Distance Learning and Digital Literacy
Research and Evidence-Based Practice
Resources

The SABES PD Center for Distance Learning and Technology has gathered this resource list to provide you with research-based evidence to support your decisions around distance learning, digital literacy, and technical support.

Key:
- R: Research
- EBP: Evidence-Based Practice


A meta-analysis of the literature from 1996 to 2008 found that, on average, students in online learning conditions performed modestly better than those who received face-to-face instruction. The difference between student outcomes for online and face-to-face classes was larger in those studies contrasting conditions that blended elements of online and face-to-face instruction with conditions taught entirely face-to-face. Analysts noted that these blended conditions often included additional learning time and instructional elements that students in control conditions did not receive.


Adults without ICT (information and communication technologies) experience are less likely to participate in the labor force; if they are employed, they earn less than adults with ICT experience, after accounting for various other factors. This report from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) notes that ICT experience has a particularly large impact on participation in the labor force and earnings in Australia, England/Northern Ireland, and the United States—for example, workers who use ICT frequently have substantially higher wages than those who do not often use ICT.
3. EBP (Website): Digital Literacy Acquisition and Equity Research Hub

This site contains informative research and posts on evidence-based practices. In particular, see the post titled Net Inclusion 2017 Brings Together Digital Inclusion Advocates, which addresses core issues of digital equity, free speech, and economic opportunity. Findings from the Digital Literacy Acquisition Project offers links to a variety of resources related to digital literacy.


These researchers suggest that digital health literacy includes basic reading and writing skills, working knowledge of using computers, a basic knowledge of science, and appreciation of the social context of how online health information is produced, transmitted, and received. They argue that digital health literacy also requires “a combination of context-specific and analytical skills,” the ability to use a computer, and the ability to navigate the Internet in order to make informed decisions about one’s health.

5. EBP (Webinar): Digital Equity in Libraries: Understanding the Problem Solving Skills of Adults

The webinar and subsequent discussion can be viewed here.


This article, published in the Journal of Research and Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary, and Basic Education (Summer 2017), posits that to truly be college and career ready, adults must be prepared to skillfully use digital tools and develop a discovery and risk-taking mindset toward navigating online.
   In this 24-minute recording, Mitch Rosin of Aztec Software discusses the impact of technology on workforce and literacy efforts.

8. EBP (Website): **National Skills Coalition**
   This broad-based coalition is working toward a vision of an America that grows its economy by investing in its people so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper. The coalition engages in organizing, advocacy, and communications to advance state and federal policies that support these goals.

   Access to technology—be it a laptop, a smartphone, or a tablet—has increased to the point where significant numbers of people can now engage in educational learning experiences and workforce training using a “bring your own device” model of service delivery. The authors of this white paper posit that we need to use and exploit the computing technology that is already in the hands and pockets of today’s 21st century learner.

10. EBP (Document): **Let’s Rethink Online Learning**, 2017
    In this white paper, Bryan Goodwin from McREL and Erika Twani from the Learning One to One Foundation propose a new way of looking at online learning—not just as a different method to deliver standard classroom instruction, but as a way to provide personalized learning to students who may not thrive in typical school settings. The authors argue that low success rates in
online schools may be, at least in part, the end result of translating a typical Carnegie-unit (the standard time-based metric of student progress) to a digital learning setting, rather than personalizing the learning process to encourage problem solving, curiosity, and real-world learning. They describe a research-based framework for creating learning paths for students based on their abilities, interests, and preferred learning styles, while leveraging the promise of education technology to serve struggling groups of students.


Access to technology is no longer a privilege—it is now a *prerequisite* for full participation in 21st century, high-quality education and workforce training opportunities. This report posits that the ability to access educational material online—for clients, candidates, participants, students, patients, emerging or incumbent workers, or businesses looking to maintain the competitive skill edge of their workforce—is critical to moving the United States forward in terms of economic development and academic attainment.


This collaborative research effort by a core team of researchers at Portland State University focused on examining the digital literacy acquisition process among vulnerable adult learners (including those with low income, those who are unemployed, those without a high school education, immigrants, non-native English speakers, seniors, those who are incarcerated, and ex-offenders) who participated in digital literacy programming offered through partnerships in a Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program grant titled “Learner Web
Partnership: A Multi-State Support System for Broadband Adoption by Vulnerable Adults.” The goal was to better understand how vulnerable and digitally excluded populations acquire digital literacy.

13. R (Document): *Information Technology and the U.S. Workforce: Where Are We and Where Do We Go from Here?*

The Committee on Information Technology, Automation, and the U.S. Workforce was convened by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to consider the current and possible impacts of emerging information and communication technologies on the U.S. workforce. The resulting report explores the current state and possible future of technology and work, considering the issue from economic, organizational, individual worker, and societal levels. Key issues and questions for policymakers are also identified.

14. EBP (Website): COABE [Commission on Adult Basic Education] *Journal of Research and Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary, and Basic Education* From the Summer 2016 issue: “*Free Online Courses for Adult Basic Skills Learners*”
From the Summer 2014 issue: “Technology in Adult Basic Education: How Does Technology Impact on the Self-Beliefs of Adult Basic Education Learners?” (book review)

Webinar: “Learning in the Cloud: Teaching Digital Literacy to ABE/ESL Learners for Successful College and Career Transitions”

**DISTANCE LEARNING IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Ramazan Gungor and Dr. Esther Prins
Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy
Pennsylvania State University

Adult educators have long sought to encourage greater participation in, and more equitable access to, educational opportunities for adult learners. This literature review examines how distance learning can help adult educators address issues of equity and participation, especially in rural areas with restricted educational opportunities.

16. R (Document): *The Journal of Literacy and Technology*
This online peer-reviewed international academic journal explores the complex relationship between literacy and technology in educational, workplace, public, and individual spheres. The spring 2017 edition explores effective search strategies that have been developed and used by adult learners.
17. EBP (Website): Everyone On

EveryoneOn.org is working with the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education to help adult education teachers and their students purchase low-cost Internet access, enabling them to create hotspots of wireless connectivity for their classrooms.


Over the past decade, innovations in educational technology have impacted nearly all preK–12, postsecondary, and professional learning environments, while largely bypassing the adult education market. In 2014, Tyton Partners conducted comprehensive research on the role of and potential for instructional technologies in the U.S. adult education field. This two-part publication (Part I, Part II) explores technology readiness, access, and use within various adult education delivery channels. The research and analysis presented here can assist suppliers, investors, policy professionals, and institutions as they explore opportunities in the adult education market.

19. EBP (Website): South Carolina Assistive Technology Program

This federally funded program seeks to ensure access to assistive technology devices and services for people with disabilities so that they might live, work, learn, and be a more independent part of their communities. The overarching goal is to enhance independence, productivity, and quality of life for all South Carolinians.

This report from the United States Distance Learning Association provides an overview of distance learning technologies, distribution systems, blended learning, and content-related support requirements. Originally published in 2005, the second edition includes a chapter on virtual worlds by Keysha I. Gamor.

21. R (Website): *LINCS Adult Education and Literacy Resources*

The LINCS Resource Collection contains many high-quality resources specific to digital literacy and distance learning, for use by adult educators.

21. EBP (Collection): *LINCS Digital Literacy Initiatives*

This section of the LINCS website presents a collection of digital literacy initiatives funded by the U.S. Department of Education to enable adult learners to succeed in a range of academic activities, including STEM and college and career readiness.

22. EBP (Website): *Use Technology Effectively*, February 2012

Adult education settings are often challenged by “uneven” technology infrastructure. This section of the LINCS website presents ideas on how to more effectively and creatively use the technology you have access to in your teaching and learning environment.

23. EBP (Document): *Integrating Technology with Student Learning*

This July 2011 report, available on the LINCS website, provides an overview of the policies and research that inform how technology can be integrated into student-centered learning strategies.

24. EBP (Discussion Summary): *Using Video in Teaching and Staff Development*
This two-part discussion was hosted on the Professional Development and Technology Lists in August 2011. Full transcripts of both parts may be accessed on the LINCS website:

- **Part I:** The Multi-Dimensions of Staff Development-Using Videos for Instructor Professional Development, July 25–29, 2011
- **Part II:** Using Video with Adult Learners, August 15–19, 2011


The more that K–12 teachers use technology, the more they recognize and value its strong positive effects on student learning and engagement and its connection to 21st century skills. This Walden University report, available on the LINCS website, sheds light on the debates around technology and 21st century skills from the vantage point of school-based educators: Does integrating technology or 21st century skills (or both) distract from or enhance critical educational out-comes? And is there sufficient time during instructional programs to make effective use of technology or to develop 21st century skills?


This policy brief, housed on the LINCS website, looks broadly at the challenges of and opportunities for securely and cost-effectively providing advanced technologies in corrections facilities to help strengthen and expand educational and re-entry services. It describes the current status of these technologies in corrections, existing and emerging approaches to providing such services in facilities, and the successes and challenges of early implementers.

27. EBP (Documents): *Distance Education*

This collection, housed on the LINCS website, includes a number of reports on distance learning.

28. EBP (Discussion): *Assessing Distance Education Students: Participation, Progress, and Achievement*, October 4–8, 2010

This LINCS discussion focused on using assessment in distance education programs: what works, what are the challenges, and how can we address these challenges? Here you can find both a summary and transcript of the discussion, and learn about further resources of interest.

29. EBP (Document): *Getting Online: Distance Education Promising Practices for Canadian Literacy Practitioners*, October 2008
This resource, housed on the LINCS website, reports the findings from Getting Online: Distance Education Promising Practices for Canadian Literacy Practitioners, known as the GO Project - a two-year study designed to research trends, technologies, and promising practices in online and distance learning both in and outside the literacy field in Canada. This report gives an in-depth view of Canada’s “distance learning landscape,” and provides insights and guidance for anyone who wants to understand the range of issues involved in teaching and setting up an online course.

30. EBP (Discussion Summary): WIA Community Conversations Summary: Technology and Distance Learning

The summary of this WIA (Workforce Investment Act) Community Conversation, housed on the LINCS website, outlines questions related to technology and distance learning, successes and challenges, and suggestions for the field.