



Arizona Department of Education
Diane Douglas, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Arizona Adult Education Distance Learning Guidance Program Year 2015-2016

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Arizona Adult Education Distance Learning Guidance

Setting the State Context

According to the U.S. Census,¹ 731,808 (14.6%) Arizonans age 18 and older lack a high school diploma and over 198,090 (4.4%) of adults over the age of 18 cannot communicate effectively in English. Despite the sizable number of people with literacy deficiencies, the State's adult education system served 21,541 learners,² fewer than 3% of Arizona citizens who were in need of services.

Distance education is regarded as one way to increase the capacity of the system by expanding access to educational opportunities for adult learners using distance learning (DL) strategies to eliminate barriers and extend learning beyond traditional classroom settings.

Background. In PY 2004, the Arizona Department of Education/Adult Education Services (ADE/AES) implemented the *Arizona Distance Education for Adult Learners (ADEAL)* initiative. Initially, seven projects were funded to provide preparation for the high school equivalency diploma via distance education. From PY 2004 through PY 2007 1,170 adult education learners were served through distance learning.

ADEAL Pilot Project Data: PY04/05 – PY06/07	
3 Program Years	
Outcome	# of Learners
Accessed DL Services	1,170
Enrolled Status (12+ Hours)	569
Completed an Educational Level	228 (40%)
Attained Employment	37
Retained Employment	91
Entered Post-Secondary or Other Training	16
Obtain a High School Equivalency Credential (GED)	116

In PY 2008, the decision was made to provide an opportunity for distance education to all adult education students enrolled in Arizona. Nine state-authorized agencies were funded as DL providers to provide distance learning services. Programs that were not funded to provide DL services were required to develop collaborative agreements with the state-authorized DL providers in order to ensure access for all learners throughout the state.

ADEAL Project Data for DL Providers: PY07/08 – PY12/13	
6 Program Years	
Outcome	# of Learners
Accessed DL Services	3,092
Enrolled Status (12+ Hours)	2,544
Federally Recognized as DL Learners (DL hours>F2F hours)	1,720
Completed an Educational Level	1,142 (66%)
Attained Employment	158
Retained Employment	291
Entered Post-Secondary or Other Training	187
Obtained a High School Equivalency Credential (GED)	291

¹ US Census, *American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates for 2013.*

² National Reporting System (NRS) Reporting Tables for PY 2012/2013.,

In PY 2012, ADE/AES implemented the *Transforming Education through Technology (TETT)* initiative as a two-year pilot to study innovative and transformative strategies, including structured hybrid learning (HL), which added a DL component to traditional face-to-face instruction. The TETT pilot was conducted on a small scale in only three programs, but lessons learned from TETT informed large scale replication of successful strategies.

Beginning in PY 2014, ADE/AES expanded access to the online curriculum, the PLATO Learning Environment (PLE), to all adult education providers so that HL models could be implemented throughout the state. The goals of these initiatives were to increase: 1) the capacity of the system, 2) instructional intensity for learners, and 3) learner outcomes.

ADEAL Project Data for All Programs (HL and DL): PY13/14 1 Program Year			
Outcome	# DL/HL Learners Federally Recognized (DL>F2F)	# DL/HL Learners not Federally Recognized (DL<F2F)	TOTAL
Enrolled Status (12+ Hours)	474	1,554	2,031
Completed an Educational Level	319 (67%)	1,027 (66%)	1,348 (66%)
Attained Employment (# attained/# cohort)	23/129 (18%)	100/488 (20%)	123/620 (20%)
Retained Employment (# retained/# cohort)	78/231 (34%)	181/672 (27%)	259/904 (29%)
Entered Post-Secondary or Other Training (# entered/# cohort)	21/37 (57%)	41/143 (29%)	63/182 (35%)
Obtained a High School Equivalency Credential (# obtained/# cohort)	59/106 (56%)	108/286 (38%)	167/394 (42%)

Distance Learning Data. Data collection and analysis is a critical component of the implementation of ADEAL. During the pilot phase and continuing into the statewide implementation phase student outcome data was invaluable in helping assess the projects and in planning for improvements.

As implementation of distance learning services expands statewide, data gathering and analysis continue to be critical. In addition to the above data, student outcomes relating to the capacity of the system, intensity of instruction, acceleration of learning, and differences between varying delivery models will be studied closely.

The DL Model in Arizona. Since PY 2008, distance education opportunities for adult learners in Arizona have been implemented statewide through a collaborative process between state-authorized providers of **Distance Learning (DL)** and other providers of adult education services.

- ◆ Adult education agencies must apply to become a state-authorized DL provider. As part of the application, providers must agree to formally collaborate with other adult education agencies in the state in order to serve DL learners. The DL provider's role is

primarily, to provide instructional support at a distance and to monitor progress in the distance curriculum.

- ◆ Agencies which are not state-authorized as DL providers must agree to formally collaborate with state-authorized DL providers by providing referral and face-to-face services as necessary to DL learners (i.e., intake, orientation, assessment, instructional support).
- ◆ Both the authorized DL provider and the collaborating non-DL provider have access to applicable student records for the purpose entering data and running reports.
Confidentiality requirements as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) shall be maintained.
- ◆ Both the authorized DL provider and the collaborating non-DL provider get credit for DL student outcomes. Outcomes for DL students are reported for both agencies. The state adult education data management system ensures that these students are counted only one time on state level reports.

The HL Model in Arizona. Beginning in PY13/14, all adult education agencies funded by ADE/AES, including those not previously designated as a state-authorized DL provider, were given the opportunity to implement **Hybrid Learning (HL)** instructional delivery models. These programs utilize approved online curricula to provide instruction at a distance to learners who were also enrolled in face-to-face classes.

- ◆ A qualified staff member is designated as the program's Distance Learning Coordinator and that information is made available to ADE/AES
- ◆ Students are formally enrolled into at least one class that provides face-to-face instruction and at least one class providing DL instruction using an approved DL curriculum. The state management system for adult education consolidates data from all classes for students so that attendance and other data are not double counted.
- ◆ The adult education agency provides all instruction and support for HL students, including intake, orientation, instructional support, monitoring of the DL curriculum, face-to-face instruction and assessment.
- ◆ In most cases, the HL instructor has the primary role of managing both the DL component and the face-to-face component of the course.
- ◆ Agencies adhere to all requirements and guidelines pertaining to distance education as outlined in this document and in other guidance provided by ADE/AES.
- ◆ Learners likely to benefit from DL, but who cannot attend the face-to-face component of an HL class, are referred to a state-authorized DL provider.

Defining Distance Education. Distance education is a formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for the majority of the instructional period. Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media including, but not limited to, print, audio recordings, video, broadcasts, computer software, web-based programs, and other online technology. Teachers support distance learners through communication via telephone, e-mail, instant messaging, or other technologies and software.

Defining Distance Learners. For federal reporting purposes, a student is classified as a distance learner only if the majority of attendance hours credited to the student are considered distance contact hours as opposed to face-to-face contact hours. Face-to-face contact hours and distance contact hours will be recorded separately. The determination of the student's status as a classroom or distance learner will be made at the end of the year and will be based on which category of hours is over 50% of the student's total attendance time. The student's hours in both face-to-face and distance situations will be included in the NRS report, according to the NRS Guidelines for Distance Education Learners.

Defining Hybrid Learning. Hybrid Learning is an instructional delivery model that incorporates a distance learning component with traditional face-to-face classroom instruction. Teachers must monitor progress on an approved online curriculum in addition to the face-to-face class. Instructors support their learners both in and outside of class via virtual learning communities, telephone, e-mail, instant messaging, or other technologies and software.

A student who participates in Hybrid Learning will be considered a Distance Learner for NRS purposes only if the majority of attendance hours credited to the student are considered distance contact hours as opposed to face-to-face contact hours (see **Defining Distance Learners** above).

Distance Learning Approved Curricula. The following curricula are approved for distance learning instruction: *Assessment and Learning Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS)*, *Aztec*, *GED Academy*, *MyFoundationsLab (MFL)*, *PLATO Learning Environment (PLE)*, *SkillsTutor*, *USA Learns*, *ESL ReadingSmart*, *Burlington English* and/or *Rosetta Stone*.

Procurement for DL Curricula. In order to ensure that all adult education providers in Arizona have access to high quality DL curricula, training and technical support for instruction to Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE) and English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA) students, the State contracts with at least one consultant with the capacity to provide these services. The contract is procured on a competitive basis for a specific number of years. The current provider is Pearson, which offers *MyFoundationsLab*.

Measuring Contact Hours. Students in distance education must have at least 12 hours of direct contact with the program before they can be counted for federal reporting purposes. Direct contact hours for distance learners can be a combination of face-to-face contact and contact-at-a-distance through telephone, video, teleconference, or online communication where the learner and program staff can interact and the learner's identity is verifiable and the interaction is synchronous and recordable.

In addition to direct contact hours, proxy contact hours for learners will also be collected. The manner in which proxy contact hours will be measured will vary depending upon the curriculum used. The chart below shows the proxy contact hour (PCH) criteria and credit (attendance hours) for each of the approved curricula.

Curriculum	Model	PCH Criteria	PCH Credit (attendance hours)	Validation by
ALEKS (MHC)	Clock	System must track time-on-task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
Aztec	Clock	System must track time-on-task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
My Foundations Lab (MFL)	Clock	System must track time-on-task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
PLATO (PLE)	Clock	System must track time-on-task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
SkillsTutor	Clock	System must track time-on-task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
GED Academy	Clock	System must track time-on-task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
USA Learns	Mastery	Course 1: 70% proficiency or higher Course 2: 70% proficiency or higher Course 3: 70% proficiency or higher	Course 1: 20 units; 3 hours/unit Course 2: 20 units; 3 hours/unit Course 3: 42 units; 1 hour/unit	California Dept. of Ed (CDE)
ESL ReadingSmart	Clock	System must track time-on-task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
Rosetta Stone	Clock	System must track time-on-task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
Burlington English	Clock	System must track time-on-task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System

Recording Contact Hours for Hybrid Classes. Students in a hybrid model of learning will have attendance recorded in two categories—direct contact hours and proxy contact hours.

At least two classes must be set up in the Arizona Adult Education Data Management System (AAEDMS) to record the different types of hours:

- ◆ One class will report **direct hours**. Documentation for these hours will be student sign-in sheets and/or other documents verifying direct contact at a distance (e.g.—telephone conversations). Direct contact hours should be entered into AAEDMS by the 15th of the month for the prior month.
- ◆ At least one other class will report **proxy contact hours**. Documentation for these hours will be time-on-task reports from the distance curriculum’s learner management system. Proxy contact hours are entered into AAEDMS by the last day of the month, showing the cumulative number of hours for that period.

A separate class should be set up in AAEDMS for each distance curriculum that is offered and the name of the curriculum should be clearly indicated on the class set-up page. Students may be enrolled in multiple classes reporting proxy contact hours from different curricula.

Supplemental materials from curricula that are not on the approved curriculum list cannot be counted as proxy contact hours. Supplemental or occasional assignments from materials that are on the approved list should also not be counted unless they are assigned as a formal component of a hybrid class, supported and monitored by the teacher.

Assessing Distance Learners. Distance learners must be assessed under the same guidelines as all other adult learners in Arizona, using approved standardized assessment tools and after the same number of instructional hours as other students, according to Arizona's approved NRS Assessment Policy. All standardized assessment must occur in secure, proctored settings. It is permissible to arrange for remote testing locations that are more convenient for distance learners as long as all state assessment requirements are met.

Funding for Distance Learning

Funding from the Arizona Department of Education for state-authorized DL providers shall be done through a competitive application process in the same way that other ADE adult education instructional services are funded.

Application and Approval Procedures to Operate a Distance Learning Program

In FY2008 and FY2009, nine ADE/AES agencies applied through a competitive RFGA process and were designated as state-authorized providers of distance education based on the following criteria:

- ◆ Assessment of Need
- ◆ Qualifications of Personnel
- ◆ Eligibility and Competency
- ◆ Coordination, Integration and Non-Duplication of Services
- ◆ Projected Outcomes
- ◆ Program Operations
- ◆ Class Schedule
- ◆ Detailed Budget

State-authorized DL providers are accountable to all requirements described in the FY 2009 Request for Grant Application (RFGA), including the requirement to formally collaborate with other adult education agencies to provide instructional services via distance strategies to learners who request and will likely benefit from distance learning opportunities.

Training Requirements

Personnel affiliated with state-authorized DL providers and HL models are required to adhere to the same training requirements as personnel affiliated with any ADE/AES-funded adult education provider: administrators and instructors must hold valid Arizona Adult Education certification; administrators, instructors and staff must participate in state required training; administrators, instructors and staff who provide distance services and/or utilize the ADE/AES provided online curriculum shall participate in specific training such as MyFoundationsLab workshops and webinars.

Experienced distance teachers are expected to participate in additional ongoing professional development relevant to distance learning.

Contact Information. For more information about Arizona Distance Education for Adult Learners, contact Stephanie Bulgrin at stephanie.bulgrin@azed.gov.