



DLAC: Year 1 Update

This year, our Digital Leadership Academy participants completed an important module in the DL 101 course: their site plans. DLAC participants are discovering the many benefits of online learning for students and programs, such as better preparing students for their career and postsecondary goals, retaining students and increasing persistence, and reaching outcomes.

Through their Orientation module, they learned how critical orientation is for ensuring student success. We see proof of this as our adult learners complete their studies across the country, and national research has shown that students do better when they are provided with a comprehensive orientation. DLAC members anticipate a lot of positive effects from implementing an orientation program for their online students.

Our course facilitator Destiny Simpson shares this quote about our DLAC participants: "Your learners and programs are so fortunate to have dedicated staff like you to support these endeavors!" Look for our DLAC Year 1 reports coming in May!



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Addressing the Topic of Equity

One of the significant issues that has risen to the forefront during this past COVID-19 year is the topic of equity and how different populations have been affected to a greater or lesser extent by the inequities that plague our society. Political protests that occurred during the summer of 2020 were a reminder that people of color face unequal treatment on a number of fronts on a daily basis. In our field of education, COVID-19 has shone a white-hot spotlight on digital divide issues – lack of adequate broadband connectivity, devices, and digital skills – that have hampered or shut out students from educational and other opportunities to provide for and advance the well-being of themselves, their families, and their communities.



Although we at OTAN may not face the same technological challenges that our colleagues in the field and their students do, we also recognize that we are not exempt from the need to address inequity however and whenever we can, and that starts with each of us. With our adult education colleagues at our employer, the Sacramento County Office of Education, OTAN staff have participated in SCOE trainings on implicit bias and equity and

disability to better educate ourselves about equity issues we need to personally address. OTAN and adult ed staff have also participated in the CALPRO *Success for All Learners through Equity* online Community of Practice this spring, which has helped participants develop

their personal cultural competence.

One of the outcomes of the 2020 CAEP Summit was a request for more training on equity issues, and the CAEP TAP office organized

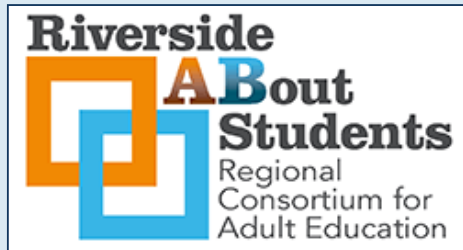
the three-part Advancing Equity Professional Learning Series in the fall. OTAN and adult ed staff attended sessions on implicit bias, talking about race, and what action steps to take in the future. (For more information on the series, visit <https://caladulthood.org/Educators/377>)

Finally, OTAN staff have made a number of presentations over the past year addressing equity, including webinars introducing digital equity and accessibility considerations, as well as a webinar on "equity, not equality" in partnership with CAEP TAP. We look forward to sharing more of our learning with the field to continue the discussion of bringing about equity whether it involves technology or in other venues. 🌐

Stories from the Field

Equity Solutions Through Partnerships

When schools in Riverside County switched to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some students in adult education lacked the home computers or internet service needed for their studies. Other projects supported K–12 and college students with devices in the region, while adult school students were overlooked. So last summer, the Riverside ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium for Adult Education launched a project to make a difference. The project addressed the inequity experienced by adult education students because of their lack of access to devices and connectivity needed to participate in distance learning.



The ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium organized a partnership between 19 adult schools in the county throughout three consortia (ABOUT STUDENTS, Desert, and Southwest Riverside Consortia), the Riverside Workforce Development Board (RWDB), the Riverside Board of Supervisors, and Moreno Valley Unified School District (MVUSD). All adult schools were surveyed to see how many devices were needed. The needs analysis was shared with the RWDB identifying the problem many adult schools and their students faced with online learning. Next, the RWDB through the Department of Homelessness Prevention and Workforce Solutions sponsored a \$1 million proposal for use of a portion of the county's CARES Act Relief Fund. The Board of Supervisors awarded the monies and MVUSD served as fiscal officer to allocate funds.

As a result of the partnerships between several agencies, adult schools in Riverside County were able to purchase nearly 3,000 devices and hot spots to loan to students, enabling them to continue their education through distance learning. One example of equity solutions through partnerships!

Submitted by
JoDee Slyter, Regional Director
ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium for Adult Education

Connecting the Community: Introducing the Digital Navigator

With more and more schools approaching successful 1:1 digital device implementation goals, the focus has shifted from lack of access to lack of skills. Recent (post-COVID-19) polls show that student engagement is down and troubleshooting technology problems is up—way up. In fact, a staggering 87% of teachers report that they are spending more time troubleshooting problems with technology than they did before schools closed (Herold & Kurtz, 2020). This is an incredible number and it's very likely that technology challenges directly contribute to a decline in student engagement.



At Highlands Community Charter School, we have introduced a new position called Digital Navigator to directly address these issues. Our view is that by removing the technology-based barriers that our students face—especially our lower literacy learners in their L1—they will be better equipped to engage online and receive high-quality learning opportunities every day.

Under the direction of the Instructional Technologist, the Digital Navigator provides individualized or small group assistance to instructional staff and students who need internet service, internet-capable devices, and/or coaching in introductory digital skills in order to become effective digital learners. This assistance is provided primarily in-person but may also include Zoom, telephone, email, text, video chat, and other communication methods that work for the learner. The Digital Navigator's work is part of Highlands' efforts to achieve and maintain a 1:1 digital device environment, elevate digital literacy agency-wide, reach instructional technology objectives, and provide equitable internet access and support for every student. 🌐

Herold, B., & Kurtz, H. (2020, May 11). Teachers Work Two Hours Less Per Day During COVID-19: 8 Key EdWeek Survey Findings. Education Week. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/05/11/teachers-work-an-hour-less-per-day.html>

Submitted by
Jerry Yamashita, Instructional Technologist
Highlands Community Charter School

TDLS 2021 - Success for All!

OTAN's yearly conference, the Technology and Distance Learning Symposium (TDLS), was held virtually March 3, 4, and 5—and received quite a few hurrahs, huzzahs, and acclamations on all fronts!

The new conference platform, built by OTAN's own programmers, accommodated well over 800 attendees, presenters, and support staff. A huge success, the platform allowed attendees to view all the presentations, search by session or strands, create their own schedule, join Zoom meetings, contact support, and find evaluations for sessions! Kudos for the new platform ranged from *"The platform was so easy to use."* to *"I was able to find everything I needed in just a few minutes. I didn't find myself hunting for the right place to be."*

The presentations were also a big hit! With 84 presentations to choose from, including the networking sessions, there was enough tech being shown every day to blow the mind of even the most advanced techie. An alphabet of tech was covered with titles like AutoTutor, Blend or Not to Blend, Empowering through Video, Googly

for Slides, Make It Stick: Vocab and Tech, Tech Troubleshooting, and USA Learns. Presentations from CAEP TAP, CALPRO, and CASAS were included where virtual collaboration, digital literacy, and reporting were covered.



Shout-outs to all TDLS presenters! They surpassed all OTAN's expectations and the attendees agreed! Evaluations can be boiled down to two snippets for all: *"Well done! I learned a lot, you were friendly, welcoming, encouraging!"* and *"Great presentation, Good instruction, clear and understandable."*

Accolades are extended to the attendees as well. Adult educators were thrust into virtual classrooms in 2020 and they stepped up to the tasks with their perseverance and tenacity. They kept their students and colleagues afloat in the sea of virtual technology. Without adult education administrators, teachers, and support staff, there would have been no call for proposals, no new conference app, and no need for a conference. Thank you all for registering, attending, and learning at the Technology and Distance Learning Symposium 2021. We hope to see you all at future OTAN events and next year's TDLS 2022! 🌍

New OTANians

After previously working as a .NET developer and a freelance developer creating websites for local businesses, Justin Timko has joined the OTAN team as a Project Specialist II, Programming Application Development. His duties include creating and maintaining OTAN websites and applications. One of his current projects involves the rebrand of the Practices with Promise website for the California Adult Education Program.

Justin calls himself a jack of many trades and a master of none. Even outside of work, he spends his time learning new programming languages and other things tech related. He enjoys creating and coding things



Justin Timko
Project Specialist II,
Programming/Application
Developer

using Arduino and Raspberry Pi. He is also working on his Offensive Security Certified Professional (OSCP) certification, which is ethical hacking. Away from the screen, he enjoys playing guitar and traveling with his camera to capture photos or make creative videos.

In Justin's words: "I have always wanted to be a part of something that helps others. I've been programming for many years and wanted to use my skill set to help in something I believe in: education. I am an advocate for education, STEM, and makerspace projects. So, to be able to join OTAN has been rewarding."

Welcome to OTAN, Justin! 🌍

Techie's Tech Tip

During OTAN webinars and online workshops, we've often mentioned that the materials need to be accessible before they're made public. What does that really mean? We're not talking about the ability to access the content, but rather, that the content is made useable for not only people with disabilities, but as many people as possible. Making content accessible also benefits others, such as those using mobile devices or those with slow network connections.

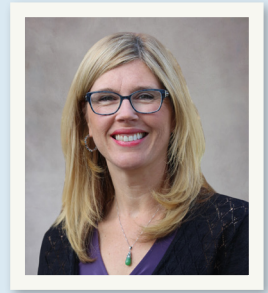


To assist staff at adult education agencies throughout California in familiarizing themselves with accessibility practices and regulations, OTAN has compiled a list of resources you can use to learn more about accessibility and how to create your own accessible content. Visit our new Accessibility Resources page at <https://otan.us/resources/accessibility-resources/> for information on getting started, as well as links to accessibility resources and guides from Microsoft, Apple, Google, and Mozilla on how to make content using their products accessible.

OTAN is committed to providing full and equal access to all. As such, OTAN follows Section 508 and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 compliance. For more information on Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, visit <https://www.section508.gov/manage/laws-and-policies>. For more information on WCAG 2.1, visit <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>.

From the Adult Education Director

In a year of fast-moving changes, OTAN paused to redefine its role in supporting adult education and its vision for the future. Following several months of discussion and reflection, staff came to consensus on OTAN's new vision, *Leading adult education through support for and the effective application of technology*.



There were several steps involved in adopting a new vision, starting with having a common understanding of what a vision is. Staff examined strong vision statements from other organizations and determined that keeping the vision short, clear, and with an established and hopeful goal were key. In Zoom breakout sessions, staff considered questions such as: What attracts practitioners to us? What words and phrases communicate what we are about? Where do we see OTAN in 3, 5, and 7 years? With feedback from discussions, staff separated into groups, each tasked with drafting a vision statement that spoke to who we want to be as an organization. Through consensus activities, staff analyzed the draft statements and eventually narrowed the options to two. Staff wordsmithed the final drafts and came to an agreement on OTAN's new vision.

The new vision speaks to actively leading, support through training, coaching, and developing technical systems (developing and maintaining our numerous websites), and meeting practitioners on their technology journey, from integrating technology into lessons to making large technology shifts. While OTAN staff have been physically apart, the process of developing a new vision helped connect us in new and exciting ways. What is your future?

Renee Collins

Adult Education Director



Scan these QR codes to learn more about these exciting OTAN resources!



OTAN has created a new Accessibility Resources page to learn more about accessibility and create your own accessible content!



Read the latest Web-based Class Activity and previous articles on interactive tools and instructional themes and activities!

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