



Disseminating Throughout Development

Background and Context

[The Content-Integrated Language Instruction for Adults with Technology Support \(CILIA-T\)](#) was designed to integrate civics, U.S. history, and academic English with digital skills development through a 16-module open-access curriculum. From the outset, the team recognized that dissemination needed to be more than a final step at the end of the grant period. Building visibility early, even before the curriculum was complete, would help generate interest, cultivate partnerships, and support eventual adoption. This required new thinking: what can be shared when the full product is not yet ready?



The Challenge: Communicating Without a Finished Curriculum

A common challenge in educational research is that dissemination often occurs late in the process, after the curriculum, intervention, or tool is fully developed and tested. For CILIA-T, this approach risked delaying engagement with the field at a time when practitioners were eager for new resources. Moreover, adult education programs face high turnover among instructors and learners; if the team were to wait until the end, they might lose opportunities to connect with teachers and programs who could benefit.

The problem, however, was that in the project's early stages the full curriculum was not yet available and some dissemination outlets, such as conference proceedings and journal articles, operate on long publication timelines, creating a lag between submission and visibility. The team needed a way to share progress meaningfully, build credibility, and invite feedback, all while being transparent about the curriculum's developmental status.

The Strategy: Sharing Early Products and Building Visibility

The CILIA-T team addressed this challenge by treating dissemination as an iterative process that paralleled curriculum development. Rather than waiting for the polished product, the team identified early deliverables and research activities that could be shared with the adult education community.

- Creating a project website. Early in the grant period, the team developed a simple but functional website to serve as a central hub. The site hosted descriptive information about the project, updates on curriculum development, and a regularly updated blog. Blog posts highlighted emerging themes, ongoing challenges, and progress reports, offering transparency and signaling to practitioners that valuable resources were on the horizon. The team also wrote short updates in educator newsletters about the curriculum development
- Developing and sharing early products. Even before the curriculum was complete, the team created practical resources that teachers could use immediately. These included:
 - A set of digital standards (developed in partnership with [Northstar](#) colleagues) that integrated technology into civics, history, and English content.
 - Short digital assessments designed to measure skills such as finding information online.
 - Instructional videos covering tools central to CILIA-T, including Quizlet, Gmail, Zoom, Internet search, and WhatsApp accompanied by teacher guides with classroom activities.
 - Digital skill tutorials that instructors could adopt independently of the full curriculum.
- Conducting and disseminating early studies. The team undertook two experimental studies during curriculum development: one on the role of background knowledge in comprehending complex information, and another testing the effectiveness of the digital materials. They also used classroom observations during pilot implementation to describe the digital landscape of adult education classrooms. Findings from these studies were shared through presentations and made openly accessible on the Open Science Framework (OSF) to ensure transparency and broaden reach. (See <https://osf.io/vk634/>).

“Treating dissemination as an iterative process that paralleled curriculum development.”

This multi-pronged strategy allowed the CILIA-T team to provide immediate value to practitioners, build credibility, and generate excitement for the curriculum even while it was still under development.

Outcomes and Reflections

By sharing resources iteratively, the team positioned CILIA-T not only as a curriculum but also as a contributor to the field’s broader conversation about integrating technology into adult education. Teachers were able to begin experimenting with digital standards, assessments, and tutorials in their classrooms, while researchers and policymakers could track progress through OSF postings and blog updates. This approach helped create a growing

community of interest around CILIA-T, laying the groundwork for smoother adoption once the full curriculum became available.

Key Takeaways

- **Start early.** Dissemination does not need to wait for the final product—sharing emerging findings, resources, and insights can build momentum and interest.
- **Share practical resources.** Early deliverables such as standards, assessments, and tutorials provide immediate value to practitioners while signaling the direction of the full curriculum.
- **Think iteratively.** Dissemination can mirror the design cycle itself: implement, evaluate, revise, and share at each stage.
- **Think about the ‘End Game’:** Early in the development, consider whether you have a **market for the product** and how it can be scaled to become sustainable.