an open mind and a light heart. Consider the tips in each section. Pick the ones that resonate with you and try them out.

Above all, remember that while technology is your friend and a useful tool, it is not the gizmos and the techno bells and whistles that make a great session. It is the relationship you and your learner have as a team and it is the skills and heart that you bring as a tutor that make a good session. That never changes.

If you can tutor in-person, you can tutor remotely!

Section 1: Introduction to Remote Tutoring

What is Remote Tutoring?

The terms *remote learning* and *distance learning* are often used interchangeably, yet there is a difference.

Remote tutoring is learning with a tutor over the phone or online in real time (synchronous learning). Distance learning is learning independently using content which the tutor has set up online or sent via mail (asynchronous learning).

At LU, we are advocating a remote learning/tutoring approach. We are asking tutors and learners to get together for their sessions online or over the phone in real time.

If you choose to tutor remotely, you may be working with your learner over the phone, via text or using various video calling apps such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Google Meet or Zoom. You will be working together in real time.

Please note that remote tutoring may include some independent learning activities. If your learner is ready and comfortable to work independently, you could assign them activities that they can do on their own between your remote real-time sessions.

When to Tutor Remotely

You may choose to tutor remotely as a practical solution for when you cannot tutor side by side or as an overall learning strategy together with your face-to-face sessions.

Here are a few examples of situations where remote tutoring is a great option:

Educational scenarios:

- Your learner has goals around digital literacy and practicing online with digital tools just makes sense
- You want to increase the scope of your tutoring activities to support the specific goals of your learner
- You want to access materials and activities that can only be found online
- You want to introduce variety and new approaches to your tutoring sessions
- You want to find new ways to engage your learner

Practical scenarios:

- You or your learner have transportation issues and cannot meet up in person
- You or your learner have mobility issues that make it difficult to meet in person (e.g. a broken leg, wheelchair use, etc.)
- There is a global pandemic and meeting in person is not a safe option
- You have a cold – you feel well enough for a tutoring session but do not want to pass it on
- There is (inevitably!) a snowstorm and it is not possible to travel
- The LU office is not accessible during the summer months, Fridays, weekends or because of a school closure

Being set up to tutor remotely opens a whole new world of possibilities for you and your learner!

The Advantages of Remote Tutoring

Whether you have chosen remote tutoring to enrich your face-to-face tutoring sessions or for practical reasons, remote tutoring will expand your practice as a tutor and offer your learner additional opportunities to grow and to develop their skills and experience.

Educational benefits of remote tutoring:

- You and your learner build knowledge, resilience and confidence when you step out of your comfort zones and learn something new
- Your learner gets to add basic digital skills to their bank of essential skills – so do you!
- Expanding digital skills and online access means expanding your options and opportunities in a modern world
- You and your learner will be exposed to new approaches to learning that you might not have been using in your in-person sessions
- Functionality of computers offer accommodations in ways that in-person activities do not (e.g. text can easily be enlarged by zooming in, converted to speech by screen readers or be accompanied by audio)
- Once familiar with certain online programs that supply immediate feedback or audio reading support, some learners have more options to work independently between sessions
- Opens possibilities for a hybrid approach of in-person tutoring combined with remote tutoring (blended learning)

Practical benefits of learning remotely:

- More flexibility and control over your schedule
- The possibility of tutoring throughout the summer and on Fridays and weekends
- Eliminates the hassles of commuting
- Time is saved with no commute
- Extreme weather (or a global pandemic!) will not keep you away from your tutoring session!

You may be starting to think that remote tutoring is a pretty good idea, but where to start? We acknowledge that despite the many benefits, the prospect of remote tutoring may be scary and intimidating for you and your learner.

By reading the following sections of this manual, we hope to guide you through the process of creating a successful remote learning environment for you and your learner.

Section 2: Safety in a Remote Learning Environment

A key foundational element of any learning experience is feeling safe.

The world of remote tutoring is unfamiliar territory and you will have some new areas to navigate. To help you operate in this new world, we are giving you a roadmap with clear information around safety and security in a digital environment.

These documents are **mandatory** reading and you and your learner will need to confirm by email that you have read and understood each document as you start tutoring remotely.

You can find each document online in the Literacy Unlimited Resource Hub. Click on the links below to open and read each document. Ask for a hard copy from LU staff.

LU Remote Tutoring Guidelines for Staff, Tutors and Learners

LU has developed guidelines that describe the roles and responsibilities of staff, tutors and learners when tutoring remotely.

In addition, LU has developed some resources to help you review online safety tips with your learner. These are easy-to-read Quick Sheets that introduce both of you to online safety basics.

Included in each Quick Sheet is an activity that you can use in a tutoring session to introduce this topic. Find these Quick Sheets online at the LU Resource Hub by clicking on the links.

Staying Safe Online

Protecting Your Personal Safety Online

If you have any concerns regarding safety online or need clarifications about your role as a tutor in an online environment, contact an LU staff member and ask any questions that you might have.

Section 3: Getting Started with Remote Tutoring

Whether you and your learner decide to tutor offline by phone or to move online, this section walks you through the steps to get started tutoring remotely.

Remember that you can call the LU Program Director at any point for help or guidance.

Tutoring Remotely Offline

If you and your learner have decided to tutor offline or find that the only devices available are a landline phone or a non-smart phone, then your first undertaking will be to find materials and get them to your learner.

Follow these steps:

1. Decide how you will send materials to your learner – your mode of delivery will help you decide which kinds of materials and activities to use

   - Start where your learner is at – if they have no digital skills, no access to digital devices or no interest in using a digital mode of learning, then you will be using snail mail, dropping off materials at their home or arranging for your learner to pick up materials at the LU office
   - If your learner uses email purely to send messages and does not yet know how to open email attachments, you can send reading passages, word activities and writing activities in the body of the email and work through these over the phone
   - If your learner uses basic email and is interested to learn further skills like creating word documents or attaching documents and photos using email, you could help them with these skills over the phone and eventually send materials like PDFs or word documents as attachments
   - Consider using a combination of snail mail and email, depending what materials and devices you are using

2. Plan your lessons and choose your materials

   - Visit our [Lesson Planning](#) section in the manual for guidelines on planning your sessions in a remote learning environment
   - Visit our [Materials](#) section in the manual and choose accordingly
   - Visit our [Activities](#) section in the manual to get ideas for phone activities

Tutoring Remotely Online

If you and your learner have decided to tutor online, your first steps will be to determine a mode of learning that is practical for your learner.

This mode of learning should build on digital skills that your learner already possesses or is ready to learn.

Choosing a mode that matches their digital skill level or provides a gentle learning curve will ensure a successful and enjoyable online experience.

Follow these steps:

1. Decide with your learner what learning mode they want to use for tutoring (see Table 1 below for a summary of each learning mode, the prerequisite skills and technical requirements).

   Ask yourself:

   - What devices do I and my learner have right now that can be used for tutoring sessions? (e.g. android phone, iphone, tablet, ipad, laptop, desktop computer)
   - What platforms do I and my learner have downloaded right now that can be used for tutoring sessions? (e.g. learning apps, video chat apps like WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger, video chat platforms like Zoom or Skype, email, etc.)
   - What devices and platforms am I and my learner interested in learning?
   - What digital skills does my learner have already? (e.g. keyboarding, sending email, texting, attaching photos in a text, doing a Google search, etc.). To help identify their digital skills, use the Basic Digital Skills Self-Assessment Check List
   - Based on my learner's current digital skill level and access to devices, which learning mode makes the most sense to start with?

> **Top Tip:** LU has tablets and laptops that learners can use on-site. The Program Director can show a learner how to use the device and arrange for a short tutor-supported course to get them started. Contact the Program Director to find out more about what is possible.

Table 1: Learning Modes in Remote Learning

Learning Mode	Description	Notes
Snail mail + phone tutoring	Tutor drops off or sends learning materials to the learner via snail mail. Tutor and learner talk over the phone using the materials. Tutors develop their own materials or get them online or from the LU library.	This method is used if a learner has no access to a device or chooses to work offline Tech Required: • phone with speaker option • headset for hands-free use (optional)
Email + phone tutoring	Tutor emails learning materials to learner and then talks over the phone. Tutor can also use email as a medium to practice reading and writing skills with their learner.	Skills Required: • keyboarding • receiving and sending email • opening attachments • attaching documents • using Word • downloading and using PDF viewer • and more! Tech Required: • phone with speaker option • headset for hands-free use (optional)

Learning Mode	Description	Notes
Texting without Wi-Fi *** Check to see if you and your learner's phone plans have unlimited texting	Tutor and learner send and receive texts by SMS (via cellular network). Texting is used to do small reading and writing exercises. This learning mode can be used in conjunction with a phone tutoring strategy or with an online tutoring strategy.	Skills Required: • typing on a phone or tablet keyboard Tech Required: • a phone plan that includes texting
Video Chat Apps (WhatsApp, FB Messenger, Google Meet) *** Using these apps without Wi-Fi uses up data on your device (know how much data is included with your plan and learn how to check your usage)	Tutor and learner talk with video, share screens (FB Messenger), and/or send messages (WhatsApp). They do this using smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer. Tutor and learner can use these Apps to send and receive documents, photos, audio clips or video clips in addition to texting activities. Tutor can use these Apps purely as a telephone with a video component and work with material that is sent via email or snail mail.	Skills Required: • downloading app • adding tutor as a contact • typing on a phone or tablet keyboard • attaching docs or photos • using emojis Tech Required: • device • Wi-Fi or data • mic and camera (external or built-in) • headset or earbuds (optional)

Learning Mode	Description	Notes
Video Conferencing Platform (Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams) *** Using video conferencing platforms uses up data on your internet plan. Know how much data is included in your internet plan and how to check your usage) **Top Tip:** A shared screen uses up more data on your internet plan	Tutor and learner connect via a video chat platform using smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer. Tutor and learner share a screen in real time and use online resources together. They may decide to take advantage of extra features in these platforms (highly recommended!) like: using a whiteboard, annotating an online document, saving text chats, creating polls. For those less comfortable with all the features, these platforms can be used purely as a telephone with a video component. Tutoring material is sent via email or snail mail.	Skills Required: • downloading app • creating an account (not mandatory with Zoom) • navigating within the platform • learning how to use platform features • using a keyboard • navigating on browser Tech Required: • device • Wi-Fi on laptop or computer • Wi-Fi or data on phone • mic and camera (external or built-in) • headset or earbuds (optional)

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2. If you are not familiar with the device or platform/App that your learner wants to use, check out the [Quick Sheet tutorials](#) in our resource section and become familiar with how to download it to your device, the set-up options and information on how to use it – you can always ask for help from LU program staff if you need it.

3. Do what you need to do to help your learner get set up on their device or platform.

   - Send your learner a Quick Sheet for their device/platform via email or snail mail and support them over the phone as they work through it
   - If your learner (or a family member) uses Zoom or another video chat platform, have them share their screen and walk them through the process of setting up their device
   - Enlist the help of a family member at the learner's end (and your own!) if possible
   - Call the LU office for assistance if you get stuck

4. Keep it simple.

   - Master one device, platform or App before you introduce another
   - Start where your learner is at and go from there

5. Reassure yourself and your learner that you will figure out this new remote learning approach together and have fun while learning along the way.

Section 4: Planning Your Remote Tutoring Sessions

Now that you have chosen which learning mode will serve you best, it is time to plan your lessons.

What should I consider when planning for remote tutoring?

The guidelines for lesson planning that you learned in your tutor training still apply in remote tutoring. Planning your sessions will draw primarily on the skills and experience you have acquired tutoring face-to-face.

Nevertheless, there are some additional things to consider when tutoring remotely:

- Tutoring over the phone or online can be more tiring than face-to-face sessions for many people. Your typical 2-hour session may be too long. Be flexible because adaptations may have to be made.
- Technical challenges will arise. Anticipating and strategizing these events will be an important part of planning.
- Being able to use technology is crucial for your learner to access online remote learning at all. Learning digital skills will need to be a regular part of your sessions.
- With shorter sessions and the additional digital skills component, you probably will not have time to work on several goals in a lesson. Pick one goal and make that goal the focus of your lesson.

Ask yourself these questions as you plan:

- Are we using just one mode of learning (from Section 3) or combining several? (only consider using several learning modes in one session if your learner is comfortable using at least one of them already)
- How long will our sessions be and how often? (e.g. an hour online plus small texting sessions throughout the week, 60-min sessions twice a week, etc.)
- How long can we stay focused and engaged in learning on this device? (i.e. an hour of pure texting back and forth might be hard to tolerate but an hour of varied activities on a zoom chat or a phone call might be more manageable)

and the most important question…

- Which of my learner's goals will we be working on in this session?

Guidelines for planning my remote tutoring session

Here are some guidelines to consider when planning your remote tutoring session:

- Start with a conversation to connect and ground yourselves
- Plan for a 60-min to 75-min session to start – adjust the length as you go
- Consider several shorter sessions in a week rather than one long one
- Create continuity in the learning process – if possible, bring familiar elements from your face-to-face sessions into the remote session (e.g. the structure of your lesson plan, familiar activities and materials)
- Incorporate segments on learning a new digital skill that will help with remote learning on your chosen device (e.g. how to use a whiteboard on Zoom, how to send photos of your written work on a cell phone, how to use emojis, etc.)
- Ask your learner what kinds of activities and materials they would like to use in the session – consider using choice boards in your lesson planning to facilitate this (see Activities Section for more information)
- Build in breaks – check in with your learner and pay attention to their cues to assess how many and how long
- If you are meeting twice a week, consider focusing on digital skills one session and other goals the next
- Do a test-run of new websites or online materials before introducing them to your learner
- Have some phone activities prepared in case you encounter technical difficulties and need to do a quick pivot!
- Be patient – this is a new experience and over time you will get a sense of how long things will take

Sample Lesson Plans

Here are some sample lesson plans that will give you a starting point for creating your own customized versions.

Your sessions may be longer or shorter and may be structured differently. Try out different combinations. You and your learner will find a rhythm that works for you over time.

Sample Lesson Plan - Snail Mail/Email/Phone Session

<table>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">
<p align="center">Learning Mode: Snail Mail/Email + Phone Tutoring</p>
<p align="center">Session length: 60 Minutes</p>
<p align="center">Frequency: 2x per week</p>

*** For ideas on phone activities, refer to the <u>Activities section</u>
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2"></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal conversation – share the week's activities

Review the lesson plan (verbally or as an email attachment)</td>
<td>5-10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm-up (something your learner enjoys)</td>
<td>10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review last week's homework and/or previous lesson</td>
<td>5-10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break (if needed)</td>
<td>5 min (adapt as necessary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading or writing or mini-lesson on a specific skill area (something related to a functional goal or interest)</td>
<td>15-20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on lesson</td>
<td>5 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework and planning for next session</td>
<td>5 min</td>
</tr>
</table>

Sample Lesson Plan - Texting Session

Learning Mode: Texting without Wi-Fi
Session length: 20 – 30 minutes
Frequency: 2x per week
+ additional optional mini-texting sessions (5 minutes each)
*** For ideas on texting activities, refer to the [Activities section](#)
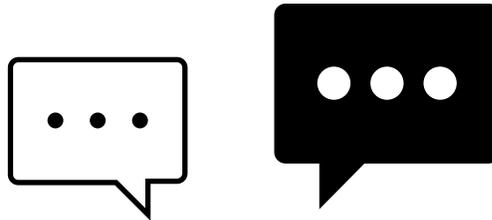
Activity	Time
Informal conversation via text – short summaries of highlights of your week (this will be your warm-up) Review your plan via text	5-10 min
Texting activities that are related to a functional goal or interest	10-15 min
Feedback on lesson via text Mini texting assignments for the coming week	5 min

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Sample Lesson Plan – Video Conferencing Session

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Learning Mode: Tutoring via Video Conferencing Platform
Session length: 90 minutes
Frequency: 1x per week</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">*** For ideas on video conferencing activities, refer to the <u>Activities section</u></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center"></td></tr>
<tr><th>Activity</th><th>Time</th></tr>
<tr><td>Informal conversation – share the week's activities

Review the lesson plan over shared screen</td><td>5-10 min</td></tr>
<tr><td>Warm-up (something your learner enjoys)</td><td>10 min</td></tr>
<tr><td>Review last week's homework and/or previous lesson</td><td>5-10 min</td></tr>
<tr><td>Break (if needed)</td><td>5 min (adapt as necessary)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Reading and/or writing activity related to a functional goal</td><td>15-20 min</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mini-lessons on specific skill areas</td><td>15-20 min</td></tr>
<tr><td>A game or activity that your learner loves to do</td><td>10 min</td></tr>
<tr><td>Feedback on lesson</td><td>5 min</td></tr>
<tr><td>Homework and planning for next session</td><td>5 min</td></tr>
</table>

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Section 5: Finding Materials

With your learning mode chosen and your lesson planned, it is time to gather your materials!

In face-to-face tutoring, you were able to access materials from the LU Library, search for materials online and ask your learner to bring in real-life materials from home.

This can still happen, but during a period when the LU office is not accessible and you are not meeting your learner in person, getting materials and sharing them with your learner can be more challenging.

Do not despair! We have ideas for whatever scenario you face. Useful materials are everywhere!

Getting Materials from LU

We hope that the LU office and resource centre will stay open throughout these uncertain times. When we are open, you and your learner can borrow materials, have photocopies made and arrange to use a device and/or Wi-Fi on site.

Top Tip: Please check with the office before you visit. You may need to notify us of your visit and book an appointment if you want to meet with a specific member of the LU staff.

Before you visit, take some time to prepare what you need. If you are looking for materials from the library, please browse the online LU library catalogue first to help you choose an appropriate resource for your learner ahead of time.

The following guidelines tell you more about how to borrow resources from the library and arrange a visit to our centre.

CLICK HERE to search our LU library catalogue of resources

CLICK HERE to view guidelines on borrowing resources from the LU library

CLICK HERE to view guidelines on visiting the LU office and resource centre

Finding Materials at Home

It is always a good idea to tutor with materials that your learner has in their own home. These are items they use and read regularly and the vocabulary is particularly relevant.

If your learning mode is phone tutoring, you will also be sending your learner materials via email, snail mail, home delivery or LU pick-up.

But what if your learner does not have any digital devices to receive an email or a photo of some reading material? What if your materials are delayed at the post office or you cannot get out of the house to access the mailbox? And what if you cannot access the LU office to pick up materials?

In these circumstances, finding materials at home is a great option.

Top Tip: When tutoring by phone, find identical materials that you both have at home, so that you each have a copy of what you are reading together. This makes the session more effective and is a great way to discover things you have in common and to build rapport!

Here are some suggestions:

- Use government notices that come by mail (e.g. Covid-19 Self-care Guide)
- Use grocery flyers and food take-out flyers that come by mail
- Use bills like Bell or Hydro and read headings or segments that are at an appropriate reading level for your learner
- Find an old copy of the yellow pages - this is a rich resource with lots of potential for reading and creating word activities
- Get copies of a local newspaper and find words, headlines and passages at a proper reading level for your learner
- Use membership magazines like CAA or Costco Connection
- Calendars – practice months, days of the weeks, holidays
- Find food boxes or cans and read the labels – cereal boxes or milk cartons are great
- Scour your cleaning products to find ones that you both use and then read the labels
- Take a tour around your bathroom and find shampoos, deodorants or toothpaste that you have in common
- Raid your medicine cabinet for items (e.g. Tylenol bottles, Aspirin bottles, hydrogen peroxide)
- Find a board game that you both have and read the cards or instructions

- Share music you both like – read song titles or lyrics and create activities around them
- Netflix closed caption subtitles – pick a show you both love

Finding Materials Online

Finding good quality online materials that you and your learner can use during a remote learning session is important. LU has done some of the work for you by putting together a curated list of online resources and materials. You can find this list of resources by using these links or going to https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/resources:

- [Language Skills Resources](#)
- [Other Literacy Skills Resources](#)
- [Resources to Meet Specific Learner Goals](#)

You will find a PDF information sheet on the website for the resources that LU recommends.

Top Tip: On our online resource page, icons provide a quick way to highlight features of the resource – like device compatibility, LU Literacy Level, multisensory elements, suitability for English Language Learners (ELL), Canadian content and diverse content.

While you may be excited to try out a lot of the resources in these lists, LU recommends that you start with one (or two) and keep sessions simple to start with.

As you explore this list of online resources and materials, ask yourself:

- What are my learner's goals and is this resource relevant?
- What literacy skills does my learner have and is this resource at the right level?
- What kind of literacy skills does my learner want to improve and is this resource helping to build those skills?
- Will my learner enjoy these materials and find them accessible?

If you find that there is nothing in this list for you and your learner, you may start to look online for other resources.

General Guidelines

Use these guidelines when looking for resources online:

- Seek web pages that have a clean layout and are easy to read – avoid pages that are cluttered with ads, pop-ups and other distractions

- Seek web pages that are straightforward to navigate – if you have to jump through a lot of hoops to get to the main activity, give it a miss
- If you have found a great resource that requires you and your learner to open an account, make sure it is a straightforward process – avoid stressing your learner (and yourself!) with too many log-in/set-up requirements
- Be aware when a flash player is required – it can be a security liability and you will also need a plugin, which means following extra steps to install it
- Look for resources that have multisensory elements (audio, relevant visuals, drag and drop, touchscreen or click actions)
- Look for resources that have Canadian and diverse content (although don't rule out excellent ones that do not)
- If you have found a great resource meant for kids, use your judgement to ensure that it would be appropriate for an adult learner
- Pay attention to the lock symbol in the search bar – this means the website is secure (also look for a shield icon, and the https:// at the start of the address)
- If the lock icon is not there, you can still use the site but do so with caution – if we are recommending a "not secure" resource site, it means we are comfortable that this is a reputable site (it just doesn't have the capacity to ensure security if you want to share personal details or credit card information and is more vulnerable to hackers)

Accommodating Learning Difficulties

In many ways, being online can be favourable for someone with a learning difficulty. Technology can provide a lot of helpful accommodations.

In addition to the general guidelines outlined above, consider the following when choosing resources or platforms for a learner with a learning difficulty:

1. Does this resource/platform offer any tools that will increase the accessibility of the material you will be working with?

   For example, standard Word and Google Doc tools let your learner:

- Zoom in or magnify text so it is bigger and easier to read
- Double space text
- Change page colour (cream is easier to read for a dyslexic reader)
- Change style, colour and size of font
- Highlight words or phrases in various colours

2. Can your learner download and install higher tech tools to make the materials more accessible/learner-friendly?

For example, when reading online or using Word or Google Docs you can use:

- [OpenDyslexic Font](#) (free) or [Dyslexie Font](#) (paid) to use in a Word or Google Doc
- Text-to-speech tools to listen to computer-generated audio of all content or portions of content that your learner reads
- Line reading tools to help your learner keep their place while reading text
- Tools to change the colour of the web page to make it easier to read
- Highlighting tools to mark important content in reading passages
- Digital notepads to make notes about reading passages
- Dictionary or thesaurus tools to find definitions or synonyms for words quickly

3. Choose online resources that are well set up for learners with learning difficulties:

- Reading passages with accompanying audio content – ideally with human voice audio that can be played at varying speeds
- Activities with accompanying visuals (photographs or illustrations)
- Activities that include interaction with the screen
- Resources with a predictable layout and an uncluttered appearance
- Resources that are straightforward to navigate and do not require a lot of processes to access

Multisensory Approaches

LU has always stressed how important it is to use multisensory approaches in your tutoring activities. In your face-to-face sessions, you've incorporated visual and auditory activities and you've used manipulatives like letter and word tiles, phonics flip-books, flashcards and word sliders. You have played hands-on games with your learner and used white boards and flip charts to use big body movements while writing.

This will continue as you tutor remotely!

So how do you bring in a visual component while tutoring over the phone? And how do you incorporate tactile and kinesthetic elements from a distance? It is possible!

Here are a few suggestions that you can use to keep your sessions hands-on and allow your learner to experience learning through multiple pathways.

Remember that each of the resources in [LU's curated list](#) is coded with an icon that tells you which multisensory element is integrated in that resource.

Including a visual component:

- Choose reading materials with contextual photos, illustrations and graphic elements
- Use paper or electronic graphic organizers to help visualize main ideas or concepts in a text
- Adjust font size, bolding, colour or spacing on word documents to emphasize different parts of a text
- Highlight text in word documents using the highlighter tool
- Organize large blocks of text with colour cues
- Find materials with videos or animations that demonstrate a learning concept in a visual way
- Use written reminders via email or text to reinforce verbal instructions

Integrating an auditory component:

- Read aloud
- Spell words aloud
- Use a phonics approach
- Give oral instructions
- Have discussions with your learner
- Use audiobooks
- Find online resources that have accompanying audio with reading passages

Creating a tactile-kinesthetic component:

- Find online resources that allow drag and drop, clicking, swiping or touching a screen
- Brainstorm on a large surface like a whiteboard (use a window or a mirror with dry erase markers at home)
- Act out words or concepts over a video chat
- Trace letters on the screen or in the air
- Read and manipulate flashcards (help your learner make their own from index cards)
- Manipulate word or letter tiles (Scrabble, Boggle, etc.) that you have at home
- Use Play-Doh or modelling clay that you may have at home to form letters of the alphabet

LU Home Literacy Kits

To bring visual and tactile-kinesthetic tools to our learners' home learning environments, LU provides learners with individualized Home Literacy Kits that are available on request. The kits can be ordered online and then picked up, delivered or mailed. You and your learner can create your own customized kit by choosing from the following possible items:

- Pens, pencils, eraser
- Spiral-bound exercise book
- Highlighter pens
- Index cards
- Post-it notes
- Letter tiles
- Dry erase markers (to be used on white boards, windows or mirrors)

- Mini whiteboard
- Mini address book (to be used as word bank)
- Instructions and materials to make a word slide
- Special item – something your learner needs to participate in the session or to learn independently

CLICK HERE to order a Home Literacy Kit for Remote Learning for your learner. After submitting your order, please allow at least one week for us to respond to your request.

If you have any questions regarding the Home Literacy Kit for LU learners, please contact the LU Program Director.

Section 6: Activity Suggestions for Remote Tutoring

If you have been working together for a while, you and your learner will have your favourite engaging, go-to activities that are staples in your lesson plan. Your learner loves those!

Some of these may adapt well in a remote environment, so go ahead and use them. Familiar activities will help your learner ease into this new learning environment.

Some of your go-to activities, however, will not be a fit with the remote learning mode you have chosen. This is a great opportunity to expand your repertoire and find some new favourites!

You may be surprised at how remote learning will reveal new and exciting activities that will fire up your learner, keeping them engaged and motivated.

It may feel a bit daunting to come up with activity ideas using a new learning mode like phoning or texting or video chatting. To help, LU has put together some great ideas to get you started.

Activities for every session

The activity ideas that follow are organized under the different learning modes. Some special activities that you can use with different learning modes are described in more detail at the end of the section.

These suggestions will give you options as well as inspiration for some customized activities.

As you explore this list of suggested activities, ask yourself:
- What are my learner's goals and interests and is this activity relevant?
- What literacy skills (and learning difficulties) does my learner have and is this activity at the right level?
- What kind of literacy skills does my learner want to improve and is this activity going to be effective in building those skills?
- Will my learner enjoy this activity and find it accessible?
- Is there a way to adapt this activity to better meet my learner's needs, interests and skill level?

Tutoring by phone

Tutoring over the phone may be one of the most challenging tutoring modes in remote learning. With no visual contact, oral and listening skills are extra important.

While you can still do plenty of reading and writing activities over the phone, do not be afraid to make discussion an integral part of your lesson plan.

Discussion helps learners to learn, to reflect on what they are learning and how they are learning. Discussion helps learners to communicate their needs, knowledge and understanding.

Tutoring over the phone gives you an opportunity to capitalize on this.

Here are some activities that you can do over the phone.

Discussion:

- Discuss the practical literacy challenges of your learner and do some verbal problem-solving together
- Ask your learner about how they learn best and what things help them to learn
- Help your learner clarify their goals and what they need right now
- Encourage your learner to "think aloud" during reading and writing activities
- Do verbal role-plays around goal-based scenarios (e.g. a telephone call to register for a course, call to a doctor to get health information, etc.)
- Brainstorm some writing topics

Writing:

- Read something to your learner (with vocabulary and content relevant to their goals). Ask them to write down the key vocabulary. Ask them how they spelled the words and work on a challenging word over the phone.
- Read something to your learner (with content related to their goals and interests). Ask them to write down the main ideas and read them back to you.
- Suggest that your learner write a few sentences in a daily journal.
- Brainstorm some writing ideas over the phone. Ask your learner to sketch a mind map on paper, a mini whiteboard (check out our [Home Literacy Kit](#)) or using a window as a whiteboard with dry erase markers.

- Ask your learner to send samples of their writing (snail mail or drop-off at LU office) or photos of their writing (email or text) for your feedback.

Reading:

- Using common reading materials that you have sent your learner or found at home, do an assisted reading activity over the phone
- Use CLOZE passages that you have prepared and sent to your learner
- Consider borrowing two copies of a favourite workbook or reader from the LU resource library and work through those together over the phone
- Practice duet reading or choral reading using a reading resource you have sent your learner
- Ask your learner to read one of their journal entries to you

Mini-lessons:

- Dictate the spelling of targeted words over the phone for your learner to copy down on index cards. Use those cards for various activities – trace the shape of the words with a finger, organize the cards into categories, write a list of related word families on the back, create compound words, etc.
- Have your learner make up a story using as many words from the same word family as they can

In addition, try out some of the special activities at the end of this section that are compatible with phone use (Warm-ups, Language Experience Story, Word Scavenger Hunts).

Tutoring by text (SMS and Video Chat Apps)

Tutoring using text alone is also very challenging. Visual face-to-face cues are missing and oral communication is probably limited.

However, there is still a lot you can do with short texting activities via SMS or a platform like WhatsApp, especially if you have the capacity to use emojis, photos or video clips to add a visual element to your sessions or use an audio clip.

Standard texting

- Do a "written conversation" via text – remember to pick up on errors and model correct spelling and grammar in your responses

- Do a mini CLOZE exercise – send a short text with a word missing (replaced by an underscore) and ask your learner to fill in the blank
- Send a short text with a grammar or spelling error and ask your learner to correct it
- Text a series of words and ask your learner to text them back in alphabetical order
- Ask your learner to text as many words as they can that start with a specified consonant sound or blend (e.g. ch- or pr-)
- Text a scrambled sentence to your learner and ask them to text it back in the correct order – start with only a few words and build up slowly
- Go back and forth sending each other 3-letter words (or words that start with a specific letter, or words that belong to a category, etc.)
- Send a series of words that are all related except for one – ask your learner to text back the word that does not belong, with a short explanation why
- Practice expanding sentences – type a short complete sentence to your learner, ask them to retype the sentence adding in **one** word, then go back and forth each adding one word until you can't come up with anything else to add
- Practice writing a story – you start with a sentence, they add one, you add one and so on (create poetry or lyrics this way too)
- Ask your learner to describe a process using steps (e.g. making a sandwich, doing laundry, a task at work, etc.)
- Role play a conversation around one of your learner's goals (e.g. text out a possible conversation in a job interview or looking for an apartment to rent)

Using visuals in your texts:

- Text an emoji to your learner and then ask them to type back words that describe it – take turns going back and forth (you can increase the difficulty by using several emojis and making up a short story about them)
- Take turns describing an emoji that you want to be sent to you – the other person sends the emoji and you clarify if it is the one you were expecting
- Attach a photo and ask your learner to write a short description of it
- Ask your learner to send you a photo or a series of photos with captions
- Ask your learner to attach some photos of objects that they cannot spell – work through the spelling via text
- Ask your learner to take photos of various words in their community (scavenger hunt) and send them to you via text – discuss!

- Ask your learner to take photos of a process that they do well and provide captions for each photo
- Play charades on WhatsApp – you act out a word on a video clip and send it to your learner who guesses by text and then they send you a video clip doing a different word
- Send instructions via video clip on WhatsApp
- Celebrate small successes with a celebratory emoji!

Using audio in your texts (on WhatsApp):

- Dictate a sentence via audio clip and ask your learner to transcribe the sentence
- Ask your learner to send you a verbal question via audio clip and then you respond to the question via text
- Send an audio clip to your learner asking them to text you back a specific spelling word
- Send a short reading passage via text to your learner and ask them to record themselves reading it and then to send you the audio clip
- Send verbal instructions via audio clip

Remember to text the instructions for each activity before you start and get confirmation from your learner that they have understood. You could also give verbal instructions via phone, audio clip or video clip.

> **Top tip:** Use full words when you text. If your learner wants to learn texting short forms and slang, do them only in the context of that lesson to minimize confusion.

Tutoring using video conferencing platforms

Online video conferencing platforms, like Zoom, are relatively straightforward to access (check out our [Quick Sheets on the website](#)).

Typical features in video conferencing Apps are:

- Whiteboard
- Share screen
- Annotation tools
- Chat
- Options to run polls or quizzes

Just take it slow, learn and practice one feature at a time and enjoy the experience!

Here are some activity ideas you can try using video conferencing platforms:

- Spend time doing tutorials on how to navigate each of the features in the video conferencing platform you are using – go at your learner's pace
- Use the chat window to have written conversations or to practice reading and writing and then save the chats to use for future activities (e.g. correcting errors, expanding the chats, word study, CLOZE exercise, etc.)
- Use the chat window to send documents or links for your learner to use in the session
- Pull up a PDF or word document on a shared screen for a reading activity
- Share a reading passage on your screen (PDF or webpage) and ask your learner to use the annotate tool to circle phrases that answer comprehension questions you pose
- View web-based materials on your shared screen and ask your learner to use the annotate tool to circle key words or specific word patterns that you are working on (e.g. words ending in -ing, same word family, etc.)
- For web-based activities that are interactive, ask your learner to open those up on their device and share their screen with you so you can instruct and support them while they navigate the activity
- Create fun polls where your learner reads a list of items or sentences and interacts with the screen to respond to the poll
- Take advantage of the whiteboard feature (play word games, practice spelling, do mind mapping, etc.)

There will be a learning curve for you and your learner. Stick with it. It will be worth the effort as it offers a lot of options for a variety of activities that tick all the multisensory boxes.

More Activities

The activities described in more detail below have been referenced in other sections of this Guide. These include:

- Warm-up activities – to use at the beginning of any session
- Language Experience Story – how to adapt this idea to different learning modes
- Scavenger Hunt – a way to engage with vocabulary found in the home
- Choice Boards – a way of involving your learner in lesson planning
- Google Docs Activity – creating an opportunity for collaborative learning
- Video – as a starting point for learning

Warm-up Activities

These are general warm-up activities that are not too demanding and will ease your learner into the more challenging area of learning new skills. You could also do them at the end of the session to cool down.

Choose ones you know your learner will like and will fit with concepts you are working on!

Over the phone or on a video chat (some of these can be done by text as well):

- Read to your learner
- Do a duet reading of a shared reading passage (that you have sent in the mail)
- Transcribe a language experience story that your learner dictates over the phone and then send it to your learner by mail or email for next session
- Take turns brainstorming rhyming words
- Take turns picking words that start with the last letter of the previous word (e.g. clock, kangaroo, orange, elephant, tap, party, yellow, writing)
- Take turns coming up with 3-syllable words
- Do some free writing along with your learner and then share what you have written out loud
- Play Scattergories - pick a letter and a category – name as many words as you can in the category beginning with that letter

On a shared screen, shared document or whiteboard:

- Have a written conversation in a chat box
- Give your learner a fun and engaging Zoom poll
- Play Pictionary on a whiteboard – one person draws a picture and the other writes or types their guesses
- Play Hangman on a whiteboard
- Play Scattergories on a shared screen using this [Scattergories categories generator](#) – choose how many categories you want, push play and ignore the timer
- Do a fun online quiz on a shared screen – try out [Freerice vocabulary quiz](#) where a correct answer triggers a sponsor to pay for an equivalent of 5 grains of rice for the World Food Programme

Language Experience Story

Especially good for beginner readers, this technique provides activities that you can use for several weeks (or more!) and will bring in a kinesthetic-tactile approach.

Ask your learner to dictate their story while you copy it down. If texting is an option, text them back the story right away and have them read it back to you. Then, send them a package in the mail (or email if your learner has a printer) with the following items that you can use in subsequent sessions:

1. The story written or typed in large font for your learner to read to you
2. Index cards with key words (sight words) from the story – use them for extension activities (e.g. match words to words in the story, trace word with a finger or print the word in the air, brainstorm word families)
3. A second copy of the story with some predictable words replaced by just an underscore (CLOZE exercise)
4. A third copy of the story with some random words replaced by just an underscore (CLOZE exercise)
5. A fourth copy of the story with one sentence per line so that the learner can cut up each sentence with scissors and re-sequence
6. A fifth copy of the story so the learner can cut out individual words for various activities (e.g. re-creating the story, word sorts, alphabetizing, creating compound words, etc.)

Phone approach variations:

- If your learner has a printer and email you can send the sheets that way and create index cards that can be printed and cut out
- Your learner can also make their own flashcards with phone assistance (using our LU Home Literacy Kit)

Online approach variations:

- Send the package snail mail and use video chat to work through the activities
- Use Zoom whiteboard or shared Google Docs for the CLOZE activities
- Ask your learner to make their own flashcards with phone assistance (using our LU Home Literacy Kit)

Scavenger Hunts

This is a fun kinesthetic way to have your learner engage with vocabulary in their homes and neighbourhoods. Your scavenger hunt can be short or long and customized to different levels. It could be done in real time on your phone call, video call or texting session, or it could be assigned as homework.

Once your learner has completed the hunt, you can use the words and phrases in some extended activities (e.g. spelling, using the words in a sentence, adding words to categories, generating word families, etc.)

Here are a few suggestions to get you started.

Level 1 Activities (directions given verbally):
Write down:
- A word that starts with "A" on a label found in your bathroom
- A word that starts with "B" on a label found in your refrigerator
- Two words that you recognize in your neighbourhood
- Two words that you do not recognize inside your home
- Three 3-letter words found on your food packages

Level 2 Activities (directions given verbally):
Write down:
- Three 2-syllable words on items found in your bathroom
- Two words that rhyme on items found in your home
- Two words that start with pl- on labels found in your refrigerator
- Three words that appear on items that came in the mail today
- One compound word found on a food label

Level 3 Activities (directions given verbally or in writing):
Write down:
- Directions on a container of disinfecting wipes
- The first sentence of the first book you find at home
- Three descriptive words found on your shampoo bottle
- Five words on a nutrition label
- A phrase taken from the container of your tea or coffee that describes it

Choice Boards

A choice board is a great visual tool to get your learner involved in choosing what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. Make a grid with 9 squares and fill them with activity options that relate to your learner's goals.

This example includes activities for someone who wants to learn more about Covid-19 and is also practicing some digital skills around email and learning how to use Google Docs.

Delete 5 emails and learn how to unsubscribe to emails	Read the Westcoast Reader article on Covid-19 HERE	Create a draft email to a friend
Send your tutor an email attachment of this document on how to hand wash.	Write a numbered list of all the things you are doing to keep healthy and safe in this Google Doc	Insert a link in an email and then try the same in a Google Doc
Complete a quiz on Covid-19 HERE	Read this infographic on Covid-19 Riskiest Activities and write a list of the activities that you plan to do in the next month	Watch this video (with written captions) on proper handwashing

*** all links for this Choice Board can be viewed as a list at the end of this section

Choice Boards continued...

Ask your learner to choose which activities they will do to get a bingo either horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Or maybe they will choose to do them all!

When planning your choice board:

- Consider using your choice board for lesson planning – present the choice board for the main part of the lesson
- Send the choice board to your learner ahead of the lesson so they have a chance to consider what activities they would like to work on
- Consider using one board for a month and working through the activities
- You could include links to various online resources or just include activities that require pen and paper
- Your activities could be short mini-lessons or broader activities related to a specific goal
- Your board could include activities related to just one goal or could include several goals
- If you use this for homework assignments, make sure your learner will be able to do each activity independently
- If you complete a choice board activity within your session, consider some follow-up activities to accompany it

Google Docs

Google documents are similar to Word documents. The difference is that they can be used collaboratively so two or more people can work on the same document simultaneously. This creates opportunities for a variety of tutoring activities.

You will have to have a Google account. If your learner does not have a Google account, you can share the document via a link and give them editing permission.

You can work together in the document while on a video conferencing platform (e.g. Zoom), while over the phone or even when not connected (using the chat window to communicate).

Here are some ideas to use Google Docs in a tutoring session:

- Do a written conversation in real time – in the document or in the chat window
- Give your learner a writing activity and make written comments in the comment box
- Write something and ask your learner to leave written comments in the comment box – this encourages engagement and critical thinking
- Ask your learner to use the highlighter tool to focus on different concepts (e.g. highlight the two-syllable words in red and the three-syllable words in green, highlight all the prefixes in blue and the suffixes in yellow, etc.)
- Write a text with errors and have your learner make suggested changes using the editing tool (provides a visual element) – once you have accepted their suggestions, allow them to click the "accept suggestion" checkmark
- Use the document as your own personal whiteboard while tutoring on the phone or during a video tutoring session
- Create a word sort using Google Slides where your learner can drag and drop words into categories – copy this one and use it as a template for your own customized word sort
- If you are really ambitious and have the skills, consider creating a customized HyperDoc for your learner and sharing it with other tutors – a Hyper Doc is a digital lesson plan created by a teacher or tutor

Using Video as a Starting Point for Writing

To add variety and a dynamic visual element to your lessons, try using video clips (e.g. TEDTalk, TV411, YouTube or a news webpage). They are great as a springboard into reading and writing activities. They are also great ways to break up a session. They add interest and can help motivate a learner.

Here are some ideas for how to use video clips in your tutoring session:

- Share a video clip with the sound off and ask your learner to write the dialogue
- Share a short video clip, stop it before the end and ask your learner to write their own ending – then watch the end and discuss which ending was better!
- Watch a TEDTalk and write some thoughts about it
- Watch a YouTube video on learning a skill (anything your learner would like to learn) and ask your learner to write a summary of the steps
- Watch short entertaining video clips about various language skills and then do related web lessons – TV411 is a great place to do this!

Links in this section

Warm-up Activities

https://swellgarfo.com/scattergories/

https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/resources/language-skills/reading-resources/#Vocabulary

Choice Board

https://thewestcoastreader.com/covid-19/

https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/How-to-Hand-Wash.pdf

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xpK7k5bSPMYeYvbGDUGmdzU4vz-vbbf0Mgv5cy139dI/edit?usp=sharing

https://app.quizzify.com/demos/coronavirus-quiz

https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Coronavirus-COVID19-riskiest-activities-03.png

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IisgnbMfKvI

Google Docs

https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/WORD-SORT-Suffixes.pptx

https://hyperdocs.co/blog/posts/hyperdocs-templates-for-getting-started

Video

http://www.tv411.org/writing/creative-personal-writing/editing-checklist

Section 7: Creating a Positive Learning Environment at a Distance

Communicating effectively, enhancing motivation, developing and maintaining rapport, managing online anxiety and practicing digital etiquette are crucial for a positive learning environment. Paying attention to these elements will contribute to the success of your learner and make your sessions more enjoyable.

Communicating Remotely

Remote tutoring comes with its own communication challenges. Non-verbal cues are a huge part of effective communication and there are fewer cues in remote tutoring situations.

If your learner speaks another language or has speech issues, it may be harder to understand over the phone or via online platforms. Technology issues, such as an unstable internet connection or audio delay may be additional barriers.

But there is a lot that can be done to mitigate these factors.

General communication tips (speaking):

- Speak slowly and clearly
- Remember to enunciate well
- Repeat important information
- Be an ever-so-slightly more animated version of yourself on the phone and on video calls – to highlight those non-verbal cues
- Be dynamic with your body language – but not so dynamic that it is distracting
- Be aware of your tone of voice – it carries a lot of impact

General communication tips (listening):

- Pay close attention to verbal cues – use active listening to listen between the lines and pay attention to voice tone
- Demonstrate that you are listening – lean forward, nod, smile, words of encouragement (it can be felt over the phone)

- Do not hesitate to let your learner know if you are having difficulty understanding them – avoid pretending that you understand
- Ask for clarification or paraphrase to make sure you have really heard what your learner has said
- Pay close attention to physical cues if using a video platform – posture, facial expressions, fidgeting, hand gestures, eye contact

Tips if you are struggling to understand your ELL learner:

- Gently and kindly let them know that you are having difficulty
- Keep your voice at a normal level when making inquiries – avoid the temptation to speak loudly
- Despite frustration, keep calm and be patient
- Encourage your learner to use gestures – depending on your learner, you could have fun with this and turn it into a game
- Consider adding texts or email messages as a supplemental way of communicating in tandem with verbal communication

Tips when using technology (share these tips with your learner):

- Eliminate background noise – or at least do your best to keep it to a minimum
- If you experience unexpected background noise while the other person is talking, mute yourself during that period
- Make sure speakers and microphones are not blocked
- Using earbuds will ensure that everything your learner says is only heard by you and it will also improve audio reception – make sure your earbuds are securely plugged in to your device
- Remember to adjust the volume as needed!
- Orient your device to give a clear, well-lit view of your face (avoid being backlit) – when you and your learner are well-lit, observing non-verbal cues is easier
- Make sure your device is on a firm surface to avoid shaking
- Make sure your phone audio and computer audio are not on at the same time – this could lead to an echoing effect
- If your audio is choppy or your video is freezing, check to see that your bandwidth and internet speed are compatible with the videoconferencing platform requirements – if this sounds like gobbledygook to you, then you will need tech support on this!

Boosting Motivation

As in face-to-face tutoring, motivation in a remote learning environment is sustained when learning is learner-driven, goals are relevant and important to your learner and activities are engaging and delivered through an active learning approach.

The basics remain important when creating a motivating remote learning experience:

- Make first steps easy – break things down and start small
- Build on strengths
- Provide meaningful and timely feedback
- Celebrate small wins along the way
- Use active learning

In the remote learning context, here are a few additional tips for boosting motivation:

- Reflect on what motivated your learner in your in-person sessions and do something similar online – get creative!
- Ask your learner what digital skills they want to learn and create goals around those – keep in mind that certain basics will have to be mastered on the way
- Choose some online activities that progress through levels – check our recommended resources to find some that do this
- Track progress – many online programs allow you to track your progress as you work through activities and some even have a built-in reward system for when you complete levels
- If the resource does not have a built-in progress tracker, set up your own using a spreadsheet or a word document – especially if your learner wants to learn how to create these kinds of documents
- Encourage your learner to keep a list of digital skills that they have mastered – keep adding to that list and see it grow!
- Choose online resources that have multisensory elements – each of our curated resources include information on what multisensory components are present
- Ensure that your learner is comfortable navigating an online resource before they attempt to use it independently
- Try a variety of activities online – at a pace that is comfortable for you and your learner
- Celebrate your wins with emojis, gifs, or an acknowledgement through the mail

Developing and Maintaining Rapport

Building rapport is all about mutual respect, understanding, concern and a positive connection. Find common ground and be warm and empathetic.

You apply these principles brilliantly in your face-to-face interactions with your learner and the good news is that rapport on the phone and online can be built and maintained in all the same ways that you build rapport in person.

The best advice we can give you is to keep doing what you always do and you'll be fine!

Your attitude, body language, what you say and how you listen, are all key to developing and maintaining rapport with your learner. Here are some refresher tips that apply to both in-person and remote situations.

Attitude:

- Spend time at the beginning of each session just talking and sharing
- Show interest in your learner's interests and ideas and build on those in conversation
- Share information about yourself and find common interests or values
- Keep things light and use humour and laughter in the session – try sending humorous and positive emojis or gifs as well!
- Respect is key – respect time, respect confidentiality, respect opinions and ideas
- Be authentic
- Be enthusiastic
- Show empathy
- Be encouraging and give praise in a meaningful way

Body language:

- Maintain an open and relaxed body posture – posture affects tone and mood, so this comes through even on the phone
- Smile – even when you are on the phone, your learner can feel that you are smiling!
- Maintain eye contact about 60% of the time – without making your learner feel uncomfortable
- Lean forward to indicate that you are listening
- Nod while listening
- Mirror your learner's body language if appropriate

What you say and how you listen:

- Reflect back and clarify what has been said by your learner
- Try to match the tone, volume and speed of your learner's speech
- Use words that your learner uses – this emphasizes common ground
- Match your learner's communication style – listen for words like: see and look (visual), hear and listen (auditory), feel and sense (kinesthetic) and use those words in your own communication

Managing Online Anxiety

Tutoring and learning online is a new experience for most of us and it is perfectly natural to be anxious about it.

For many of our learners, it is a brand new and very scary experience. As tutors, we are out of our comfort zones and have the added stress of wanting to give our learners a great learning experience. Feelings of fear, doubt and overwhelm may creep in.

Fear not! There are things you can do to reduce your anxiety and to help your learner to reduce theirs.

Tips for managing online anxiety (for tutors and for learners):

- Have a conversation about any anxious feelings your learner may be having – getting it out in the open often minimizes its power
- Reframe remote learning as an adventure in learning for both of you – because it is!
- Remember to breathe – taking deep breaths together at the start of the session (or during technical mishaps) may be helpful
- Cultivate patience – replace those feelings of discouragement with the long view (good things take time!)
- Humour will be your secret weapon – use it liberally and keep that sense of humour especially when things do not go as planned
- Turn tech challenges into a game – keep a chart of how many tech challenges you have experienced and overcome (celebrate each time you complete five or add five to your list)
- Proceeding in small, manageable steps will keep anxiety at bay – start where you are at and slowly add skills

- Remember that computers are not as fragile as you think and remind your learner of that as well
- A good rule of thumb – if stuck, restart device – often things fix themselves that way
- If you are struggling with a particular tech challenge that prevents you from moving forward or has you and your learner at frustration level, have something up your sleeve that does not require tech – revert to a fun phone activity (have a few of these at the ready, just in case) and try to sort the tech problem out before your next session (call us for help)
- Take breaks if you notice that either of you are getting frustrated – get up and walk around, do something fun and easy or just read a story to your learner
- Use this mantra – It is all learning and learning is good :)

Digital Etiquette During Video Calls

Digital etiquette or "netiquette" is a set of rules and expectations for when you are online. Knowing what is expected and accepted on a video call makes the experience more pleasant and more productive for all concerned.

Here are a few tips:

Before the call:

- Find a private spot with no distractions – do the best you can!
- Warn your family that you are on a private call to minimize interruptions and to preserve confidentiality
- Try to have a background that is not too distracting – a blank wall is ideal
- Wear the same clothing that you would wear to an in-person tutoring session
- Choose front (facing a window) or side lighting – being well-lit helps with non-verbal communication
- Be prepared – have everything you need by your side so you don't leave the other person staring at an empty chair
- Test your camera and microphone to make sure they are working ahead of time

During the call:

- Be on time – this shows respect and will reduce your learner's anxiety as they wait to enter the video chat
- Frame the camera correctly so you are within the frame

- Look into the camera (not at yourself), maintaining eye contact with your learner
- Mute yourself if background noise arises while someone else is talking
- Refrain from fidgeting, tapping, rustling through papers – microphones are quite sensitive and it could be distracting
- Refrain from eating while on camera
- Refrain from multitasking on other devices like your phone (unless necessary for tutoring)
- Do what you can to limit interruptions but when they inevitably happen, just be patient and continue when you can
- Keep your sense of humour and flexibility when unexpected things happen

Remember – if at any time you feel that your remote tutoring sessions are not going well, you feel uncomfortable or you sense that your learner is losing interest or motivation – trust your feelings.

The LU office is here to support you as you navigate through this transition. LU staff can talk through any problems and work with you and your learner to find solutions.

Remember, too, that as an organization, LU considers our tutors one of our greatest resources. From time to time there will be workshops and meetings organized so that we can all share our experiences – successes, challenges, concerns, questions and answers.

Check the LU Calendar on our website for all our tutor events and the News page for new resources and posts about literacy.

Section 8: Transitioning to Blended Learning

Currently, most of us are engaged in remote learning, but there will be a time when we can start to consider meeting in person again and this will be a great opportunity to blend the new remote approaches we have been learning and practicing, with our familiar in-person approach.

Combining traditional face-to-face learning and remote learning is called *blended learning*.

Why do a blended learning approach?

- Research suggests that blended learning may be more effective than only face-to-face learning or only online learning – you get the best of both worlds!
- Offers flexibility
- Offers global access to resources – increases your options in finding that perfect resource that matches your learner's needs
- Gives learners the opportunity to acquire digital literacy skills
- Online component fits well with workplace literacy skills
- Tutors can cater to various learning styles using different modes
- Learners who do not have devices at home can learn on LU devices
- Learning time is extended as learners become more comfortable and independent online
- Contributes to learners being confident and self-directed learners

Blended learning can take many forms. Here are a few examples of how a blended learning approach could look:

- You tutor face-to-face and text or email in between sessions or during sessions to practice writing and digital skills
- You tutor face-to-face and assign online homework (if your learner is confident in using the platform)
- You tutor face-to-face with occasional remote sessions
- You alternate regularly between tutoring face-to-face and tutoring remotely
- You tutor remotely with occasional face-to-face meetings

Here are a few things you can do in your face-to-face sessions that will facilitate a shift into blended learning:

- Teach the digital skills needed for remote learning while tutoring face-to-face
- Use online tools and resources while tutoring face-to-face (quizzes, polls, language exercises, educational apps, videos, etc.)
- Use technology tools to communicate with your learner and share online resources and assignments with them

Blended learning will enrich your tutoring sessions and expand your learner's world.

When you are ready to bring a blended learning approach to your sessions, do not hesitate to contact the Program Director for guidance.

Hyperlinks to the LU Resource Hub Referenced in the Guide

LU Remote Tutoring Guidelines for Staff, Tutors and Learners

https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Policies_Procedures_Remote-Tutoring-Guidelines_Responsibilities.pdf

Staying Safe Online

https://stephaniel10.sg-host.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/StayingSafeOnline-Rules-and-Activity_QuickSheet-1.pdf

Protecting Your Personal Safety Online

https://stephaniel10.sg-host.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Online-Personal-Safety-Guidelines-and-Activity_QuickSheet.pdf

Basic Digital Skills Self-Assessment Check List

https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/BasicDigitalSkills_SelfAssessmentCheckList-1.pdf

Quick Sheet tutorials

https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/tutor-guides/tutoring-remotely/quick_guides_for_remote_tutoring/

LU's curated list of resources

https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/resources/

LU Calendar

https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/events/

News page

https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/latest-news