TDLS 2026

OTAN's annual Technology and Digital Learning Symposium is back March 6 and 7, 2026! Join us for two days of cutting-edge edtech professional learning from adult education experts, with time to catch up with colleagues, too!

TDLS features engaging, interactive presentations and vibrant discussions. It is designed to demonstrate effective ways of incorporating technology to enrich the learning experience, expand educational reach through a combination of in-person and online learning, and improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of adult education programs. TDLS welcomes all educators, administrators, and support personnel who work in agencies serving adult learners.

Registration and the call for presenters will be open this Fall. If you're interested in attending and maybe even presenting, check out our website tdls.otan.us for more information! We'll see you at TDLS!

Inside This Issue:

Resilience in the Face of Adversity

2025 has been a year so far where things that we expect to be permanent or happen automatically suddenly are not or do not. Throughout the spring, we have been hearing about the closing of the US Department of Education which has been around for over 45 years. On July 1, we discovered that Congressionally authorized federal education funds meant to be disbursed to states and territories were impounded for review by the USDOE. All of a sudden, budgets and plans for the coming school year were thrown into chaos.

The month of July was challenging for adult education programs across California as they kicked off the 2025–26 school year, and for OTAN, this was no exception. Many of our colleagues are not aware that OTAN is 100% federally funded, and we immediately felt the impact of the impoundment and potential loss of funding.

Amid uncertainty, we have also seen the resilience of adult education shine through. Our CDE Adult Education Office, led by Dr. Carolyn Zachry, has been working overtime to provide support and guidance to the field. Since the AEO oversees OTAN, they have also helped us prioritize our work throughout the summer and into the fall. Even though we have not been able to begin many activities that we normally would at the start of a new school year, we have been doing our best to provide the highest level of service to our constituents.

OTAN has continued to provide professional development sessions to schools as they prepare for a new school year. We have been working with agencies as they introduce or continue using Canvas with staff and students. We have been rolling out new teaching and learning resources (described later in this Newsletter) for adult educators to use in classrooms with students.

It was five years ago when our education field went through a tumultuous moment that required pivoting quickly to a new reality. All of us at OTAN bring that same resolve to meet the challenge and operate as a leadership organization ready to support our colleagues.

Explore the Latest Adult Ed Courses in Canvas Commons

If your school uses Canvas, don't miss out on Canvas Commons, a library of shared Open Educational Resources (OERs) that educators can contribute to or use in their own courses. The Commons includes full courses, modules, templates, and activities. OTAN curates the California Adult Education Canvas Commons, a collection designed specifically for adult education, featuring ESL, CTE, and digital literacy courses, EL Civics modules, professional development resources, and adaptable templates.

What's New in Commons?

OTAN continues to expand its collection with new resources developed by professionals in the field:

- **English for Multilingual Learners:** A self-paced course for adult learners to practice English while building digital literacy, study skills, goal-setting, and financial literacy.
- **OTAN Weekly Iconic Template:** A fully customizable course template with engaging button styles designed for instructors who prefer weekly lesson layouts.
- **DART: Digital Access and Resilience with Technology:** A digital literacy and ESL curriculum helping learners master foundational computer and language skills needed to create and manage online accounts.
- **Digital ESL | Canvas Companion:** Curriculum integrating smartphone use and digital basics for beginner English learners, originally designed for older adults but adaptable for all ages.
- **EDC Digital Upskilling Program | Computer Basics Toolkit:** A hands-on Chromebook and Google Workspace course covering internet navigation, online safety, email, video calls, and more, with bilingual lesson materials.

How to Access

From your Canvas global navigation bar, select Commons, then filter by "California Adult Education Canvas Commons." Explore, preview, and import resources into your own courses. Need access? Contact AECanvas@scoe.net. ⊗

Keep Learning with OTAN's Professional Development Opportunities

With WIOA funding challenges creating uncertainty for many agencies, access to professional development is more important than ever. OTAN offers flexible, high-impact learning with CEU options to keep educators engaged and supported.

Courses:

Digital Learning Guidance: Self-paced course that explores strategies, tools, and best practices for creating engaging, effective digital learning environments.

Triple E Framework: Self-paced or webinar format that guides you in evaluating and improving technology use for engagement, enhancement, and extension of learning.

Coming Soon - **HyFlex:** Strategies for engaging learners both in person and online synchronously and asynchronously.

Coming Soon - **Accessibility Support:** Self-paced training option that helps you create inclusive learning experiences for every student.

OTAN's courses are built to fit your schedule, goals, and teaching style. We are dedicated to ensuring you have the tools, resources, and ongoing training you need to adapt, grow, and keep moving forward. Start exploring all our PD opportunities today at OTAN.us ⊗

OTAN offers technology integration sessions in the form of in-person, virtual, and hybrid events. These professional development events can be scheduled as hands-on workshops or presentations and are provided to adult educators and staff throughout California at no cost.

Series sessions are also available. Where workshops and presentations can be scheduled individually, with a series, skills are gradually built around specific topics, apps, and/or digital tools over the course of several sessions.

All OTAN sessions are customizable to fit the needs of the requesting agency and staff.

Sampling of topics includes:

- Using AI in Adult Education
- Canvas LMS
- Creating Accessible Documents for Adult Ed
- CK12 - Digital Textbooks
- Digital Learning Guidance
- Engaging Instruction
- Google Apps and Tools
- Internet and Digital Safety
- Microsoft Apps and Tools
- Triple-E Framework
- and much more!

Session Requirements

In-person (3 hour min.)
- At least 3 weeks scheduling notice.
- A minimum of 10 registered participants one week before the event.
- One device for every participant at the host site OR
- Ability to connect to site WiFi with sufficient bandwidth to support all devices.
- A projection system.

Virtual (1-1.5 hour min.)
- At least 2 weeks scheduling notice.
- A minimum of 8 registered participants 3 days before the event.
- All participants must be able to connect to a Zoom session.

Presentation Requirements

In-person (1 hour min.)
- 3 weeks notice before event.
- A projection system.

Virtual (20 minutes min.)
- 2 weeks notice before event.
- A projection system.

For more information about customizing or scheduling, or more information about OTAN Professional Development, contact OTAN training staff at support@otan.us.

OTAN.US
916-228-2580

The Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN) provides electronic collaboration, information, and support for instructional technology and digital learning to adult education and literacy providers in California. Here is a list of some resources and the path to locate them on the OTAN website:

Teaching Tools and Resources

California Adult Education Digital Learning Guidance – The Guidance is designed to identify, document, and disseminate practical information for adult educators, classified and support staff, counselors and transition specialists, and administrators to support effective implementation of digital learning within adult education.

Accessibility Resources – You will find OTAN-developed resources as well as resources you can use to learn more about accessibility and create your own accessible content and presentations.

OTAN Canvas – OTAN Canvas is a partnership between Instructure, the Sacramento County Office of Education, and OTAN to provide access to the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) for in-person, blended, and distance learning.

Teaching with Technology – A robust searchable database to help adult education teachers and staff locate web resources and other technology related to a specific lesson topic. You can filter your search by program areas, keywords, and standards.

Web-based Class Activities – Web-based activities are monthly technology-based activities organized around instructional themes and topics as well as edtech tools, with ideas on how to get started and how to use in the classroom.

Curriculum Offers – OTAN works to negotiate the best free or reduced-cost special offers for online curriculum licenses and professional development resources suggested by our OTAN Advisory Committee and adult educators in the field.

Lesson Plan Builder – Create, share, and publish lesson plans that follow the WIPPEA format and the Triple E Framework.

California EL Civics Exchange – The California EL Civics Exchange is a repository for original EL Civics instructional materials created by California WIOA, Title II: AEFLA/EL Civics agencies which can be used to teach EL Civics content to English language learners.

Video Presentations

Watch our recordings on the following topics:

- AI, Teaching and Working Online, Academic and Workforce Training, and Equity and Inclusion
- Google Tools, Microsoft Tools, and Digital Tools
- Devices and Using Video
- OTAN Tech Talks
- And more!

Stay Connected

Adult Education News – Catch up on recent and past news items about OTAN events and services as well as issues of interest to the field regarding technology and tech integration.

OTAN Digest – Items of interest to adult education staff members, including new resources, training opportunities, and recent news, published monthly.

Newsletter – OTAN's Newsletter is full of news, stories, tips, and helpful information, published two times a year.

Social media – Follow us on X, Facebook, LinkedIn, and our YouTube channel and stay up-to-date with OTAN.

Other Items of Interest

Technology and Digital Learning Symposium – OTAN's annual conference with presentations that show participants how to integrate technology to enhance the learner experience, extend the classroom to learners through blended/distance learning, and help adult education programs be more effective and efficient.

Adult Education Students Succeed – Every year, OTAN invites nominations of adult education learners who are successful as a result of the education received at California adult education agencies.

Digital Leadership Academy – DLAC is a two-year program designed to be flexible in how agencies can best use the resources offered by OTAN to support their technology integration, distance learning, or blended teaching agency goals.

California Adult Education Students Succeed 2025

Since the early 2000s, OTAN has recognized California Adult Education Students Succeed honorees who are successful as a result of work done at an adult education program. Agencies nominate students who inspire and embody a resilient spirit, overcome difficult challenges, contribute to their communities, and improve their own circumstances. This year, OTAN and our adult education community celebrate the amazing honorees and programs, instructors, administrators, and support staff who support adult learning.

Each year, a nomination window opens on January 1 to nominate deserving students. Each nomination is scored using a rubric based on a number of components. This year, thirty-eight students from adult education agencies around the state scored at or above the qualifying score and joined other successful students throughout the years. Among the thirty-eight honorees, the top four scoring adult learners are then selected to be honored at public events during the year.

We invite everyone to visit the Students Succeed website at https://adultedlearners.org This collection of stories, photos, and videos inspire hope and motivation for adult students and staff. Additionally, these serve to educate not just the public but legislators about the great impact of adult education programs in California.

Each of our honorees embodies the dedication and resilience needed to reach their educational goals despite each person's own unique challenges. Congratulations to all our honorees and all adult education programs that have changed the lives of so many! ☉

New OTANians

We are excited to welcome two new members to the OTAN team, each bringing unique skills, experiences, and passions that will strengthen our work supporting adult education across California.

Our first new colleague is Miranda Currie, Project Specialist II - Technology Projects, who most recently served as the ESL Department Lead at Elk Grove Adult and Community Education, where she began in 2018. In addition to coordinating the ESL department and EL Civics program, she taught multiple ESL levels, including Beginning Literacy. Her career has also included work as an artist and illustrator, as well as serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in West Africa. At OTAN, she will primarily manage the Canvas project, supporting agencies with onboarding, training, and presentations, while also contributing to communications and the development of a new Course Outline Builder. Passionate about digital equity and technology integration, she also enjoys time with her young children, gardening, hiking, yoga, and traveling.

Miranda Currie and Muamong Vue

Joining her is Muamong Vue, Program Analyst. She comes to us with five years of experience in the non-profit sector and local K–16 education systems. Her background in project management, development, and implementation has prepared her well for her new role at OTAN. Here, as a Program Analyst, she will assess current systems to identify opportunities for improvement, as well as manage and support OTAN trainers. Motivated by a desire to explore new ways to support learners and educators, she is eager to contribute to OTAN's mission. Outside of work, creativity fuels her hobbies—arts and crafts, photography, and painting—along with time spent outdoors hiking, camping, and fishing.
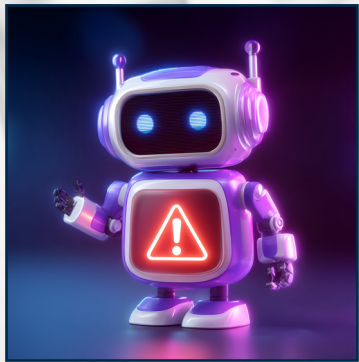
Please join us in giving them both a warm welcome! ☉

Techie's Tech Tip

Shh…Don't Tell the Robots!

Artificial intelligence is becoming a common learning tool, from schoolwork helpers to study aids. But sharing too much personal information can put your privacy at risk.

Avoid giving AI your full name, address, phone number, passwords, or any details that could identify you. Use examples that are generic, not personal, when asking questions or uploading schoolwork. Be mindful that some AI systems may store or process what you share—so think before you type. Schools can help by teaching digital literacy, reviewing privacy policies together, and encouraging students to ask, "Do I really need to share this?"

By treating personal information like a treasure worth protecting, students can enjoy the benefits of AI while keeping their identities and security safe. ✈

From the Adult Education Director

As we move into a new program year, I am inspired by the resilience and dedication of California's adult education community. Even as federal challenges create uncertainty, your leadership continues to model innovation, strength, and a steadfast commitment to adult learners.

Here at OTAN, we are proud to serve as one of the three State Leadership Projects, alongside CASAS and CALPRO, with the strong support of the California Department of Education. Together, we are committed to adapting and pivoting to meet the evolving needs of the field. For OTAN, this means equipping educators and administrators with the technology tools, digital strategies, and professional learning opportunities that help programs thrive in any environment.

Your ability to embrace change and lead with creativity is what drives adult education forward in California. OTAN is honored to partner with you in this work—supporting your efforts, amplifying your successes, and advancing digital innovation that opens doors for learners across the state.

Thank you for the powerful impact you make every day. ✈

Renee Collins
Adult Education Director

OTAN
Outreach and Technical Assistance Network

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

The Technology and Digital Learning for California Adult Education report provides an overview of the state of digital learning in WIOA, Title II AEFLA-funded adult schools and community colleges in California in Program Year 2023–2024

The California Adult Education Professional Development calendar is the one stop training source for OTAN, CAEP, CALPRO, and CASAS events for California adult educators