



**ADULT EDUCATION
SERVICES**

Blended & Virtual Learning Policy PY 2023-2024

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ADE-AES Educational Technology Overview

Our Purpose

The Educational Technology unit of Arizona Department of Education - Adult Education Services (ADE-AES) supports WIOA state-funded adult education programs and instructors with technology integration, blended learning, virtual education, and digital literacy by facilitating professional development and offering guidance specific to each unique program.

Introduction to Blended Learning & Virtual Learning

Blended learning is an andragogical strategy that connects and compliments traditional in-class learning experiences ('contact hours') with out-of-class digital components ('proxy hours'). The benefit of the out-of-class portion of blended learning is flexibility in when, how, and where students access the online components. Virtual (or distance) education is where students and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for 50% or more of the instructional period. A student's status as a participant in blended learning or virtual learning may change at any point based on the percentage of proxy hours.

To help facilitate blended and virtual learning, WIOA state-funded programs may utilize online curricula that have been acquired by the state at no cost to the program. Programs may select alternative online curriculum from the list of approved online curricula (pages 7-8); or, if instructors have completed the required Teacher Verification Model certification course, they may source other suitable curricula deemed to be educationally sound through a rigorous evaluation process. This includes curricula that instructors themselves have created.

Recording Attendance in the State Data Management System

State-funded adult education programs must keep an auditable record of in-class (synchronous) and out-of-class (asynchronous) attendance using the state data management system. This attendance may be recorded in the state data management system as a cumulative monthly total (by default), or, on a more frequent basis if so desired. Time spent on asynchronous online learning outside of class, referred to as 'proxy hours,' can be reported via one of three National Reporting System (NRS) proxy models:

- **Clock Time Model** describes recording usage of **state-approved online curricula** (see page 8) that automatically tracks student usage and can generate reports showing that student's usage over a period of time. Adult education programs enter that time into the state data management system in the 'proxy hours' field.
- **Learner Mastery Model** describes recording usage of **state-approved online curricula** (see page 7) that allocates a fixed number of hours based on passing a test (typically 70% or higher). The fixed number of hours will be recorded in the state data management system in the 'proxy hours' field when the student passes the test.
- **Teacher Verification Model** is where a teacher, upon completion of state-required training, can use their professional judgment and prior experience to determine the time required for students to complete assigned asynchronous work (if the assigned work does not have its own means to track time). The estimated hours to complete the assigned work will be recorded in the state data management system in the 'proxy hours' field for students who show evidence of satisfactory completion.

Setting Up Classes in the State Data Management System

When setting up a new class in the state data management system, pay close attention to the 'class format' which indicates the modality that students are primarily attending. All formats utilize blended learning where synchronous instruction (contact hours) connects with asynchronous learning (proxy hours) to be completed outside of class time and therefore can report both types of attendance hours.

All participants must have at least 12 hours of contact with the program* before they can be counted for Federal reporting purposes. The class format options are as follows:

- **Face-to-Face** - used for classes where the synchronous instruction primarily occurs in-person (all students are in the classroom).
- **Virtual** - used for classes where the synchronous instruction is primarily held virtually such as over a video conferencing platform (e.g., all students are attending class virtually, such as Zoom, WebEx, or Google Meets)
- **HyFlex** - used for classes where the synchronous instruction is occurring in-person and virtually at the same time (students may choose to attend in-person or virtually based on their needs that day).

**In-person contact time is not required to obtain the initial 12 hours of contact. Contact hours for virtual learners can be a combination of in-person or through telephone, video, teleconference, or online communication, where participant and program staff can interact and through which participant identity is verifiable.*

Monitoring

All hours entered into the state data management system must adhere to Arizona state guidelines and will be **subject to audit** by the Educational Technology and/or the Program Operations and Compliance units. It is imperative that all hours entered into the state data management system have documentation to substantiate the amount reported. That may include virtual and/or in-person attendance logs, online curriculum usage reports, evaluations of specific online curricula, and teachers' written notes. All documentation must be kept in an auditable format, either hard-copy or digital, and be available upon request by ADE-AES.

Acceptable Evidence of Contact Hours (synchronous instruction)

- **Face-to-Face** - Sign-in/sign-out sheets recording student attendance hours must exactly match student attendance hours that are entered into the state data management system. If a student signature is missing for either the sign-in or sign-out field, attendance for that student on that day cannot be entered into the state data management system until their signature is obtained. These attendance sheets must be kept on file for a minimum of 5 years after the current grant contract ends.
- **Virtual** - Evidence for these hours will include documents verifying interactions such as virtual attendance logs, chat logs, or written records detailing specific time/date and length of contact. Records and logs must be kept on file for a minimum of 5 years after the current grant contract ends.

- **HyFlex** - Evidence includes any combination of the acceptable evidence listed for Face-to-Face and Virtual class formats.

Acceptable Evidence of Proxy Hours (asynchronous instruction)

- **Clock Time Model and Learner Mastery Model** - Records will be audited by comparing reports generated by the specific state-approved curriculum with data entered into the state data management system's 'proxy hours' field. The data in the generated reports must reflect the proxy hours entered into the data management system. Exceptions must be justified. Generated reports must be kept on file and provided upon request for a minimum of 5 years after the current grant contract ends.
- **Teacher Verification Model** - Records will be audited by reviewing evidence of:
 - instructor completion of the Blended Learning Certification course (found on the EMS),
 - a completed Lesson Submission Form for the lesson(s) of the earned proxy hours entered into the data management system,
 - and evidence of the student's satisfactory completion of the assignment.
 Evidence must be kept on file for a minimum of 5 years after the current grant contract ends.

Assessment

Accountability testing is designed to measure effectiveness at the program level. Results should be used to guide programmatic decisions, policies, and procedures. Programs are required to have additional assessments in place to inform classroom instruction and individualization of learning for skill mastery.

Programs must administer initial tests to all learners (100%), including Virtual Learning students, within the first 12 hours of attendance and follow up with progress tests during the period allowed as described in this document to at least 75% of learners. Remote proctoring of TABE assessments is allowed. All valid assessments administered to WIOA Title II participants must be entered in AAEDMS.

If neither in-person nor remote proctoring is possible, a provisional EFL must be assigned to the student. See the PY 2022-2023 Assessment Policy's Appendix A for guidance on provisional EFLs.

Progress test timeframes are set by ED/OCTAE/DAEL and also apply to students enrolled in DL. TABE 11&12 and TABE CLAS-E required progress test timeframes:

Student Level	Publisher Recommended Instructional Hours between test sessions	Minimum allowable time between test sessions
ABE Levels 1-4	50-60	40 instructional hours or 4 weeks (whichever is longer)
ABE Levels 5-6	30-59	30 instructional hours or 4 weeks (whichever is longer)
ELAA Levels 1-6	50-60	50 instructional hours or 4 weeks (whichever is longer)

Contact Information

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Glossary

Asynchronous Learning- Any out-of-class learning that adheres to either the Clock Time Model, Teacher Verification Model, or the Learner Mastery Model.

Blended Learning - Learning that connects content via two different learning modalities (contact hours/synchronous & proxy hours/asynchronous).

Clock Time Model - Assigns proxy hours based on the elapsed time that a learner is connected to, or engaged in, an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.

Curricular Resources - Learning material aligned to the state's adult education content standards that are used by instructors and students.

Digital Literacy - the skills associated with- (A) using technology to enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information; and (B) developing digital citizenship and the responsible use of technology.

Distance Learning Student - For federal reporting purposes, a student is classified as a Distance Learning (DL) student if over 50% of attendance hours are 'proxy hours,' as opposed to 'contact hours.' Student status as a classroom or DL student may change at any point based on the percentage of proxy hours. Both the student's face-to-face and proxy hours will be included in the annual NRS report, according to the NRS Guidelines for Distance Education. Final determination of a student's status is determined at the end of the fiscal year for reporting purposes.

HyFlex Instruction – Short for hybrid flexible, referring to instruction that occurs face-to-face and virtually simultaneously. Students also have the option of attending asynchronously, allowing for maximum student choice of their learning environment.

Learner Mastery Model - Assigns a fixed number of proxy hours based on the learner passing a test on the content of each lesson.

Proxy Hours - Any out-of-class (asynchronous) hours of instruction adhering to either the Clock Time Model, Teacher Verification Model, or the Learner Mastery Model.

Synchronous Learning – occurs when teacher and students are together at the same time (live); can be in-person or virtual.

Teacher Verification Model (TVM)- Assigns a predetermined number of proxy hours for each assignment based on teacher determination of the extent to which a learner engaged in, or completed, the assignment.

Virtual Learning - Any substantial synchronous contact made with a student that supports their success from a distance to include but not limited to delivering instruction, tutoring, mentoring, and motivating. Professional judgment is used to determine whether the contact was substantive enough to document in the state data management system.

Approved Online Curricula

This list is subject to change as curricula get added/removed based on its alignment to NRS requirements, the Arizona Adult Education Content Standards, and other criteria.

Learner Mastery Model			
Curriculum	Proxy Hours Criteria	Proxy Hours Reporting	Validation by
NROC LMS Courses	Learners must meet a 70% proficiency or greater for all unit quizzes to earn reportable hours.	Each Topic: 0.5 hours/topic	NROC & ADE/AES
Reading Skills for Today's Adults	<p>Learners must complete the supplemental activities and earn a 70% or higher on the assessment.</p> <p>Teachers will keep records of students' work demonstrating completion and mastery.</p>	<p>1.5 hours/passage using PDFs</p> <p>Each Passage includes completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Passage reading → Pre-questions → Post-questions and → Supplemental activity <p>OR</p> <p>0.75 hours/passage using Wakelet</p> <p>Each Passage includes completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Passage reading → Quizlet vocabulary activities → Google Form of comprehension questions 	Literacy Minnesota & ADE/AES
USA Learns	Learners must meet a 70% proficiency or greater for all units to earn reportable hours.	<p>Course 1: 3 hours/unit</p> <p>Course 2: 3 hours/unit</p> <p>Practice English & Reading: 1 hour/unit</p> <p>USA Learns Citizenship: 1 hour/unit</p>	California Department of Education (CDE) & ADE/AES

Clock Time Model

All of the below software utilizes 'Time On Task' to report proxy hours. Links included for information only.

ALEKS (MHC) - <https://www.aleks.com/>

Arizona Career Readiness Credential (ACRC) - <https://acrc.az.gov/>

Aztec Software - <http://www.aztecsoftware.com/products-services/high-school-equivalency>

BurlingtonEnglish - <https://www.burlingtonenglish.com/>

Edmentum (Previously named PLATO) - <https://www.edmentum.com/>

EdReady - <https://nroc.org/what-we-offer/edready/>

ESL ReadingSmart - <http://welcome.eslreadingsmart.com/>

Essential Education - <https://www.essential.ed.com/products/>

Khan Academy - <https://www.khanacademy.org>

Learning Upgrade - <https://web.learningupgrade.com/>

McGraw-Hill HSE Achieve - <https://www.mheducation.com/prek-12/segment/adulted.html>

Northstar Digital Literacy Assessments - <https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/>

Odysseyware - <https://www.odysseyware.com/>

Rosetta Stone - <https://www.rosettastone.com/k12/home/>

SkillsTutor - <https://www.paxenpublishing.com/skillstutor/>

Teacher Verification Model

Any other online curricular resources that have been vetted by an instructor who has completed the required ADE-AES Blended Learning Certification course can be utilized for proxy hours. Curricular resources can include existing resources found through internet searches, resources compiled into a single location within a learning management system (LMS) or webpage, and resources created by the instructor.

Appendix A: Digital Literacy Guidance

The resources below are in response to the National Skills Coalition's "Digital Skills in Pandemic Times: How State Policymakers Can Help Workers and Businesses Adapt in a Changing Economy" recommendation document.

1. ***Encourage the use of existing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds and state adult education funds for digital skill-building***
 - Purchase [Northstar Digital Literacy](#) for the program.
 - Use [Google Applied Digital Skills](#) or Microsoft's LinkedIn Learning Courses: [Working with computers](#) and [Working and collaborating online](#)
 - Pay teachers to develop lessons and/or professional development that incorporate the International Society for Technology and Education (ISTE) [Standards for leadership, teachers, and students](#).
 - To address equity, purchase devices such as the RACHEL, Study Buddy, or other tools found on the [Digital Tools for Different Access Scenarios](#) for those without internet/device access.
 - Purchase assistive technology and accessories such as keyboards for phones, smart pens, screen readers, etc. Additional tools and information can be found at the Learning Disability Resources Foundation's [Assistive Technology Page](#).
2. ***Ensure that digital literacy skill-building is an explicitly permitted use of state Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) funds.***
 - Collaborate with Title I Partners to ensure digital literacy is specifically addressed.
3. ***Facilitate partnerships between education and workforce providers and the public library system to support digital skill-building.***
 - State Land Department's Statewide [Map of Public Wi-Fi Hotspots](#)
 - AZ Library Wi-Fi Hotspot Lending Program Update: recently awarded funding for 16 libraries to start or continue lending programs, and with the CARES Act stimulus funding are in the process of awarding additional funding for hotspot lending. Reach out to your local library to see if they are a participant of this program.
 - [Arizona Libraries Digital Inclusion Resource Hub](#)
 - [Connect Arizona](#): Get free tech help from a digital navigator with anything from computer issues, finding free wifi hotspots, to using your smartphone to access email and other apps.
4. ***Analyze existing datasets to understand whether existing digital learning methods produce equitable outcomes for learners.***
 - Utilize the [Digital Literacy Action Plan \(DLAP\) Tools](#) to gather data on what student needs and goals are.
 - Review [A Playbook for Fostering Digital Resilience through Instruction in Adult Education](#) to ensure practices are setup to produce equitable outcomes.
 - Local providers are required to explain how they plan to analyze the success of digital literacy instruction in the Digital Literacy section of the AES-required Technology Plan submission.