

DLAC May 2024 Final Project Report

Grossmont Adult Education (GAE) serves approximately 8300 students across our EL, Academic, CTE, and Re-Entry programs. Our EL program serves close to 3000 of those students, including English Basic-English 4, Foundations (English 5-6 with ABE), and a large IET program, supporting more than 10 CTE classes. The student population we serve is extremely diverse, boasting more than 37 languages from 80 countries, many facing a broad range of barriers and challenges, especially our dominant refugee population.

Our DLAC Team, consisting of Jennifer Owens, EL Director, Jennifer Hanson, EL Distance Learning Teacher, Barbara Van Dyken, EL Teacher, and Nikki Ross, Program Specialist, is dedicated to establishing a culture of digital literacy in our EL program that could serve as a model across all programs. We have been supported closely by our wonderful DLAC Coach Cindy Wislofsky and Adult Ed Director Kim Bellaart.

IDEAL 101/102 has helped us design and redesign our site plan and DLAC goals to focus on immediate needs and effective processes that harness educational technology as a catalyst for meeting the heavily impacted student demand for EL in our region. Through our IDEAL meetings and DLAC training we have gained incredible insight from our colleagues' site plans, which have helped us launch a schoolwide Professional Learning plan "Building our Digital Literacy Foundation". In addition to our site plan, through our DLAC training sessions, we have learned so much about the strengths and struggles of each member of our team. Reflecting on these traits has allowed us to reconsider each other's ideas, make room for mistakes, and recognize the unique professional wins we have individually achieved over the past two years.

After many adjustments and lessons learned during Year 1, this year we narrowed our focus to three goals: Professional Development and Continuing Support for Teachers to increase their digital literacy, Identification and Integration of Digital Literacy Objectives (DLOs), and the Digital Literacy & Canvas Utilization Guideline for EL programs. We can humbly share that in this second year we have accomplished many pieces of these goals. This is in large part due to the models set before us by our DLAC partner schools and their shared successes and areas of continued growth.

Our first goal sets the stage for accomplishing the other two by focusing on Professional Development and Continuing Support for Teachers, to increase their digital literacy. We saw Torrance present their impeccably planned Northstar schoolwide training and we met with them and were able to use this template to organize a small Northstar breakout at a PL day in October 2023 and ultimately offer a teacher, admin, and staff training session this past April! Our first event of three planned PL days was attended by 50 participants, with 30 completing at least one Northstar assessment! The enthusiasm was surprising and felt like the fresh start we needed, looking towards new work with our consortium, our technology based CIP goal, and collaborative efforts to meet WASC recommendations.

Goal two, Identification of Digital Literacy Objectives (DLOs), incorporates a process for PLC review and inclusion of DLOs in course outlines. This goal allows us to take a product from DLAC and fold in our teachers as the decision-makers regarding its integration. These DLOs are aligned with Northstar, tailored to EL levels, and crosswalked by CASAS scores to apply across programs. This is important when we consider our “Foundations” VESL/VABE courses and the breadth of our IET program, especially given the range of digital literacy of both teachers and students. We have already shared these DLOs with PLC leads and gained favorable review. Realistically, course outlines are a challenge at GAE, but we hope that as updates are required, DLOs will be seen as part of the process and with the continuation of Goal 1, the high standards that are crucial to developing our new tech culture.

Our final goal, creating a Digital Literacy & Canvas Utilization Guideline, touches every branch of our large and impacted EL program. We identified the different ways educational technology, once our teachers are trained and competencies are incorporated into course outlines, can be integrated into EL classrooms at each level, including IET. We know every teacher has different techniques but understand the importance of equitably exiting students to the next level with aligned competencies. We also recognize that some teachers are already meeting these standards, so our Directors have launched “Tech Buddy” and “Canvas Coach” opportunities to leverage existing instructor expertise as a key support for teachers with continuing professional development needs related to technology.

In addition to our professional development and digital literacy curriculum accomplishments (Goals 1 and 2), we have seen incredible growth related to Goal Three, Digital Literacy & Canvas Utilization. Notably, and giving credence to our initial inspiration for joining DLAC, we were able to import Ventures modules into Canvas for three course sections serving close to 200 Distance Learning (DL) students, across six learning levels. It was Eastside’s model of using Canvas based Ventures that helped us plan this project logistically and envision what was possible. Jenna’s efforts have aligned our DL program with in-person class curriculum and now allows us to seamlessly support students who are unable to attend class at any point in their studies. Another huge gain related to Goal Three has been incorporating EL Civics into Canvas modules and instituting completely electronic based assessments over the course of the last year. It has been an amazing paradigm shift for our EL program, and in just the past semester, we have increased Canvas use from four teachers to fifteen!

Despite so many encouraging wins, we have encountered challenges that have changed our original plan and setbacks that have redirected us towards smarter goals. As an example, in an early draft of our Site Plan, Jen had planned for a redesign of the offices at our EL site, to accommodate a Student Center. This Center would be designated a hub for new hybrid classes, a place for students to access technology, and keeping our WASC goals in site- a place for building community. The redesign was not approved and we were challenged to find new opportunities for our students to access this kind of special space. In an act of inspiring innovation, Jen flipped the script and worked to integrate our English levels 5-6 with our ABE

program. These classes were transferred to our main site that boasts a large student center, two computer labs, an academic counselor, and our team of Transition Specialists. This challenge became an achievement for our DLAC Team, giving students better access to technology resources, as well as more equitable support, as they plan college and career pathways.

We have several “next steps” planned as we carry on our DLAC goals into the next year. First, we will continue our Northstar Training sessions, with planned PL events in June and August, to help teachers increase their own digital literacy as we hope to establish a schoolwide culture that understands the value of educational technology. Secondly, over the next year, we will continue to meet with our PLC Leads to monitor the review of the Digital Literacy Objectives and gather data regarding their varied delivery in the classroom, aiming to document best practices and recommend revisions. Goal Three’s continued success will rely heavily on our “Tech Buddies” and “Canvas Coaches”. We will continue to deliver EL Civics electronically as the launching pad for teachers using Canvas and some form of technology in the classroom. We will also add training that shows teachers unique ways to incorporate discussions, videos, and mini oral presentations that stretch both teacher and student competencies, reflect our DLAC goals, and of course build community. We have all broadened our awareness of the support OTAN offers and value the network of amazing colleagues we hope to continue collaborating with in order to fully realize our DLAC goals.

Another key area that has become increasingly important throughout our two-year journey are Barbara’s exciting DLAC inspired technology projects. Barbara spearheaded a Learning Upgrade pilot in her hybrid class during the first two terms of 2023. This pilot was instrumental in testing new digital tools and strategies within our EL curriculum. Barbara also developed a digital curriculum for EL Civics using H5P tools, establishing a Job Lab, with interactive digital content on her English Language Center Website, that is a great resource for all EL teachers. She was also able to integrate these tools into Canvas, continuing to establish her work advancing our digital literacy goals.

In closing, we would like to give very special recognition to our wonderful Coach, Cindy Wislofsky. She is incredibly insightful and consistently constructive in her coaching. She sits back and gives us room to struggle, grow as a team, and become better leaders who, despite our many different strengths, share a unified goal of seeing students succeed. Thank you, Cindy! We look forward to continuing to connect with you, even as you celebrate your own “next steps”!