

El Monte-Rosemead Adult School

The El Monte-Rosemead Adult School serves about 11,000 students per year. It's located in the city of El Monte, which is an urban area with high population density and a mostly low-income population. We work in the Adult Secondary Education/Adult Basic Education/High School Equivalency Department (ASE/ABE/HSE).

The DLAC team includes Carrie Frogue the Program Administrator for the ASE/ABE/HSE department, Refugio Gonzalez the Lead Teacher for ASE, Janet Kershaw the Lead Teacher for ABE/HSE, and Luis Serrano the full-time teacher for the ASE/ABE/HSE independent lab.

Our DLAC project is to create ASE courses that can be delivered with a Blended Learning Model. Using Moodle for our learning management system, we began in August 2019 with the Social Science courses. The instructor meets with the students for two and a half hours per week and the students work on Moodle for the remainder of the course.

This project has been integrated into our school's Technology and Distance Learning Plan as one of its goals to build student's digital literacy skills. Measurable outcomes include students demonstrating digital literacy skills measured by teacher observation, course completion, and student surveys.

The program's goal is to assist students in building their digital literacy skills to be better prepared to succeed in a digital world. This project gently introduces students to an online learning platform. Many college courses are online, so our students will be better prepared for future learning opportunities. By participating in a blended course, students learn how to communicate with a lab instructor, access course resources, submit assignments, and take exams online. Teachers remotely communicate, monitor student progress, and provide additional resources when needed.

Our original project goal was to integrate technology to our existing pen and paper independent lab and home study program beginning with the social studies courses. Using the supported DL model as a guide, we planned to develop courses utilizing Moodle as the learning management system in order to provide digital resources along with the existing curriculum. Each course includes digital textbooks in our core Social Science curriculum and are supplemented with videos, handouts, online links, and other online resources.

This project goal was expanded in fall 2019 when there arose a need for a blended learning course to replace one of the teacher-directed courses. We had a teacher who was available for two and a half hours of instruction, but we needed to provide a teacher-

directed U.S. History course that ran for six hours a week. This scenario provided an opportunity to offer our first blended learning course and utilize the U.S. History course we had created on Moodle. Since this instructor would teach a different blended Social Studies course each quarter, we set the goal of creating a new course each quarter.

The information and activities in the DL 101 course provided a foundation for the planning and implementation of our courses. Creating DL 101's implementation plan was essential in defining the many elements to consider when developing distance learning courses, such as determining the demographic target for our courses and defining the roles of the instructor, digital leaders, and administration. DL 101 helped us identify and develop various forms of student support and monitoring throughout the course. For example, we realized the importance of having an orientation so we developed an orientation system that begins with the counselors, then the instructor, and is imbedded within the course.

DL 102 helped us to realize the importance of evaluating digital resources as well as create a rubric for our own program. This rubric is a valuable tool that will guide us as we move forward with blended learning classes.

The largest challenge we faced concerned time. Prior to DLAC we each had very full schedules and we needed time to work together as a team as well as time to learn how to use Moodle. Our Program Administrator, recognizing this need, made adjustments that allowed us to schedule weekly meetings, trainings, and work time. The training provided by our DLAC coach, Blair Roy, has been invaluable for learning how to use Moodle. She is always available for any and all the questions we have.

We have used several of Dr. Porter's team building activities in our department's staff meetings. We have many new staff members who have never worked together before and we wanted to build a united team. We feel confident that Dr. Porter's instruction will serve us well as we coach the many small groups in our new agency-wide project.

COVID-19 directly impacted the entire school's instructional methods. Our department was best prepared to deal with distance learning since we offer all the high school core courses on our Moodle server in addition to our blended learning courses. The blended course fared well with the instructor using Zoom for weekly instruction. ASE, ESL and CTE instructors used a variety of tools including Google, Jupiter, email, and zoom. Each department experienced mixed levels of success often linked to the instructor's tech skills.

This pandemic put in the forefront the urgency for the entire school to be better prepared for current and future shut-downs. Our administrators, recognizing this need, asked us to lead a project that will expand our blended learning model school-wide. The project begins this summer with instructors receiving curriculum development hours to create Moodle courses for their levels or subjects. Each department has placed its teachers into groups that include members with tech skills working with members that have content

knowledge. The DLAC team will provide weekly training, meet with each group, and serve as coaches along the way. Regardless of whether there are future shut-downs, these blended courses will be offered to provide additional learning options.

We are amazed at the progress we have made in the last two years. It would not have been possible without DLAC. We began with a small goal for our department that has quickly grown to include our entire school. DLAC has provided us with all the tools we need to bring blended learning to our school.