

DLAC Midterm Narrative

Silicon Valley Adult Education (SVAE)

DLAC Team: Arezoo Miller (Team Leader), Aruna Subramanian, Henry Mulak

Extended Team: Kiran Grewal (Assistant Superintendent), Maliheh Vafai (Director), Lars Guntvedt (Assistant Principal)

Overview

Silicon Valley Adult Education (SVAE), located at 760 Hillsdale Avenue in San Jose, California, was established in 1870 as a night school for young men. Today, it serves approximately 365 ESL students and 75 ABE/GED/HSD learners annually. After multiple relocations, the school has been operating at its current site since 1968. Over the years, SVAE has demonstrated a consistent commitment to evolving alongside the needs of adult learners, and its current focus is on enhancing ESL instruction through thoughtful digital integration—with Canvas now being introduced as the primary learning management system .

The Role of IDEAL-101 and the Site Plan

IDEAL-101 provided critical insights into digital teaching strategies and learner-centered design, laying the foundation for our DLAC team to craft a clear, structured, and actionable vision. The course helped us understand the importance of aligning digital transformation with the actual needs, strengths, and challenges of our students and teachers.

The creation of our Site Plan allowed us to apply these concepts directly, guiding us through the steps needed to evaluate our current tools, identify gaps, and organize initiatives into measurable, manageable goals. A major emphasis has been ensuring that Canvas is used in a way that's intuitive and beneficial for both students and teachers, supporting a seamless learning experience.

Through the guidance of our instructor Destiny, coach Susan, and expert mentors like Dr. Paul Porter and Neda Anasseri, we have also come to recognize that strong digital adoption depends on equally strong collaboration. By leveraging our individual strengths—strategic thinking, execution, influencing, and relationship-building—we are fostering the leadership and teamwork skills necessary to drive this transformation.

Accomplishments to Date

- Completion of IDEAL-101
 - Development and completion of the Site Plan
 - Completion of a teacher survey on digital practices and Canvas use
 - Drafting of a project outline focused on Canvas standardization in the ESL department
 - Team building progress, including in-person meetings and shared leadership
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Training Application & Team Development

One of the early challenges we encountered was learning to work effectively as a team. Differences in communication styles and unclear expectations caused some initial confusion. Through open dialogue and regular meetings, we've strengthened our collaboration and created a more cohesive working environment.

We adopted simple yet effective strategies:

- Focus on shared goals and minimize distractions
- Assign specific tasks and set clear agendas
- Were tasked with roles depending on each member's strength
- Use reminders and consistent communication to keep the team aligned

Scheduling was also a barrier, which we addressed by adopting a flexible calendar and planning meetings as well in advance as possible.

Challenges, Barriers, and Setbacks

Challenges:

- Initially unclear roles and goals as a DLAC team
- Working almost exclusively with coaches or administrators during meetings made it difficult to establish our own team dynamic

Barriers:

- The main barrier has been ourselves. Learning to function as an independent, self-directed team

Setbacks:

- None significant, though team development has taken time
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Changes Made

Our initial vision was to standardize Canvas across the entire SVAE program. Based on team capacity and feasibility, we refined our scope to focus specifically on the ESL department. We also moved from remote-only to in-person meetings to improve collaboration.

Next Steps

- Finalize and analyze the results of our teacher survey
 - Use survey data to outline a digital curriculum for Canvas integration
 - Attend the Canvas Regional Summit in Sacramento on May 9, 2025
 - Develop curriculum and training resources during Summer 2025
 - Implement PD for ESL teachers with OTAN support (tentatively August 6, 2025)
 - Launch the pilot implementation in Spring 2026
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Support Needed

We are grateful for the continued support from our administration, coach, and the DLAC/OTAN teams. Looking ahead, we request:

- Confirmation and delivery of Canvas PD from OTAN
 - Continued coaching to help solidify team structures and leadership
 - Administrative support to promote Canvas as an essential tool for new hires and current instructors
 - Guidance on integrating third-party tools (e.g., uploading Cambridge "Venture Shell" content into Canvas)
 - Opportunities to collaborate with other adult schools engaged in similar projects
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Summary

The DLAC initiative has been transformative for SVAE. As a team, we've matured in our collaboration, clarified our vision, and begun laying the foundation for a standardized, digital-first instructional model using Canvas. Our upcoming teacher PD and curriculum development are key next steps, and we are energized by the momentum we've built.

We believe that empowering every ESL teacher to confidently use Canvas will result in more engaging, accessible, and effective learning experiences for our adult students. With continued support and shared purpose, we're ready to take the next big steps in our digital journey.

*** ** END *** **

Notes from Tuesday's meeting, April 22, 2025 as synthesized above:

DLAC Midterm Narrative Document

Silicon Valley Adult Education (SVAE) located at 760 Hillsdale Avenue, San Jose, CA was Established in 1870 as a night school for young men now serving 365 ESL students and 75 ABE/GED/HSD adult learners annually. After several relocations, the school settled at its current site in 1968 and continues to adapt to the needs of adult learners.

The current focus is on enhancing ESL instruction through digital integration, with Canvas as the primary learning platform.

DLAC Team members

Arezoo Miller (Team Leader), Aruna Subramanian, Henry Mulak

Extended DLAC Members

Kiran Grewal (Assistant Superintendent), Maliheh Vafai (Director), Lars Guntvedt (Assistant- Principal)

The Role of IDEAL-101 and the Site Plan

IDEAL-101 played a critical role in advancing our DLAC objectives, providing invaluable insights into digital teaching strategies and learner-centered design. These principles not only shaped our approach but also helped us build a clear and actionable vision for achieving our goals. The development of our site plan further strengthened our approach, offering a structured framework to evaluate current tools, identify gaps, and strategically organize initiatives in measurable ways. Our plan emphasizes clarity and accessibility, particularly in integrating Canvas, ensuring both teachers and students experience a cohesive and effective digital learning environment.

IDEAL-101 also underscored the importance of understanding our learners' needs, strengths, and challenges as the foundation for effective support. Through our DLAC journey guided by our instructor Destiny, our coach Susan, Dr. Porter, Neda and other experts, we recognized that encouraging Canvas adoption among teachers requires a strong, collaborative team. By acknowledging each team member's strengths, challenges, and expertise, we were able to harness those assets to drive our shared vision forward. This process not only fostered collaboration but also revealed the need for individual growth and the development of leadership skills to successfully navigate this transformative journey.

How did IDEAL 101 and the development and completion of a site plan help meet your program and DLAC goals

- IDEAL101 gave us tools for Site plan
- Site plan gave us the steps for implementing our Pilot Program.

Accomplishments to date

- Ideal 101 Completed.
- Site Plan Completed

- Survey Completed
- Outline of our project Completed

How have you used the skills learned at training sessions

- ❖ Our journey has not been without obstacles. One of the earliest challenges was learning how to work effectively as a team. Differences in communication styles and work habits led to some initial misunderstandings. Over time, we overcame this by creating space for open dialogue and relationship-building.
- ❖ Scheduling was another barrier. With each member managing different responsibilities, it was difficult to find consistent meeting times. We eventually implemented a flexible scheduling system with advance notice to accommodate everyone's availability and keep meetings productive.
- ❖ Team Building...
 - Ignore conflicts and work on the big goal.
 - Meet at a scheduled time and work on a scheduled task.
 - Set up the next meeting agenda and time.
 - From Dr. Porter workshop,
 - We have 2 in the group with good relationship skills and executing.
 - Other person is Strategic thinking, influencing and relationship building.
 - With the combined effort of the above, we are working as a team.
- ❖ Handling Conflict
 - Depending on the type, talk it out and solve the problem.

- If it is big, talk with the admin and coach and address the problem.
 - How do we address each week's assignment...color code, who takes leadership etc..
- ❖ Communication Skills
 - One of us with good executing skills normally gives a heads up to the team about upcoming due dates and reminders.
- ❖ Using and encouraging strengths
 - We support and help each other as needed.
- ❖ What Challenges, barriers, and setbacks have you encountered
 - **Challenges**
 - Did not work as a DLAC team by ourselves
 - We always had either a coach or an admin with us whenever we met.
 - **Barriers**
 - Only barrier is ourselves.
 - **Setbacks**
 - ◆ None
- ❖ What Changes have been made
 - Initially we thought we will work whole of SVAE
 - We then changed to ESL only.
- ❖ What are your planned “next steps”
 - Conduct the Survey
 - Evaluate the result of the survey
 - Outline the Curriculum

- Attend CANVAS regional submit in Sacramento on May 9, 2025.
- Work on Curriculum to be presented to teachers during summer 2025.
- PD from OTAN CANVAS for ESL teachers (need to confirm with admin and book the date with OTAN)
- ❖ What support do you and your team need
 - We are getting all the support from the admin, DLAC Staff and the coach.
 - Continued support from the above is very much appreciated.
- ❖ What help do you need from DLAC staff, coaches, OTAN
 - Once we finalize the PD date with the admin, we want OTAN to come and give a PD for the school. (Tentative date August 6, 2025)
- ❖ Other areas you feel are important and relevant to your projects
 - Collaborate with schools who have done/doing similar project
 - How to upload a book (venture shell) from Cambridge one and into canvas.
 - Admin support for new teachers to ensure canvas is essential at the time of hire and teachers are supposed to use that in classroom.
- ❖ Summary

The DLAC initiative at Metropolitan Adult Education has already fostered growth within our team and helped us take meaningful steps toward digital transformation. We've strengthened our collaboration, developed a practical and focused site plan, and will start building a training structure that meets our teachers' real needs.

While challenges remain particularly around Canvas adoption, we are addressing them through empathy, flexibility, and continuous

improvement. With the support of our coach, OTAN, and our administration, we are confident in our ability to continue making progress.

Ultimately, our goal is to empower every teacher to deliver high-quality instruction through Canvas, and to ensure that every student has access to a flexible, engaging, and future-ready education.

Henry's Responses:

- *Brief overview of SVAE*
 - *Arezoo Miller - SVAE Transition Specialist*
 - [Aruna Subramanian](#) - *ESL Teacher*
 - *Henry Mulak - ESL Teacher*
- IDEAL 101 helped develop a plan to implement CANVAS standardization within the SVAE ESL department
- Accomplishments to date:
 - Team Building - ongoing work
 - Handling Conflict - ongoing work
 - Communications Skills - now meeting in person
 - Using and Encouraging Strengths - now all shared
- What Challenges, barriers, and setbacks have you encountered
 - Determining exactly what we would do and working through differences in understanding what we would be doing as a team.
- What Changes have been made
 - Meeting in person
- What are your planned "next steps"
 - Assessing survey and the building curriculum around what we determine is needed to implement CANVAS standardization.
 - (More here, including development of the PD)
 - (outline the curriculum by May)
 - (spring 2026 implement our curriculum with teachers)
- What support do you and your team need
 - Ongoing team building and coaching
- What help do you need from DLAC staff, coaches, OTAN

CANVAS course; coaching; team building

- Other areas you feel are important and relevant to your projects

Work on getting all teachers interested in the project

Administration support in getting teachers together, helping with a vision the teachers can look to.

- Summary

The SVAE DLAC group has come a long way, continuing to learn on how we can better work together as a team. Getting teachers surveyed is a big step in creating a project which will help us standardize our use of technology at SVAE, starting with CANVAS. Now we are looking forward to figuring out how we will do that, including creating curriculum, a syllabus, and rubric. There's some excitement in seeing what administration will do in helping us get teachers moving in one direction so everyone feels on board and we can all begin working in one direction on the same thing.