



*A Professional Development Resource for Adult Educators*

# New Models for Distance Classes in Adult Education

Jerome Johnston, Sheryl Hart, Destiny Long, Jenifer Vanek

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**Project IDEAL Research Report Series**

**Project IDEAL Support Center • Institute for Social Research • University of Michigan**



Project IDEAL is a consortium of states working together to develop effective distance education programs for adult learners. The Project IDEAL Support Center at the University of Michigan provides technical support in the areas of teacher training, research design, data collection, data analysis and reporting. The Center also produces working papers on topics of importance to distance education. Through collaborative research and practice, the consortium is working to provide quality distance education for adult learners across the country.

<http://projectideal.org>

## New Models for Distance Classes in Adult Education

Jerome Johnston, Sheryl Hart, Destiny Long, Jenifer Vanek<sup>1</sup>

In the field of adult education distance education has been used for twenty years to help adults prepare for the GED or other high school equivalency test.<sup>2</sup> Typically, the curriculum for distance classes has been built around an online commercial package such as PLATO, SkillsTutor, or GED Online. The role of the distance teacher has been that of a coach, helping students choose the appropriate units to study and helping them stay focused on their goal of completing the units so they can be ready to pass the GED or other high-school equivalency test.

In recent years there has been a growing recognition that ABE students who want to be college and career ready need many more skills than those required to pass the GED. They need to be able to write in more complex ways than is required to pass the GED. They need to become independent learners, identifying gaps in their knowledge and finding online resources to fill the gaps. They need fluency with the computer and Internet if they are going to apply for college or a job, and to succeed in a college or career environment that is increasingly built around computer transactions.

Some distance teachers have responded by adjusting their assignments, reducing the time students spend on the core curriculum product and adding assignments designed to build college and career readiness skills in their students. An approach that uses a variety of technologies actually helps with language and content learning needs by creating more constructivist learning experiences – rather than the behavioral models evident in the proprietary curricula. This guide describes the classes of a number of these teachers with the hope that they can inspire others to examine their distance teaching practices and offer a richer experience for their students.

This resource is divided into two parts. The first consists of a collection of short vignettes describing the "classes" of a number of these teachers. In most of the vignettes teachers have used one or more electronic tools to enable them to offer the richer experience. The second part of the guide describes the tools in a bit more detail, providing an easy way for teachers to learn about the tools that they might use in their own classes.

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<sup>1</sup> Jerome Johnston is director of the Project IDEAL Support Center, University of Michigan. The other authors are state directors, distance learning coordinators or consultants in their respective states: Sheryl Hart, Arizona; Destiny Long, Pennsylvania; Jenifer Vanek, Minnesota.

<sup>2</sup> Interactive online distance education for adult learners can be traced to the mid-1990s with the federally supported LiteracyLink project. See Askov, Johnston, Petty & Young (2003). Expanding access to adult literacy with online distance education, pp. 4-5. Cambridge, MA: NCSALL.

## Background

Project IDEAL is a consortium of states interested in developing distance education programs to expand the educational opportunities available to adult learners (projectideal.org). In 2013 distance learning coordinators from a number of Project IDEAL states created a study group aimed at identifying the online tools and learning activities used by distance teachers identified as successful in developing college and career readiness skills in their students. Study group members asked agency directors and adult education coordinators in their states to identify candidates. The candidates could be:

- A GED distance teacher who has broadened the curriculum beyond GED prep to add activities designed to prepare students for a transition to college or to a job.
- An ESL teacher who is doing the same – adding activities to their ESL classes that go beyond mastering basic skills in English and helps students prepare for college or the workplace.
- An ABE/ASE distance teacher who is teaching a special course designed to prepare students specifically for college or workforce transition

Members of the study group interviewed the candidates following the interview guide that appears in the appendix. The interviews were converted to vignettes and compiled in this guide.

This version of the guide contains an initial set of vignettes. If they prove useful we will identify and interview more innovators and add their vignettes to the collection.

Project IDEAL Support Center  
University of Michigan  
April, 2015

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# I. DISTANCE CLASS VIGNETTES



# 1. Creating an ESL Classroom Online

<i>Content Area</i>	Speaking, listening, reading and writing in English
<i>Level</i>	Intermediate to advanced
<i>Student Audience</i>	Students are spread across the state and have varying levels of prior education in their native country
<i>Class Format</i>	DL
<i>Teacher</i>	Shannon, PA Distance Learning Project, Lewistown, PA [001]
<i>Instructor Goals</i>	To support English language learners' mastery of the four components of English while introducing academic and workplace vocabulary and culture.

## The Class

Shannon was an experienced face-to-face ESOL teacher before teaching ESOL at a distance. Since she strongly believed that language needed to be learned in a community, her approach to distance teaching was to use technology to re-create the classroom experience. She developed an online ESOL Community for students that includes activities that allow learners to be engaged with each other, the teacher, and the content so they are not learning English in isolation.

The ESOL Community is comprised of three main areas:

- **Live Online Classes (LOC)** – Students participate in webinars twice a week for synchronous language practice with their teacher and other students. The lessons focus on all four components of language—reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- **Rosetta Stone** – Students work independently in this online curriculum; assignments are based upon their assessment results.
- **Supplemental lessons** – Students work on a variety of activities to help build vocabulary, practice pronunciation, and build reading and writing skills. This includes a student-created class vocabulary list in Google Docs, pronunciation practice using Voicethread, writing in online journals, and working on individual presentations that they present to their classmates during the Live Online Classes.

New students participate in an orientation using Adobe Connect to build familiarity with the online technology they will use for their Live Online Classes. Students use Moodle as their “online homeroom” and access point for all of their class materials. The class includes links to the Adobe Connect room for their classes, Rosetta Stone, and all of the supplemental activities they complete.

In addition to providing feedback and support to students during the Live Online Classes, Shannon also uses tools to provide individual instruction to students. She uses email, phone, Skype, and text messaging to communicate with learners. She also uses Camtasia to create videos that provide instruction or for providing feedback on students' work.

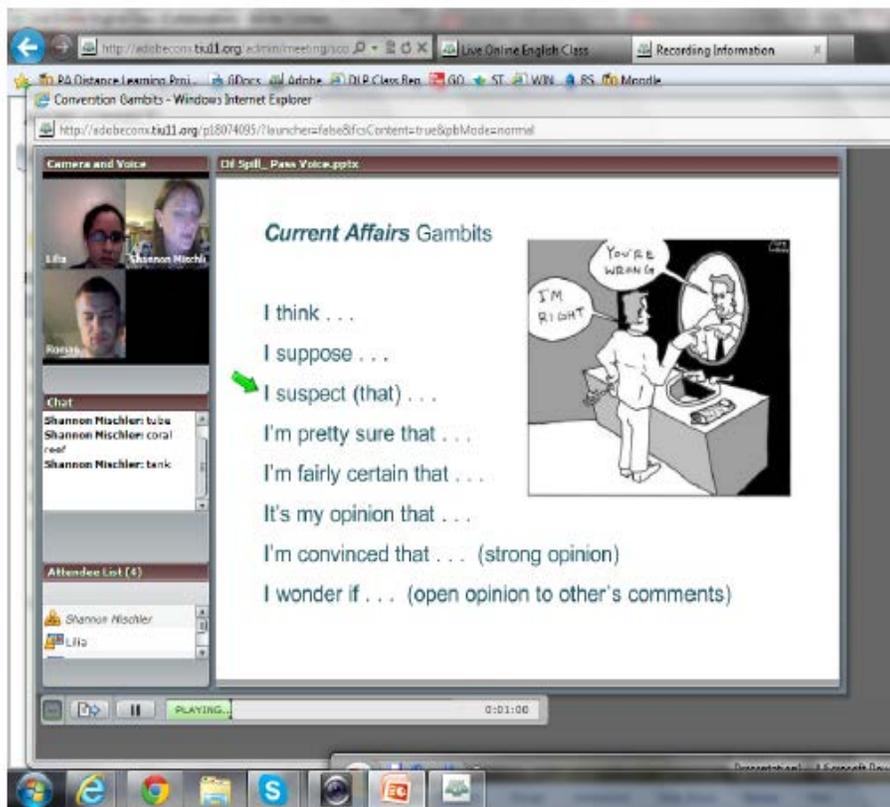
Students have commented how much they enjoy the Live Online Classes and using the supplemental tools in addition to Rosetta Stone.

## Tools

Adobe Connect, Camtasia, Google Docs, Live Online Class, Moodle, Rosetta Stone, Skype, Voicethread.

## Screenshots

### Live Online Class



*Shannon uses Adobe Connect to conduct a twice-weekly synchronous online class with students*

## Moodle

Moodle is the Learning Management System for the class. Below are screen shots of various assignments.

### ESOL Community

Why do you want to study English? Please tell us in the [Individual Learning Plan](#).

*Each week, please participate in the activities below and stay in touch with your teacher.*



Contact Shannon with any English questions!

1

#### Live Online English Class (LOC)

Login with your first name as a Guest to [Adobe Connect classroom](#) and use [Skype](#) for the audio.

Need more help? Read "[How to use Technology in the LOC.](#)"

 [LOC Documents](#)

2

#### Rosetta Stone

Login to [Rosetta Stone](#) with your username and password. Each week complete at least 3 hours of activities. Click [here](#) for technical assistance.

 [More independent English study online!](#)

3

#### Writing

Practice writing about yourself, your home country, and your opinions, and I will provide you with written feedback.

4 **Pronunciation & Vocabulary**



[Add to the class VOCABULARY list!](#)

[Pronunciation Practice in Voicethread](#)

5



**Prepare a Presentation**

Please prepare a five minute presentation to be delivered during a live online English class. Contact your teacher with any questions!

[How to prepare a presentation](#)

[Student Presentations](#)

## Pronunciation Practice Using Voicethread

The sounds in “saw” /a/ and “sew” /ow/

**“sew”**  
Open your mouth with tongue down. Put your tongue up a little, as you say this, put your lips forward into a circle. /ow/ is a long sound, with two parts. The /w/ part is very short.

**“saw”**  
Open your mouth with tongue down. Then put your tongue up and back a little and move your lips forward a little.

low/	/a/
sew	saw
coat	caught
hole	hall
boat	bought
bowl	ball

TEACH... minimal pair choices. If students choose wo... TEACHERS can read on... the words or class/teacher chooses which wo... register... May 2... class 2

## 2. Developing Independent Learning Skills in a GED Prep Class

<i>Content Area</i>	GED transitions
<i>Level</i>	ASE
<i>Student Audience</i>	Students studying for their GED
<i>Class Format</i>	DL, Hybrid
<i>Teacher</i>	Melinda, ABE instructor, Phoenix, AZ [002]
<i>Instructor Goals</i>	Have students earn their GED, but become independent learners as well – learn organizational skills associated with learning material on their own, learn academic skills that are not in the GED curriculum but needed for college, learn technology skills needed for postsecondary education and the workplace

### The Class

Melinda has taught a GED prep course for many years. In recent years she and other instructors have come to realize how many more skills students need to succeed in postsecondary education and in the workplace.

She uses PLATO as the core curriculum to prepare students for the GED. But PLATO provides only about 50 percent of their learning exercises. The rest of the time is spent using a variety of tools and learning resources that build their independent learning skills and supplement the content they learn in PLATO.

On the first day of class she helps each student set up an email account if they do not already have one. She sends out assignments by email and expects her students to complete the assignments using tools such as MS Word and Excel and submit them as email attachments. For example, they need to write a letter using Word and prepare a household budget using Excel. She also has a class blog. Students are required to contribute to the blog for some of their assignments.

She communicates with her students primarily with email, though she will use Google Chat occasionally for synchronous activity. To build their Internet search skills Melinda has frequent scavenger hunts. She also has units on netiquette and cyber safety.

She uses TABE results initially to make assignments based on what individual students most need. But she monitors their work closely and adjusts assignments according to how well they do on each assignment.

She uses Coursesites to organize material to supplement PLATO when PLATO's content is not enough. For example, PLATO does not have enough math word problems, so she has additional word problems on Coursesites for practice. She also gives them assignments that require them to study more difficult material than they find in the GED

preparation material. She puts the assignment with links to the website on Coursesites.

If she gets questions that she thinks others in the class would benefit from, she develops a section on Coursesites to address those questions. She also has them write down questions they want to discuss in class. Students can also use email or Google chat to ask questions of the teacher.

Group work is important. Although this is primarily a distance course they are required to come to class occasionally where they can work on math games, jigsaw readings, and PowerPoint presentations in small groups.

## **Tools**

Class Blog, Coursesites, Google Chat, Gmail, Khan Academy, PLATO

### 3. Preparing for College: Mindquest Academy

<i>Content Area</i>	College prep for ASE students
<i>Level</i>	ASE
<i>Student Audience</i>	GED students declaring an interest in entering postsecondary
<i>Class Format</i>	DL, Hybrid
<i>Teacher</i>	Lori, Southwest ABE, MN [005]
<i>Instructor Goals</i>	Help students explore college possibilities and build the skills required to succeed in college.

#### **The Class**

Students in this teacher's distance education transitions program use college-preparation materials found within a free, online curriculum called Mindquest Academy. The curriculum was developed by two adult basic education instructors in Minnesota to build college readiness skills for ASE students. The modules used in this course push students to explore their life goals and build the skills necessary to achieve them.

At intake, students are given several assessments to gauge their readiness for the college-prep program. First they take the CASAS Reading and Math tests. The minimum score of 235 must be attained to continue enrollment in the college-prep distance education course. If they score lower, they are directed to an ABE class in their area. They also complete the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI), which helps them understand their readiness for college. Students examine their time management skills, assess if they have test anxiety, and explore other skills needed for college success. Finally, they take the North Star Digital Literacy assessments to find out what computer skills they need to learn.

In the in-person orientation that follows, ABE/ASE explore their goals and, if appropriate, the possibilities of pursuing postsecondary education as a vehicle to reach their goals.

Part of the success of this distance education transitions program is the close connection that students build with the area community college. As part of the registration and orientation process for the program students are given a college e-mail account and are provided with login information for the learner management system used by the college, Desire2Learn (D2L). At the orientation session, they are given assistance with these tools-- how to access D2L, how to participate in a discussion, how to put assignments in Drop Box, and how to get feedback from the teacher. After orientation, students access all content from D2L.

Mindquest Academy uses a number of online learning activities and assessments to help students identify their needs and build their skills. The teacher selects relevant content from the Mindquest Academy curriculum, and with the permission of the authors, builds it into D2L. This gives the students a chance to access valuable Mindquest Academy

resources while they build confidence using D2L, the online learning tool they will use in college.

A typical assignment would be for students to access an online reading assignment and then investigate related websites, such as ISEEK (Minnesota's comprehensive career exploration and job search online resource) or My Minnesota Career (a version of ISEEK developed for adults with low-literacy skills) to investigate college, job or personal interests. They must write brief reports on these web explorations, which they submit to D2L's online drop box. The instructors respond to the assignments by email or they may request that the student call them to discuss their work.

Throughout the course students are required to use several electronic tools to communicate – e-mail, text messaging, and the D2L discussion forum. The teacher intends to add Facebook and Twitter in the future. Students are also shown how to set up alerts on their telephone calendar to warn them when assignments are due, or when they are expected to contact the teacher.

Lori sums up the course in this way:

*"Most students have a general idea what they want to do for their future learning. Encouragement and direction are given to them along the way. I would not say that they need a lot of structure. Many students just need that extra encouragement or self-confidence that comes with small successful steps. I think that if an online student needs a lot of structure, they may not be as successful with online learning. Yes, there are deadlines and due dates, but not as much "hand holding" as a face-to-face teacher may provide. Through the orientation process, students understand what their commitment is and what the teacher expectation is for them, as well.*

*"As students complete the college exploration course, they have sifted out a career goal, an academic goal and a personal goal. With the activities they have completed, they now have a better understanding of what they want for their future: career, academic and personal."*

## **Tools**

E-mail, Text messages, Telephone, Discussion forum, Desire2Learn, ISEEK, My Minnesota Career, Mindquest Academy, Learning and Study Strategies Inventory, Northstar Digital Literacy Assessments

## Screen Shots

The screenshot shows the H&H Publishing website page for the LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) assessment. The page features a navigation menu with links for Assessments, Online Courses, Books, Booklets, and Contact/Support. The main heading is "LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory)". Below this, there is a breadcrumb trail: Home » Assessments » LASSI. A sidebar on the left contains a menu with options: Overview of LASSI (selected), Scales of LASSI, LASSI in Action, Versions of LASSI, Prices & Ordering, Samples and Demos, and Purchase Now. The main content area is titled "Overview of LASSI" and contains the following text:

Extensive research, development, and testing led to the creation of this statistically valid and reliable tool for the diagnosis of study skills. The LASSI is a 10-scale, 80-item assessment of students' awareness about and use of learning and study strategies related to skill, will and self-regulation components of strategic learning. The focus is on both covert and overt thoughts, behaviors, attitudes and beliefs that relate to successful learning and that can be altered through educational interventions. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that these factors contribute significantly to success in college and that they can be learned or enhanced through educational interventions such as learning and study skills courses.

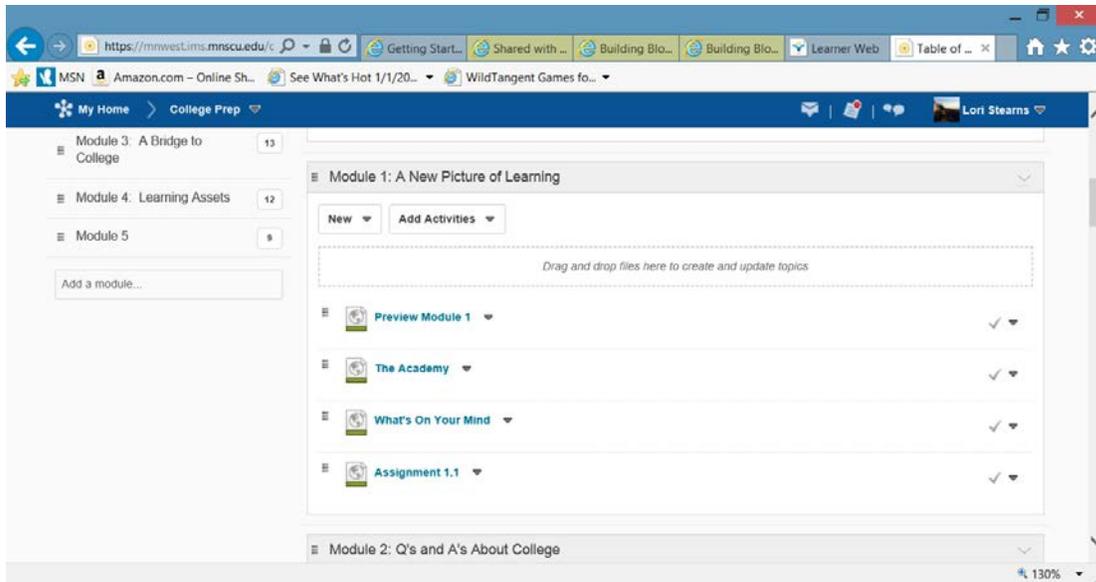
The LASSI provides standardized scores (percentile score equivalents) and national norms for ten different scales (there is no total score since this is a diagnostic measure). The LASSI is both diagnostic and prescriptive. It provides students with a diagnosis of their strengths and weaknesses, compared to other college students, in the areas covered by the 10 scales and it is prescriptive in that it provides feedback

On the right side of the page, there is a section titled "Self-Scoring LASSI" with an image of the "Learning and Study Strategies Inventory" book cover. Below the image is a "Purchase" link.

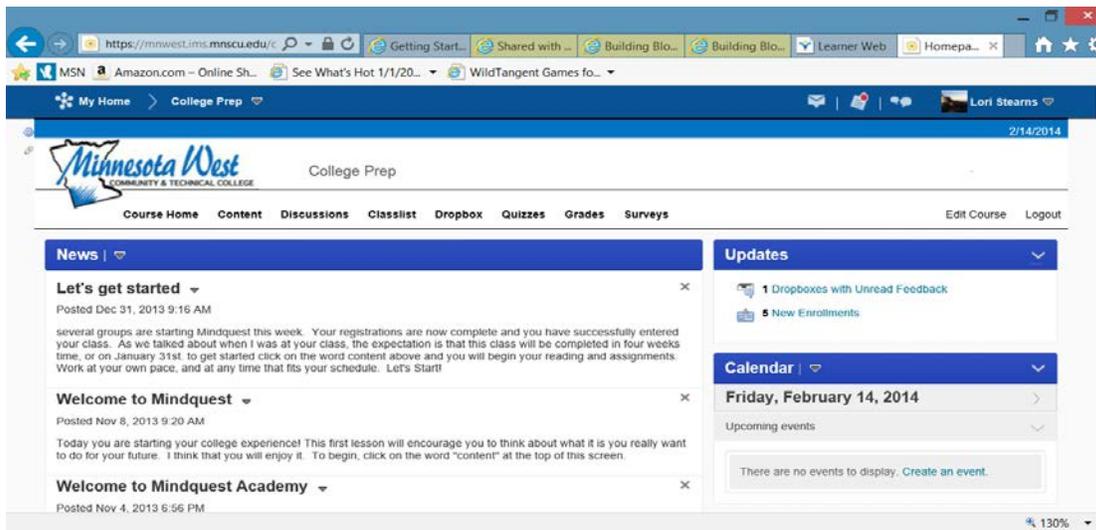
*LASSI is an assessment tool used to determine a student's learning and study strategies*

The screenshot shows the Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment website. The header features the slogan "Learn it. Know it. Show it." and the "HELP (FAQ)" link. The main heading is "NORTHSTAR BASIC COMPUTER SKILLS CERTIFICATE". Below this, there is a navigation menu with links for HISTORY & PURPOSE, THE STANDARDS, EMPLOYERS, JOB SEEKERS, and SPONSORING SITES. The main content area is titled "Jump in and Launch a Module" and contains six icons representing different modules: 1 (Computer), 2 (Globe), 3A (Windows), 3B (Apple), 4 (@ symbol), and 5 (Documents). At the bottom, there is a "Language:" dropdown menu set to "English".

*Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment is a free online foundational assessment created for ABE students.*



*Desire2Learn is embedded in the college's online system. This page shows a collection of assignments posted by the instructor.*



*The "Welcome" illustrates the tone of Mindquest*

https://mnwest.lms.mnsc.edu/c... Getting Start... Shared with... Building Bio... Building Bio... Learner Web What's O... x

MSN Amazon.com - Online Sh... See What's Hot 1/1/20... WildTangent Games fo...

My Home > College Prep

2/14/2014

Minnesota West  
COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE

College Prep

Course Home Content Discussions Classlist Dropbox Quizzes Grades Surveys Edit Course Logout

Table of Contents > Module 1: A New Picture of Learning > What's On Your Mind

Print

What's On Your Mind

What's On Your Mind.html - Last Modified Oct 1, 2009 10:14 AM

Previous Next

**What's on your mind?**

A group of 15 students in an adult education program in Bloomington, Minnesota, recently sat around a table in their classroom discussing questions like: Why do you want to go to college? What questions do you have about college? What are some of your biggest worries about going to college? Some students were Americans who had come back to school to complete an education that got interrupted somewhere along the way. They were looking ahead to new careers and knew that more education was essential for the jobs they wanted. Some students were immigrants from other countries who were trying to create new lives for themselves here and

130%

*"What's on your mind?" is set up for an electronic discussion among students.*

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- **Learn** More

[Introduction Video](#)

I am... [An English Language Learner](#)

I am... [Finishing High School or My GED](#)

I am... [Done with High School/GED and Want to Advance My Career](#)

*MyMNCareers helps low-literacy job seekers and English language learners find career planning and work preparation information. It is a simplified version of ISEEK, including guided navigation.*



## 4. Independent Learning Skills For ESL Students

<i>Content Area</i>	Mixed Skills
<i>Level</i>	Advanced ESL
<i>Student Audience</i>	Score of over 400 on ClasE, some hold GEDs, and/ or have advanced degrees from their home countries
<i>Class Format</i>	Hybrid
<i>Teacher</i>	Andrea, a community college in rural Arizona [006]
<i>Instructor Goals</i>	English language skill development through use of technology; become independent learners able to use technology tools for future education and job opportunities. Formation of lasting community of learners that exists beyond official end of class.

### The Class

Though she is new to adult education, Andrea's students have notable outcome accomplishment and her integration of technology in learning is popular with students. Andrea is enthusiastic about trying new things. This is evident in her hybrid advanced, mixed-skills ESL class.

Instruction begins in the classroom, where Andrea utilizes multiple technology tools to support learning in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Activities include a focus on post-secondary transition and are presented and practiced using a range of tech tools. For example, she uses Google Docs for assignments and Excel spreadsheets to present and organize vocabulary lists. This helps students get comfortable with technology while they gain interest in both the tools and the content, encouraging them to identify as life-long learners. Andrea makes note of particular student needs demonstrated during class and in student assignments and email messages. She also periodically interviews students to deepen her understanding of what they want to learn. Based on this information, she individualizes instruction drawing on multiple resources.

Andrea uses LiveBinders as the main classroom website. Students find their weekly assignments and instructions posted there. An assignment describes work covered in a topical unit, which typically lasts one week; however, as noted above, in order to differentiate learning, she relies on many different web-based instructional resources. Students find links to these resources in LiveBinders. These include PLATO for lessons on specific language exercises, History Channel and StoryCorps for listening and writing, and many supplemental websites for grammar, vocabulary, and language skill building, including FreeRice.com.

Andrea communicates with her students primarily using Gmail, but also uses messages posted in LiveBinders crafted using screencasts or podcasting applications like Vocaroo.com. She also uses texts, and Google Voice to send mass text messages. Through this variety in communication tools, students get practice learning in multiple forms of media.

*“I feel the most success with students who start out with lower technology skills. This class has truly changed their lives.”*

## Tools

USA Learns, LiveBinders, PLATO, Google Docs, Excel, Vocaroo.com, Story Corp, History Channel, links to other relevant websites like Adele’s Corner, dictionary.com, vocabulary.com, and FreeRice.com

## Screen Shots

LiveBinders - Your 3-ring binder for the web

< Back to Site | Share | Add | Welcome andikay71 | Log Out | Help

**TREAT Binder: Your Binder for TREAT Class** Save | Quick Guide | Edit Menu

Binder Author: [Andi](#) | [Details](#) | [Comments 0](#)

Weekly Classwork | Discussion | Special Assignment | Microsoft Office | Voicethreads | USA Learns | Extra Work | Future Work

Dictionary | Fun Practice

Microphone Screencast | Last Class Summary | Message Board | Copy and Paste Tips | Multiple Intelligences -- Assessment

**The seven things you need to do for class each week.**

***DON'T FORGET***

***TREAT requires 10 hours of homework work each week: remember to log all hours***

1. Check your **Gmail** account daily. If you can't check every day you should check every other day at a minimum.
2. Participate in **Discussion**: Check Google.groups at least three times, use the 'Discussion' tab above to see your subject and your post requirements.
3. Check the tab above labeled '**Special Assignment**' and complete all the work listed there. Those assignments are special for this week.
4. Complete a new assignment under the '**Microsoft Office**' tab.
5. Give me feedback about how class is going (Use '**Feedback**' tab)
6. Fill out your **Hours Log** on your Google document (or on paper if you have problems).
7. Complete one unit on **USA Learns**.

*LiveBinders is like an online file drawer. The teacher creates tabs – like pages on a website – and sub-tabs with different assignments or tools in each tab. Above shows the "Weekly Classwork" tab.*

LiveBinders - Your 3-ring binder for the web

< Back to Site | Share | Add | Welcome andikay71 | Log Out | Help

**TREAT Binder: Your Binder for TREAT Class** Save | Quick Guide | Edit Menu

Binder Author: [Andi](#) | [Details](#) | [Comments 0](#)

Weekly Classroom | Discussion | **Special Assignment** | Microsoft Office | Voicethreads | USA Learns | Extra Work | Future Work | Dictionary

Fun Practice

Add to our class vocab. blog | Week 12-If/Then | Week 12-Would | Week 9 | **Week 9 Final Consonant** | voiced and unvoiced | Week 9 Past Tense Review | Weeks 7 and 8

Grammar Reading for Week 8

Enter a URL: <http://www.accentmaster.com/Lessons/FinalVoicedConsonants/> Insert | Go to Site

**Record Yourself**  
It is very important to record yourself speaking and to compare your recordings to a model speaker's recording.

**How To Record Yourself**  
The easiest way to record yourself is with the Accent Master software.  
If you don't have our software you can use the built-in Windows Sound Recorder. You can find it by going to: "Start" - All Programs - "Accessories" - "Sound Recorder".

**Audio Examples**  
Set 1: cap / cab

Lynn Bo  
Founder, Accent Master

*In this screen the "Special Assignment" tab is selected, and "Week 9 Final Consonant" sub-tab open to show a video player and an assignment for the student to make a recording.*

Barrier-noun (1/1)

I really like our binder, it is a useful way to share comments, I think all of us should be use it in order to obtain more benefits and learn more from each other. Thank Andy for everything you are doing, I'm learning a lot! You are a very dedicated teacher!

*Andrea uses Voicethreads to record messages to students and has students record themselves and she comments on the videos.*

# Vocaroo



Vocaroo - The premier voice recording service.

[Or upload?](#)



© 2007-2014 [Vocaroo](#) | [Help](#) | [Info](#) | [Widgets](#) | [@vocaroo](#)

*Vocaroo is a free alternative to Voicethreads, but it doesn't have all the features that Andrea needs, such as commenting on videos.*

The screenshot shows the Vocabulary.com website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, HOW IT WORKS, LEADERBOARDS, BLOG, and HELP. Below this is a sub-navigation bar with THE CHALLENGE, THE DICTIONARY, LOOK IT UP, and VOCABULARY LISTS. The main content area features a large heading "vocabulary lists" with the subtext "Browse, create, and learn lists. Explore or make your own!". There are several featured list cards, each with a title, a brief description, a star rating, and a "Learn" button. The cards include "Historical Documents", "Common Sense," Vocabulary from the pamphlet, "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," Vocabulary from Chapters 1-4, "Vocabulary from dialogue written by Harold Ramis (1944-2014)", "100 SAT Words Beginning with 'A'", and "GRE High Frequency Words". A search bar is also visible on the right side of the page.

*Vocabulary.com provides contextualized vocabulary quizzes and tracks the learners' mastery of vocabulary*

FREE  
Rice 2.0

HOME | SUBJECTS | GROUPS | RICE | SIGN UP | LOGIN | ABOUT | SPREAD THE WORD | ENGLISH

For each answer you get right, we donate 10 grains of rice through the World Food Programme to help end hunger

login | sign up (track your totals, join and create groups and more)

English Grammar Change Subjects ▶

Which is correct?

Since I was late for [work I] wasn't able to have a free donut.

Since I was late for [work, I] wasn't able to have a free donut.

8336400 grains of rice donated yesterday.  
Over 99 billion grains donated to date (see [totals](#)).

**How to Play**

- Click on the right answer in the middle of this page.
- If you get it right, you get a harder question. If you get it wrong, you get an easier question.
- For each answer you get right, we donate 10 grains of rice to the [United Nations World Food Program](#).

WARNING: This game may make you smarter. It may improve your speaking, writing, thinking, grades, job performance... [\(more\)](#)

1 right = 10 grains

5 right = 50 grains

Play and feed hungry people

*FreeRice.com is a site where good performance on a quiz earns free rice for hungry people somewhere in the world.*



## 5. Broadening the Academic Horizon for GED Students

<i>Content Area</i>	GED Test Prep
<i>Level</i>	ASE
<i>Student Audience</i>	Students preparing to take the GED
<i>Class Format</i>	DL
<i>Teacher</i>	Rick, Distance Learning Project, Lewistown, PA
<i>Instructor Goals</i>	Help students broaden their academic interests beyond the GED and help them build the skills needed to pursue those interests.

### **The Class**

The stated goal of Rick's course is to prepare ASE students to pass the GED test. In the early years of teaching this class he assigned his student work in several packaged curricula—GED Online, SkillsTutor, and WIN—depending on the particular skills they needed to work on. As more of his students expressed an interest in pursuing postsecondary education he knew they needed additional knowledge and skills beyond what they were learning to pass the GED, so he tried to find content areas that interested them and then help them explore those areas using resources not available in the packaged curricula.

He uses a variety of online tools to help his students explore new areas and build their skills. He uses Moodle to organize all of the assignments for students. To explore new content areas he assigns Khan Academy videos. When he needs to provide synchronous instruction for students he uses Adobe Connect or Scriblink. Each provides a whiteboard which he uses much like he would a blackboard in a regular classroom. When synchronous instruction isn't possible he records his instruction using Screenr or Camtasia. To communicate with students synchronously he uses Skype; for asynchronous communication he uses email. When students first enroll in Rick's class they are taught how to use the core required tools, such as the SkillsTutor. As additional tools are added (e.g., Adobe Connect or Scriblink) Rick uses Skype to provide the technical assistance students need to become proficient with the technology.

### **Tools**

Adobe Connect, Google Sites, Khan Academy, Moodle, Screenr, Scriblink, Skype.



## 6. Expanding the Writing Curriculum Beyond GED Prep

<i>Content Area</i>	GED Writing
<i>Level</i>	ASE
<i>Student Audience</i>	Students preparing for the GED writing test
<i>Class Format</i>	Hybrid
<i>Teacher</i>	Pam, St. Paul, MN [007]
<i>Instructor Goals</i>	Develop the skills necessary to pass the GED writing test. Help students develop the digital literacy skills they need to succeed in postsecondary or on the job. Help students write collaboratively and edit each other's work.

### The Class

Pam has been teaching ABE for nearly two decades and currently teaches a class designed to prepare students for the GED writing test. Recognizing that the writing requirements for today's workplace and postsecondary placements exceed the demands of what the GED tests, she expanded the course to include writing in a variety of electronic media. She also added course components that require students to write collaboratively, and edit each other's work – increasingly a requirement in today's workplace. This hybrid course meets four days a week, complemented by online DL instruction. On Fridays the computerized classroom is open for students do online DL assignments, or they can work independently off-site. New students able to join the course every month.

While there is a clear curriculum with specific assignments, Pam views the course as individualized instruction. Many features of the class provide instruction tailored to individual needs. This differentiation is coordinated using Microsoft Front Page, a WYSIWYG web editing tool.

Pam starts the class with a variety of assessments to help gauge student needs. She uses the TABE to assess their language skills and the Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment to measure their computer skills. She uses the SteckVaughn GED practice writing tests to assess their readiness for the GED writing test.

SkillsTutor is the core online curriculum in Pam's literacy center. It provides instruction and practice in core grammar skills. Pam uses it to advantage for students who are absent. She emails assignments to the absent students that match the topic of the week. She also finds that she can increase the number of SkillsTutor assignments for ELL students, giving them additional instruction and practice.

She also uses iPathways online curriculum for more individualized instruction. She models the lesson in class and then has students do the full assignment at home. She likes the whiteboard and chat features in iPathways because they provide tools to support tutoring at a distance.

There are a number of teacher-created activities and writing assignments that students complete using a Google Docs. Students must share the document with a collaborator and take turns critiquing each other's writing. Pam has a rubric that she uses to assess the quality of the students' collaboration.

She familiarizes all students with a variety of online resources for writing, such as Grammar Girl ([www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl](http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl)) and Purdue Online Writing Lab ([owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)) and draws on them for differentiated instruction organized and presented on her website.

*“A goal of my hybrid course is to expose students to real life situations where they can see where the ability to work on a team or use a computer might benefit them.”*

## Tools

Google Docs/Google Drive, iPathways, SkillsTutor, Northstar Online Digital Literacy Assessment, Microsoft Front Page (used to create her website), various online writing sites such as Grammar Girl ([www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl](http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl)) and Purdue Online Writing Lab ([owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/))

## Screen Shots

The screenshot shows a Google Docs document titled "Welcome to Language Arts for the GED". At the top, it says "last edited by Pam Ampferer 41 minutes ago" and "Page history". The main content includes:

- Introduction to Class** - Please watch this PowerPoint if you missed the first day of class. Use the link "FAQ's about GED 2014" if you still have questions about the new test...or ask me...or ask another student...or go online and do some research...or send an email...in other words, please communicate. The new test is new to all of us. Some of you are regrouping from the last test...some of you have heard stories about how hard the new test is...not true. It's very doable...and you can do it.
- Oldie but goodie - Rocky Balboa's speech to his son.** Below this is a video player showing Rocky Balboa's motivational speech.
- February 2014** - Continuing this month: *Using evidence from a text to support your argument.* Due 2/14 Florida School Allows Cell Phones in Class - St. Petersburg Times
- And for the monthly "What do you think?"** - Read the two tweets below. What do you think? **'Not a word' proly ain't an argument anyways**. A trio of tweets to introduce the topic: The "not a word" claim usually means it's a word outside standard English—which may be trivially true—or a neologism the speaker dislikes.— Stan Carey (@StanCarey) October 22, 2013. The only words that aren't "real words" are the ones that haven't been written, spoken or thought. When that happens they become "real".— Stan Carey (@StanCarey) October 22, 2013.

On the right side of the document, there is a "Share this page" menu with options like "Put this page in a folder", "Edit Tags: New Tag", "Control access to this page", and "Copy this page". Below that is a "Navigator" sidebar with a list of links: "Starred Pages and Files", "Accuplacer", "Combining Sentences", "Completed Assignments", "Essay Writing Help", and "Homonyms". At the bottom of the sidebar is a "SideBar" section with "Current Writing Topics - Please submit through Google Drive unless assigned as a blog post.", "February", "Writing Assignment: Should 'under God' be used in the US Pledge of Allegiance?", "Resource: <http://www.procon.org>", and "Blog Post: Are public surveillance cameras a good idea?" with a resource link to the digital edition of NY Times UpFront.

*A class website is used to structure assignments and resources.*

## 7. Technology-Rich Writing Instruction for ESL Students

<i>Content Area</i>	ELL Writing
<i>Level</i>	Beginning
<i>Student Audience</i>	Somali, Korean, Hmong, Ethiopian, Oromo, Vietnamese, Iraqi, Cambodian testing 0-3.9 on TABE CLAS-E Language Assessment
<i>Class Format</i>	Hybrid
<i>Teacher</i>	Adam, and adult education center in urban Minnesota
<i>Instructor Goals</i>	Mastery of sentence level writing skills including question formation; punctuation; capitalization; spelling; simple present, past, future and present continuous verb forms; and demonstration of keyboarding and word processing skills sufficient to write simple sentences, navigate websites, and fill out online forms. Develop independent, online learning skills.

### The Class

Adam teaches in a program that is committed to embedding computer skills development into every ELL and ABE class. Additionally, the program has experimented with school-wide hybrid classes, where each class meets four days a week and complementary instruction is provided through DL. Consequently, Adam's beginning ELL writing class is a hybrid class that meets in a computerized classroom and utilizes SkillsTutor as it's primary DL tool. He has been teaching a hybrid class for two years, but had previously worked hard on classroom technology integration: having a class website, teaching and using email, integrating digital literacy skills, and offering support materials.

Adam coordinates the entire hybrid course using his class webpage, built on a district-provided website. There, he posts links to weekly teacher-created assignment activities and useful web-based activities and provides a link to their primary distance-learning curriculum, SkillsTutor. He emails weekly Skills Tutor assignments to students. In addition, he links to complementary websites that can help students practice the topic of the week.

Major assignments are generally completed in class, reinforce classroom grammar or writing skill instruction, and require the completion of a document using a Microsoft Word for basic grammar practice and sentence-level writing. The students email completed documents to him at the end of each week. Adam also uses the customizable lesson feature on Skills Tutor for language skill support as he observes issues when reading student assignments.

Email is the primary communication tool in his class. Adam emails students weekly to remind them of the assignments and expects students to email completed documents to him, rather than printing in class and handing them in. Email is becoming a daily activity for many of his students, used for asking questions about attendance, activities, or requests for extra learning activities.

Adam credits time made available at staff professional development days for his success because it gives him the time to experiment and reflect on how to best use new learning technology resources. He also understands that he is very fortunate to work for a school district that values full-time teacher contracts, which provides him time to prepare and plan.

*“We’re using SkillsTutor and activities posted on the class website to support the in-person class experience. This fosters independent, online learning skills, which is a goal of the program. I’m explicit about the fact that any education they hope to pursue will require independent learning. Many are interested in postsecondary education, which requires this. I hope they make the connection!” --Adam*

## Tools

SkillsTutor, Gmail, class webpage on district provided website, links to other subject-relevant websites

## Screen Shots

Hubbs Center Home > Student Resources > Class web pages > Writing 1 Adam Kieffer

### Writing 1



Hi. I'm Adam Kieffer, your Writing 1 teacher. My office is in **Room 1303**.

My phone number is  My email is

[Skills Tutor](#) Link to MySkillsTutor

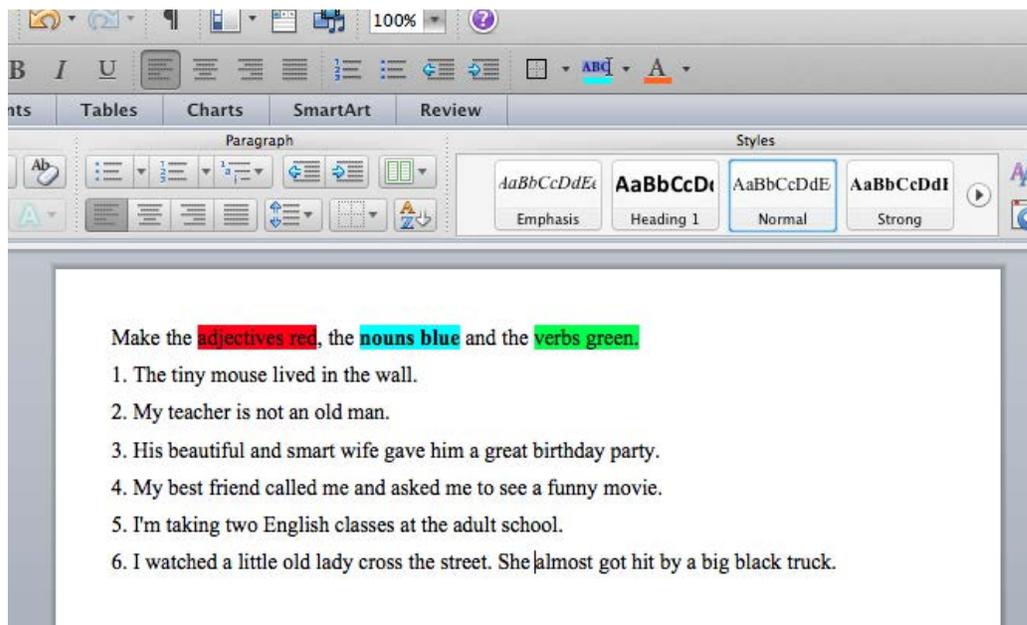
[Grammar Practice 1](#) Link to Univ of Victoria grammar practice website

[Grammar Practice 2](#) Link to Univ of Victoria grammar practice website

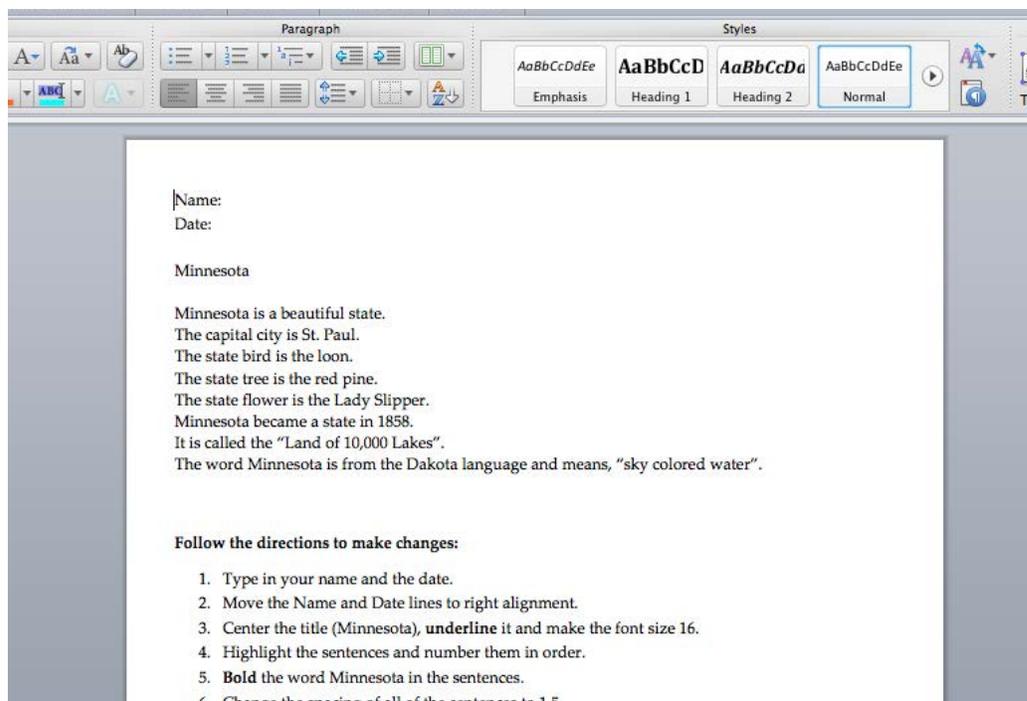
- [Skills Tutor Login Sheet](#)
- [Writing 1 Syllabus](#)
- [Adjective, Verb, Noun](#)
- [Noun Verb Adjective Colors](#)
- [Formatting Practice](#)
- [About Me](#)
- [About My Classmate](#)
- [My First Day in the U.S.](#)
- [Sentence Correction 1st Day in US](#)
- [My Day](#)
- [Negative Sentence Change](#)
- [Possessive Pronoun Sentences](#)

MS Word templates; click on a title to download the exercise

Adam's Class Website



*A sample activity that students download to their computer, complete, and then return to Adam as an email attachment.*



*A sample activity that students download to their computer, complete, and then return to Adam as an email attachment.*



## 8. Vocational Education in an ESL Class

<i>Content Area</i>	Mixed Skills – Vocational ESL (V-ESL)
<i>Level</i>	Multilevel
<i>Class Format</i>	Hybrid
<i>Teacher</i>	Sharon, Fremont, CA [012]
<i>Instructor Goals</i>	Develop technical proficiency to support online English language learning, organizational skills required for independent project-based learning and job search

### The Class

Sharon has been involved in DL since 2005. She has made digital literacy skill integration and online learning enrichment a focus of her program by pursuing grants, like the OTAN Access to Learning Through Online Education grant, to support expanding online learning opportunities and grow use of new technologies like iPads and Chromebooks in class.

Sharon has been teaching her hybrid V-ESL class since 2009. Establishing a successful hybrid computer lab-based class required many different iterations to determine a happy medium between self-directed independent DL learning and classroom training/instruction. The class provides a comprehensive curriculum where students work collaboratively completing EL civics job-related content like writing resumes, filling out online job applications, and searching for jobs online. Students build oral communication skills in class and build reading and writing proficiency through individualized complementary learning online. Much of the course content is provided online to improve both English and technology skills and to train students to be effective online learners. Although there is guided learning in the lab, it still has flexibility for students to choose to work from a variety of assignments and projects that are of interest to them as well as most beneficial to them hence differentiating learning.

In addition to this online in-class instruction, Sharon assigns USA Learns as distance ESL instruction. However, because the language level of the students is so diverse, a range of online learning materials including specific websites used to differentiate instruction and Rosetta Stone for very low-literacy students, are used.

Sharon uses a page on a Weebly website to coordinate all course activities. “The Weebly guides my instruction. It’s my curriculum.” She posts weekly self-assessment checklists written with SurveyMonkey. Students answer the questions, reporting on completion activities for the week. These surveys turn into a record showing the arc of their work and progress on long-term projects, where students find weekly tasks depending on their language needs. The lists also help students monitor weekly progress made toward project-based assignments due at the end of a quarter. Each student has their own Weebly page, which they use as a portfolio to store and present their project.

Sharon communicates with her students using the Weebly blog and email. She also provides opportunities for students to communicate with each other through discussions posted on the Weebly. Also important, she encourages students to complete online and distance work in an onsite computer lab, where students can work with in-person support.

Sharon works continuously on improving her classes, participating in professional development approximately four hours a month. She credits training received from OTAN ([www.otan.us](http://www.otan.us)) for her success with learners, having participated in OTAN academies and participated in OTAN online webinars on her own time (<http://www.caadultedtraining.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home>.)

As DL Facilitator she is paid six hours a week to work on all aspects of the program including yearly project reports, responding to student inquiries, creating materials for the program, reporting student hours, and managing blended classes and traditional DL. She estimates spending an additional unpaid two hours a week or more on implementing the strategies for online learning.

“I am constantly trying new strategies because the students want to try many different things.”

## **Tools**

USA Learns, Weebly, links to other relevant websites, SurveyMonkey, email, text messaging

## **Screen Shots**

### **Sample Survey**

Sharon uses surveys frequently. She administers a survey at least twice, looking for changes over the course of the class. Below is a sample of the items from one of these surveys.

Response categories: Yes/No or Yes/A Little/No

I feel comfortable using the computer by myself.

I can type.

I can use a printer.

I can use a scanner.

I have a computer, laptop or tablet at home.

I use the computer to learn English.

I can use a digital camera.

I know how to use email.

I can use Microsoft Word

I can use MS Excel.

I know Microsoft PowerPoint.  
 I know at least 8 parts of a computer and computer accessories. (in English).  
 Before this class, I knew how to get to the F.A.C.E. webpage and teacher page.  
 I know how to find information on the Internet.  
 Computer and Technology skills are important in getting a job.  
 Computer and Technology skills are important in school.  
 I know how to use a flash drive.  
 I can do things like: save a file, create a file, insert a picture, make a table, change font, change color....  
 I can cut and paste.  
 I can use an iPad.  
 I can use Evernote.  
 I can use Dropbox.  
 I can use a microphone or iPad or other Internet tool to record myself.  
 I want to learn English on the computer.

## Weebly – Home Page



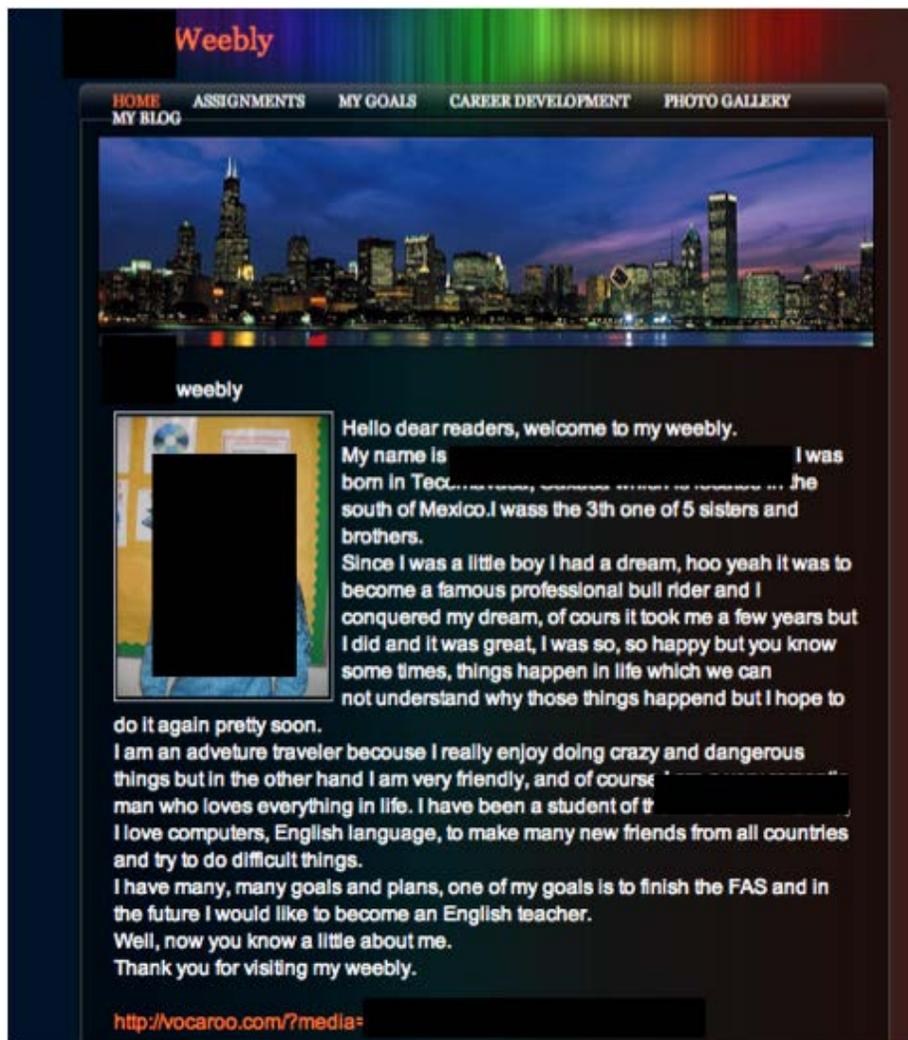
## Weebly – Blog

The screenshot shows a Weebly blog page with a light blue background. The main content area is white and contains the following elements:

- Post Title:** "Week 3 - Occupations" in a green, handwritten-style font.
- Date:** "01/23/2013" in small grey text.
- Comments Count:** "20 Comments" in small green text.
- Main Text:** "We are beginning our JOBS unit. Tell me 2 jobs that you are interested in. Example: I am interested in teaching because I love school! And I have always been interested in being a scientist. Maybe I could help find a cure for a disease."
- Comments Section:** Titled "Comments" in bold. It lists four comments from students, each with a name, a timestamp, and a "Reply" button.
  - Nang Sam Sri:** 01/24/2013 12:19pm. Comment: "I am interested in Pharmacy because I love to manage drugs and memorise the drugs name. And I also interested to work in hotel. So that, I can manage my house as the five-star hotel to be neat and tidy."
  - KALPANA:** 01/24/2013 12:27pm. Comment: "I'm interested in teaching because I love teaching and children. I'm interested in nursing because I like to do work for people those who are really needed."
  - siyu yan:** 01/24/2013 12:28pm. Comment: "I am interested in being a teacher. Because I love work with children. And I also interested in being a stage directing. I hope I can do both when I am old."
  - Gagandeep Kaur:** 01/24/2013 12:31pm. Comment: "I'm interested in fashion design because, I like to design clothes. I'm interested in Acting because, I would like to go to Bollywood."
- Author Bio:** Titled "Author" in a large, grey, handwritten-style font. Text: "I am a teacher at Fremont Adult School. This Blog is open to my VESL Lab students."
- Archives:** Titled "Archives" in a large, grey, handwritten-style font. List: "March 2013", "February 2013", "January 2013".
- Categories:** Titled "Categories" in a large, grey, handwritten-style font. List: "All", "RSS Feed".

*Students share ideas about jobs on the Weebly Blog*

## Weebly – Student Page



The image shows a Weebly website template. At the top, the word "Weebly" is written in a stylized font. Below it is a navigation menu with links for "HOME MY BLOG", "ASSIGNMENTS", "MY GOALS", "CAREER DEVELOPMENT", and "PHOTO GALLERY". The main content area features a large background image of a city skyline at night. Below the image, the word "weebly" is written in a small font. To the left of the text is a small image of a bulletin board with a black redaction box. The text on the page reads:

Hello dear readers, welcome to my weebly.  
My name is [redacted] I was born in Tec[redacted] the south of Mexico. I was the 3th one of 5 sisters and brothers.  
Since I was a little boy I had a dream, hoo yeah it was to become a famous professional bull rider and I conquered my dream, of cours it took me a few years but I did and it was great, I was so, so happy but you know some times, things happen in life which we can not understand why those things happend but I hope to do it again pretty soon.  
I am an adveture traveler because I really enjoy doing crazy and dangerous things but in the other hand I am very friendly, and of course [redacted] man who loves everything in life. I have been a student of [redacted]  
I love computers, English language, to make many new friends from all countries and try to do difficult things.  
I have many, many goals and plans, one of my goals is to finish the FAS and in the future I would like to become an English teacher.  
Well, now you know a little about me.  
Thank you for visiting my weebly.

At the bottom left, there is a URL: <http://vocaroo.com/?media=> [redacted]

*Students create a personal web page on Weebly*



## II: TOOLS FOR ENRICHING DISTANCE CLASSES

## An Inventory of Tools

This section provides a handy reference to the technology tools mentioned in the vignettes. The tools are organized in four categories and arranged alphabetically within category by the name of the tool.

<p><b>Academic Skill Building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adele's Corner</li> <li>Dictionary.com</li> <li>Free Rice</li> <li>History Channel</li> <li>ISEEK.org</li> <li>Khan Academy</li> <li>LASSI</li> <li>Mindquest Academy</li> <li>MyMN Careers</li> <li>Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment</li> <li>Story Corps</li> <li>U.S.A. Learns</li> <li>Vocabulary.com</li> <li>Vocaroo.com</li> <li>VoiceThread.com</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scriblink</li> <li>Skype</li> <li>Web conferencing / whiteboards (Adobe Connect)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Productivity Tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Google apps: online word processing, spreadsheets, presentations</li> <li>Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, PowerPoint</li> <li>Google and Microsoft—beyond the basic tools</li> <li>SurveyMonkey: online surveys</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Management Systems and Website Builders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coursesites</li> <li>Desire2Learn</li> <li>Google Blogger</li> <li>Google Sites</li> <li>LiveBinders</li> <li>Moodle</li> <li>Schoology</li> <li>Weebly</li> </ul>
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## Academic Skill Building Tools

There is a wide variety of online tools to help build student's academic skills. They vary in scope and purpose and include comprehensive academic skill-building programs such as SkillsTutor and PLATO, reference tools such as an online dictionary, tools to record your voice (to practice pronunciation), and online self-assessments to measure study skills and digital literacy skills.

### **Adele's ESL Corner**

*Description* Adele's ESL Corner is a free resource site for students of English as a second language. It contains exercises on word usage--present and past tense of verbs, possessive adjectives, object pronouns, etc. For written exercises the user is presented with sentences that need to be completed with the correct word. The program will score the exercise (indicate that an answer is incorrect) and/or provide the answer key. The program will also read the sentences with the correct words inserted. There are two levels of difficulty. Print versions of each exercise are available as PDF files.

*URL* [www.adelescorner.org](http://www.adelescorner.org)

*Teacher Setup* This is a self-study tool. Exercises can be assigned to students according to the teacher's assessment of student needs.

### **Dictionary.com**

*Description* Dictionary.com offers reliable definitions of words, as well as a thesaurus and translator tool. Word Dynamo is a game on the site that quizzes students' vocabularies based on age. The site keeps track of words a user misses and puts missed words in quizzes until the user demonstrates mastery.

*URL* [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

*Teacher Setup* This is a reference and self-study tool. The games and quizzes can be assigned to students according to the teacher's assessment of student needs.

## FreeRice

<i>Description</i>	FreeRice is a free online learning game where players answer multiple-choice questions in a variety of subjects to score grains of rice that are then donated to fight world hunger. Available subjects include: English grammar and vocabulary, chemistry, human anatomy, geography, math, humanities, and other languages such as Spanish, French, and Latin
<i>URL</i>	<a href="http://www.freerice.com">www.freerice.com</a>
<i>Teacher Setup</i>	<p>The teacher sets up a FreeRice group for the students to join (groups can be open or closed). Teacher can select the subject(s) to be studied when the group is set up. Students participate in one or more of the activities below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Independently practice vocabulary, grammar, math or any other subject</li><li>● Compete with other students in the class or other groups of students in the program to raise the most rice grains</li><li>● Research FreeRice to learn about the organization and how it operates</li><li>● Research world hunger and make a presentation for the class</li></ul>

## History Channel

<i>Description</i>	The History Channel website extends the television channel services. In addition to providing a schedule of broadcasts there are a number of resources that can be used to teach history or to support ESL students. There is a treasure trove of interesting stories in print and video about historical events. Ask History poses intriguing questions: "How many people were at the First Thanksgiving? How long was the Berlin Wall? For ESL students there are a variety of video clips that are short and interesting. For example, in Famous Speeches there are clips ranging from one to five minutes in length by presidents and leaders of the world, by generals and scientists.
<i>URL</i>	<a href="http://www.history.com">www.history.com</a>
<i>Teacher Setup</i>	Consider this site as an eclectic collection of video and print resources. Teachers will need to cull them for reading and listening activities appropriate to their educational goals.

## **ISEEK.org**

*Description* ISEEK is designed for people to assess their capabilities, plan their education and start a career. Individuals can search for all types of degree programs and jobs, and then prepare, plan and pay for their education or necessary training.

*URL* [www.iseek.org](http://www.iseek.org)

*Teacher Setup* Teachers can encourage high school students to explore sites like this, especially students who do not plan to attend a typical four year college. Students can get tips on finding jobs and creating resumes, as well as information on financial aid and unemployment benefits.

## **Khan Academy**

*Description* The Khan Academy is a free online learning environment for students and teachers, focusing on math education. Video lessons, interactive assignments and assessments are designed to cover the Common Core Standards.

*URL* [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)

*Teacher Setup* Teachers can use Kahn academy to assign math lessons and practice to their students, and track their students' progress. Khan Academy provides new interactive methods to keep students interested in math.

- Students can practice specific math content in new ways that may help them retain information more easily.
- Khan Academy also has various ways for students to track their own progress as they watch lessons and practice skills.
- Coaching features allow teachers to learn better methods of helping students
- Discussion boards allow students to ask questions about specific videos or problems.

## **LASSI – Learning and Study Strategies Inventory**

*Description* LASSI is an online assessment of a student's awareness of their own learning strategies: mainly skill, will and self-regulation. Research has shown that thoughts, behaviors and beliefs about one's learning contribute significantly to success in college.

Diagnostic and prescriptive, LASSI scores can help teachers guide students to positive attitudes and beliefs about their learning. It is used by counselors at a variety of colleges. There is a fee for using the assessments.

*URL* [www.hhpublishing.com/\\_assessments/LASSI/index.html](http://www.hhpublishing.com/_assessments/LASSI/index.html)

## **Mindquest Academy**

*Description* Mindquest provides online educational resources to ABE programs and community/technical colleges to help instructors serve the transitional needs of adult learners. These resources include links to online courses and modules, staff training and certification, and program development. A section on college foundation skills provides online courses in reading, writing, math and learning how to learn. A section of academic samplers provides an in-depth look at a variety of college-level courses such as anthropology, biology, ecology, economics, history, literature, mathematics, psychology and public health. The resources are free to students attending ABE programs in Minnesota.

*URL* [www.mindquestacademy.org/](http://www.mindquestacademy.org/)

## **MyMN Careers**

*Description* This website helps low-literacy job seekers and English language learners find career planning and work preparation information. All content is written at or below the 6th grade level. The "English Language Learner" section is written at a 3rd grade level.

*URL* [www.iseek.org/mymncareers/](http://www.iseek.org/mymncareers/)

## **Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment**

*Description* NSDL assessment is an online program to teach adults basic computer skills. Self-guided modules allow individuals to track their progress while learning basic internet use, Windows OS, Mac OS, email and word processing. A certificate is presented upon completion, providing a credential for employment, and the online assessment is free.

*URL* <http://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/>

*Teacher Setup* An additional resource for lower SES students who may not have access to computers and thus are lacking in certain computer skills.

Helpful for high school students who may go directly into the workforce and may need some credentials other than a high school diploma.

## **StoryCorps**

### *Description*

StoryCorps is an independent nonprofit oral-history project whose mission is to preserve in sound the everyday history and unique stories of Americans. The website includes a large collection of recorded stories, instructions for recording a story, and lesson ideas for educators.

### *URL*

[www.storycorps.org](http://www.storycorps.org)

### *Teacher Setup*

Teacher emails or posts link to a specific story or the StoryCorps website for students to complete one or more of the activity ideas below:

- Guess what a story is about before listening to it
- Write sentences about a story after listening to it
- Use the stories to listen to English in a variety of voices and accents
- Discuss how spoken language differs from written language
- Select and create questions to conduct their own interview

## **U.S.A. Learns**

### *Description*

U.S.A. Learns is a free ESL instructional program developed primarily for immigrant adults with limited English language skills who cannot attend traditional classroom programs because of difficulty with schedules, transportation, or other barriers.

The U.S.A. Learns website contains 3 programs:

First English Course – 20 video-based, beginner-level units;  
Second English Course – 20 video-based, intermediate-level units;  
Practice English and Reading – 42 intermediate-level stories and activities

The site offers practice activities in listening, reading, writing and speaking skills as well as life skills necessary for success at work and in the community. All instructional materials are online; there are no videos, workbooks, or other materials necessary.

Learners can use U.S.A. Learns independently as an unregistered learner (work is not saved) or a registered learner (work is saved)

and the learner can track his/her progress). Teachers and tutors can set up a class and invite learners to join the class. Once the learner accepts, the teacher/tutor can see their work and provide support for their learning. The learner can use U.S.A. Learns anywhere they have access to the Internet.

*URL* [www.usalearns.org](http://www.usalearns.org)

*Teacher Setup* Go to [www.usalearns.org/teacher](http://www.usalearns.org/teacher) to set up a class.

## **Vocabulary.com**

*Description* Vocabulary.com is a free website that helps users expand their vocabulary. It is designed for users of any age. Based on responses, custom sets of words are quizzed, and individual learners can track their progress.

*URL* [www.vocabulary.com](http://www.vocabulary.com)

*Teacher Setup* The Vocabulary Lists tool has lists for chapters of literature, SAT practice, etc. Students of all skill levels can practice on the same site at once with customized practice.

## **Vocaroo.com**

*Description* Vocaroo is a fairly simple website that allows users to record their voice and then publish or download the recording. The service is free and requires no software installation.

*URL* [www.vocaroo.com](http://www.vocaroo.com)

*Teacher Setup* Teachers can take recordings from Vocaroo and embed them into presentations or blogs. Students can use the tool in same way for presentations, etc. It is also a useful tool to add sound recordings into blogs, presentations and websites.

## **VoiceThread**

*Description* VoiceThread is a licensed cloud application that allows you to upload, share and discuss documents, presentations, images, audio files and videos. Users comment on uploaded content using text, audio, or video. There is a charge for use of the resources.

*URL* [voicethread.com](http://voicethread.com)

## Communication Tools

This category includes tools to communicate with students asynchronously – email and texting, and synchronously – tools that support live audio and/or video connections, sharing of a computer desktop or a whiteboard, as well as shared documents.

### Asynchronous: Email and Texting

Email is almost ubiquitous these days. Search for "free email" in any search engine and the results show a long list of available services. Any email program can be used to broadcast or exchange text and attachments essential for communicating with and among students and sending or receiving assignments. Most of the electronic classrooms described in this document utilize email as a core tool. Less common is cell phone texting, or more generally SMS – Short Message Service. While many adult education students come to their adult education endeavors already equipped with at least a basic cell phone that supports texting, the capabilities of SMS are much more limited than email when it comes to supporting learning tasks.

### Synchronous: Phone, Chat and Videoconferencing

There is a need in education to connect synchronously with one or more members of a class to have an easier interchange of ideas. This can be done using various forms of chat. Some years ago chat was limited to text exchanges, but today the capabilities of chat are more enhanced. For example, participants in a Google Hangout can exchange text, photos and even videos of one another. Skype supports simple audio exchange just like a telephone, but also video with multiple participants and computer screen sharing for at least one of the participants in a Skype call. More sophisticated tools such as Webex, GoToMeeting, and Blue Jeans support additional capabilities of interest to educators such as a whiteboard and participant tracking, and even multiple workgroups within a single conference. All of these are affordances that help educators better mimic a live classroom.

Below are some of the communication tools mentioned in the vignettes.

### **Scriblink**

#### *Description*

Scriblink is a free online whiteboard for sharing information in real-time. Whiteboard tools include free-form drawing, lines, circles, squares and typed text. A pick-board allows the user to select for insertion a variety of symbols including elements of mathematical equations. Images can be inserted from a user's own hard drive or from a URL. Multiple whiteboards are available during a session, and the contents can be saved, printed, or sent by email. Scriblink is good for tutoring and group work; multiple people can view and edit the same page at once.

<i>URL</i>	<a href="http://www.scriblink.com">www.scriblink.com</a>
<i>Teacher Setup</i>	Teachers can use this to support instruction of individuals or groups of students for lessons that call for shared text and drawings. Think of this as a virtual version of a classroom whiteboard or blackboard. While there is a chat feature built into Scriblink, it may be easier to use a separate telephone conference call for interacting verbally with students.

## **Skype**

<i>Description</i>	Skype is an Internet-based application that supports video and voice calls using computers, tablets and mobile devices. To make a voice call a user must have a microphone and speakers attached to the computer. Additionally, a webcam is required to make a video call. These tools (camera and microphone) are built into many computers and tablets and all smart phones. Skype supports one-to-one and many-to-many communication. In addition to voice and video, Skype supports file transfers and screen sharing, so one person at a time can show others whatever is on their device's "desktop." The service is free for participants that have Skype accounts, but calls from a Skype account to land lines or cell phones is subject to a small per-minute charge that is paid using a customer's Skype Credit account.
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<i>URL</i>	<a href="http://www.skype.com">www.skype.com</a>
<i>Teacher Setup</i>	Skype is used worldwide for audio- and video-conferencing. It's ideal for synchronous communication with one or more students. The ability to share the desktop of one of the participants is very useful for leading a lesson using a text file, PowerPoint, photo, videos or any artifact that can be displayed on a computer screen. Only one desktop can be shared with participants at a time, but it can be rotated so that anyone on a call can share their desktop with others. As with any online tool like this, it is best to have one or more practice runs with students before using Skype for a class.

## **Web Conferencing: Adobe Connect**

<i>Description</i>	Adobe Connect is web conferencing software allowing collaboration across the world on any device. The capabilities of Adobe Connect (and other web conferencing software such as GoToMeeting or WebEx) are similar to Skype, but with additional features that provide additional support for instruction. It is useful for webinars which tend to be one-to-many presentations, explaining new concepts or ideas. As with Skype, the instructor prepares a presentation on a computer and shares the presentation
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with participants. It is also useful for online meetings where the emphasis is on sharing ideas. A whole class of participants can be broken into breakout rooms to work on group projects, though this requires a great deal of skill on the part of both teacher and students. Webinars and meetings can be recorded for replay. Adobe Connect can also be used for tracking participation and for testing. Adobe Connect is fee-based. It can be hosted by Adobe or on an organization's own servers. This tool has great potential for virtual synchronous classrooms.

*URL*

[www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect](http://www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect)

## Productivity Tools

This category includes tools that are used for basic productivity in the workplace and at all levels of education. The prototypical productivity tools are those found in the Microsoft Office suite. Google provides an online suite for creating documents, spreadsheets, and presentations that is free and fits perfectly with the nature of distance education.

### **Google apps: online word processing, spreadsheet, and presentations**

*Description*

The Google suite of productivity tools mirror the capabilities of the three major software programs in MS Office – Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Google docs, sheets, and slides can be moved seamlessly from their online form to MS Office and back. The tools are designed with collaboration in mind. Each document can be shared with one or more users who can share in editing a document in real time. Google docs has editing features similar to Track Changes in MS Word. All the Google apps can be used on computers and on mobile devices running Android and iOS. The Google suite of tools are all online; i.e., they require a user to be connected to the Internet to create and edit a document initially, though – with Google Drive installed on a user's computer – a document can be moved offline for editing without being connected. Using Google's Chrome browser, documents can also be edited offline. The Google suite also includes Google Forms and Google Drawings. The former is useful for conducting surveys; the latter provides tools for simple vector drawings that can be used as stand alone drawings or inserted into a Google doc or slide.

*URL*

[www.google.com/docs/about](http://www.google.com/docs/about); [www.google.com/sheets/about](http://www.google.com/sheets/about);  
[www.google.com/slides/about](http://www.google.com/slides/about)  
[docs.google.com](http://docs.google.com); [sheets.google.com](http://sheets.google.com); [slides.google.com](http://slides.google.com)

### *Teacher Setup*

The Google suite is ideal for distance education in that students and teachers can both view and edit documents, either synchronously or asynchronously. For asynchronous think of a teacher preparing an assignment embedded in a Google doc, sharing the document with a student who completes the assignment in the same doc and notifies the teacher who then reviews the work. A similar scenario is appropriate for Google sheets and slides. As with any computer application, students need to be trained in how to use each of the tools in the suite.

## **Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, and PowerPoint**

### *Description*

Microsoft Office is a suite of tools for word processing (Word), spreadsheets (Excel), and presentations (PowerPoint). In addition, the Office suite contains Outlook, Calendar, and OneDrive. These tools have been the gold standard for businesses. Originally sold as stand-alone applications designed to create documents on a single computer, in recent years Microsoft has developed online versions of the basic tools. Versions of the tools are made for computers and for mobile devices running Android and iOS. MS Office tools all come at a cost, as opposed to Google apps which are free.

### *URL*

Basic office: [products.office.com/en-US/](https://products.office.com/en-US/);  
Online office: [www.office.com/start/default.aspx](https://www.office.com/start/default.aspx)

## **Google & Microsoft: Beyond the basics**

### *Description*

**Google** has a number of additional apps that complement the basic productivity tools: online mail (Gmail), calendar (Calendar) and websites (Sites). In addition, Google offers a classroom app that organizes many features of classroom life: distribution of assignments and collection of completed assignments, a gradebook, etc.

### *URL*

[www.google.com/work/apps/education/products.html](https://www.google.com/work/apps/education/products.html)  
[classroom.google.com/welcome](https://classroom.google.com/welcome)

### *Description*

**Microsoft** has a number of additional apps as well: mail (Outlook), calendar (Calendar), and notebook (OneNote). Microsoft will work with educational institutions for volume pricing.

### *URL*

Microsoft's own comparison of Microsoft and Google apps for education: [www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/products/office365/default.aspx#fbid=vfTckk2OYSa](https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/products/office365/default.aspx#fbid=vfTckk2OYSa)

## SurveyMonkey: Online Surveys

<i>Description</i>	SurveyMonkey is an online survey tool. Surveys are easy to design with templates for the most common types of questions: multiple-choice, rating scales, and open-ended responses. The easiest way to collect responses is to send a link to the survey to people's email address, but SurveyMonkey will provide a printed version of the survey for completion by hand. The SurveyMonkey server analyzes the data, providing tables, charts, and lists of open-ended responses. SurveyMonkey supports cross tabulation of the results as well. The basic version of SurveyMonkey is free, allowing a user to create surveys with up to ten questions and 100 respondents. For greater capacity users can pay for one of several plans ranging from \$228 per year to \$780 per year.
<i>URL</i>	Surveymonkey.com
<i>Teacher Setup</i>	Teachers can create surveys to gather learner characteristics, assess learner goals, and – using two or more surveys of the same students – measure perceived progress toward reaching those goals. SurveyMonkey could be used to create quizzes or tests, but there is no internal capacity to score a test – score individual answers and sum the total. But results can be exported to Excel for further manipulation using the many formulas available in Excel.

## LMS & Website Builders

Learning Management Systems (e.g., CourseSites and Moodle) are online platforms that provide teachers with a way to create and deliver content, monitor student participation and assess their performance. Basic systems provide a place to store readings and assignments and to accept completed assignments. More advanced systems provide interactive features such as discussion forums and video conferencing. Website builders are tools that make it easy to create websites that can display content and store files that are created by anyone accessing the site. Blogs are a form of simple website where the content – usually short articles – are easily added by a teacher or student.

### CourseSites

<i>Description</i>	CourseSites is a free, hosted online course creation service created by Blackboard. As described in Ed Tech Review: "CourseSites allows users to sign-up either as an instructor or a student so that one can use the default system properties associated with each role. CourseSites allows instructors to have up to 5 live classes at a time, share educational resources, access & manage grades, integrate multimedia into class content, and engage students in social learning. Educators can use the 'Course Invitations' tool to
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invite students and students can follow the invitation link to join their course [edtechreview.in/reviews/197-coursesites-online-learning-management-system]."

*URL* [www.coursesites.com](http://www.coursesites.com)

## **Desire2Learn**

*Description* Desire2Learn partners with schools (k-12 and higher education) to design learning strategies for a class or whole school. A variety of products allow for engaging and adaptive learning, and the company prides itself on creating custom solutions for various schools.

*URL* [www.desire2learn.com](http://www.desire2learn.com)

*Teacher Setup* Desire2Learn will create different learning and content systems allowing students to access information anywhere with an Internet connection (mobile devices are stressed here).

- Teachers can track students' progress and use adaptive learning strategies to better educate their students.
- Content for a class can all be on a cloud accessible from anywhere.

Training programs help teachers maximize efficiency and relevancy of learning.

## **Google Blogger**

*Description* Blogger is a blog publishing service. A "blog" (short for Web Log) is a simple website where one or more "bloggers" post news, information, or essays on a topic of interest to a target audience. The typical format is an article of short to moderate length followed by an option for readers to comment on the article. Blogging software, such as Blogger, comes with a selection of pre-designed themes to make a blog page look attractive. The online software has a built-in word processor that makes it easy to compose text, style the text, and insert pictures. Blogger (from Google) is totally free. It can be accessed online from a computer or through an app on Android or iOS devices.

*URL* [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)

*Teacher Setup* The use of blogs in education has been focused largely on giving students the opportunity to write an article – a so-called "post" – that looks like it has been professionally prepared and written for a real audience instead of just for a teacher. Students can be encouraged to write comments on the posts. Some teachers choose

to have a single class blog, others have every student set up a blog. Teachers can easily grade assignments posted on a student's blog, and encourage discussion among students. A teacher's blog can engage students, providing daily reviews of class material as well as additional online tools or content.

## Google Sites

### *Description*

Google Sites is a free webpage-creation tool offered by Google. The goal of Google is to make it possible for anyone to create a team-oriented (or classroom-oriented) site that contains resources the group needs to share. These resources includes text (as in explanations of assignments), shared files of any format (as in assignments to do or completed assignments), photos, videos, and calendars. A teacher can find it useful to distribute instructions and resources, but also to collect information from students in the form of uploaded assignments.

### *URL*

[sites.google.com](http://sites.google.com)

## LiveBinders

### *Description*

LiveBinders is a free online resource that allows users to organize and share large amounts of information. It is basically a virtual three-ring binder. Users can start with a blank binder, but also take advantage of a huge collection of user-created resources for educators.

### *URL*

[www.livebinders.com](http://www.livebinders.com)

### *Teacher Setup*

Teacher organizes instructional materials and assignments for student to access at a distance:

- Students independently access resources, assignments and updates outside of class
- Students learn to search the large collection of user-created resources for information on topics of interest
- Students create and share resources with each other

## Moodle

### *Description*

Moodle is an open-source learning management system (LMS). It is very sophisticated in its features and supports the creation of almost all features a teacher would want to build into a course, from rich presentations with text, pictures and videos to testing for mastery and redirects based on the outcomes of testing. It can be

used for teacher-led courses and for self-study courses. It is among the most popular LMS in education, largely because it is free. Although technically it is free and can be installed on a school's own servers, it requires sophisticated technical support to manage the resources and keep the application running. It is continually updated by its creators so users can be confident that their investment will be available for a long time.

*URL* moodle.com

## **Schoology**

*Description* Schoology is a free virtual learning environment that is visually and functionally similar to FaceBook. Social media features facilitate interaction and collaboration among a class or group of students.

*URL* schoology.com

*Teacher Setup* Teacher establishes a virtual environment for learners to interact with the teacher and each other at a distance:

- Post announcements
- Post daily or weekly assignments
- Post links to videos, webpages and other resources

Post discussion questions and facilitating online discussions

## **Weebly**

*Description* Weebly allows educators to create and manage a classroom website and blog, post and accept homework assignments and keep parents informed.

*URL* www.weebly.com

*Teacher Setup* Post and accept assignments electronically, allowing students to create e-portfolios.

- Easy widget-based page design
- Allows creativity on part of student, within protected environment controlled by the teacher.

## Appendix: Interview Guide

## Distance Teacher Interview Guide

*Teacher selection: we are looking to better understand effective teaching at a distance. Our focus is on the materials they select and how they orchestrate them for their students. The teacher selected for a case study can be a teacher of any subject – a traditional GED prep or ESL class or a less traditional course such as a class devoted just to postsecondary or job transition. For the first case studies focus on teachers of traditional ESL/ABE/ASE classes.*

*If you are typing your answers, the cell will expand downward to fit the amount of text you type.*

### Information About the Teacher

1. Date	
2. Interviewer's name	
3. Teacher's name and position	
4. Agency name and city/state	
5. Years teaching adult learners	
6. Years teaching adult learners at a distance	
7. What kind of achievement by the teachers' students led to the selection of this teacher for a case study? *	
8. Course(s) taught relative to this inquiry (title and description)	

\* In time you will need to obtain quantitative data supporting your choice of this teacher.

### Goals

*Replace the word "Answer" with the teacher's answer.*

9. Describe the goals you have for students who take this course.

Answer

10. Do these goals differ from the typical goals for a course like this? *If yes:* In what ways?

Answer

11. Do you have a formal process for assessing student goals?

Answer

12. If a student has narrower goals for the course than you have, how do you help them broaden their goals?

Answer

### Learning Materials and Learning Tasks

13. Describe the learning materials and activities that you use to help students achieve these goals. These could be a packaged curriculum product and/or activities designed by others or by yourself. They could also be simple strategies you build into the class such as requiring students to use email in certain ways to help them build their technology skills.

Learning Materials/Tasks	How do you have students use these?

14. *If the teacher assigns tasks/learning materials individually instead of to the whole class:* How do you make decisions about which resources or tasks each student should work on?

Answer

15. *If not mentioned, ask about each of the following*

Are there special things you do to help them build their computer/online skills?	
Are there special things you do to help them prepare for a job or enter postsecondary?	
What tools do you use to communicate with students?	
Do you require students to use email, text messages, Facebook, twitter or other social media tools to communicate with you or with other students in the class?	

16. Do you use a Learning Management System (LMS) with your students--e.g., Blackboard, Moodle, etc.? *If no, skip to the next question. If yes:* Describe how you use the LMS with your students—what kind of assignments have you built into the LMS? *Be sure to ask for some examples of assignments.*

Answer

17. Do your students need to do any assignments together with other students taking your course? If yes, describe an assignment where two or more students work together.

Answer

18. [If not mentioned in the grid]. Is there a core distance curriculum product you use for this course? If yes, what is it?

Answer

19. How do you use the curriculum product – what kind of assignments do you give your students in this curriculum? How do you monitor their performance?

Answer

20. What kinds of support do you typically provide to help them master the curriculum?

Answer

21. About how much of a student’s time is spent studying the curriculum product as compared with all the other learning materials/tasks you described above.

\_\_\_\_\_ <40%    \_\_\_\_\_ 40-60%    \_\_\_\_\_ >60%

22. Is it challenging for students to do any of your learning activities at a distance?

Answer

23. You have told me about each of your learning materials separately. Can you step back and tell me how the collection of assignments work together to help your students achieve their goals?

24. When students experience problems with assignments, is there any resource they can turn to beside yourself for help?

Answer

25. Are there specific things you do to foster independent learning in your students?

Answer

26. How would you describe the students with whom you have had the most success?

Answer

27. Are there other teaching strategies or materials you would like to add to this course in the future that would help students reach the goals of this course?

Answer