OTAN Honored with National Innovation Award

We are proud to receive the Outstanding State Innovation of the Year Award from the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE)! This national recognition celebrates OTAN's Digital Leadership Academy (DLAC), a two-year professional development program that supports adult education agencies in building strong digital learning systems.

DLAC prepares educators to lead technology integration and implement digital, blended, and hyflex learning models aligned with continuous improvement goals. By fostering local leadership and offering customized support, OTAN ensures that adult education providers across California are equipped to serve their learners in innovative, sustainable ways.

Sharon Bonney, CEO of COABE, shared, "OTAN has provided outstanding professional development for many years… Their recent innovation demands recognition."

This award, sponsored by Essential Education, highlights how state-led innovation can inspire national progress in adult education.

Inside This Issue:

Digital Learning Models that Meet the Challenge

Five years ago, the education field quickly pivoted from in-person to online instruction due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Although that was an extreme case, the fact is we may be asked to change direction at any moment for any number of reasons.

The start of 2025 brought horrendous fires that destroyed entire neighborhoods in the Los Angeles metro area. In the weeks after the inauguration of Donald Trump as president, there have been dramatic shifts in everyday governmental practices that have rippled across educational institutions affecting attendance and participation. There are also seasonal inclement weather events (like snowstorms and flooding) that affect the functioning of schools.
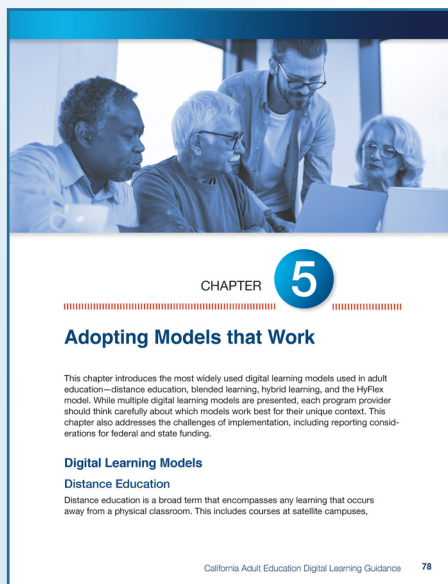
In moments like these, it is good to review what options students have to continue learning due to unforeseen circumstances. For example, if students' only option to attend classes is in person, how can they continue their studies if the school is suddenly closed, or they are fearful of attending due to increased immigration-related activity?

Chapter 5 of the Digital Learning Guidance for California Adult Education provides information on different learning modalities that an adult education agency can adopt so that students have options for attending and learning, not just when challenges arise. We start with distance learning which includes online learning, what we are most familiar with from our time during the pandemic. There is also blended learning, similar to but different from hybrid learning, which is some mix of in-person and online learning. A newer model is hyflex learning, which allows learners to choose whether to attend classes face-to-face or online, synchronously or asynchronously. By providing options, we give our learners more opportunities to participate and perhaps bring in students who might not be able to attend otherwise.

These options don't just spring up overnight. With thoughtful planning and intention, we can create a variety of modalities for students. Please reach out to OTAN to learn more about these models and how we can support bringing these models to your school.

CHAPTER **5**

Adopting Models that Work

This chapter introduces the most widely used digital learning models used in adult education—distance education, blended learning, hybrid learning, and the HyFlex model. While multiple digital learning models are presented, each program provider should think carefully about which models work best for their unique context. This chapter also addresses the challenges of implementation, including reporting considerations for federal and state funding.

Digital Learning Models

Distance Education

Distance education is a broad term that encompasses any learning that occurs away from a physical classroom. This includes courses at satellite campuses,

California Adult Education Digital Learning Guidance   78

Digital Learning Guidance is Getting an Update!

This spring marks an exciting new chapter in California's Digital Learning Guidance (DLG) for adult educators. Building on the success of the 2022 edition, OTAN and our partner Community Learning Partners (CLP) have begun the first phase of the 2025 revision process: bringing together a diverse advisory group of educators, administrators, and experts across the state and nationally to ensure the Guidance remains relevant, accessible, and practical.
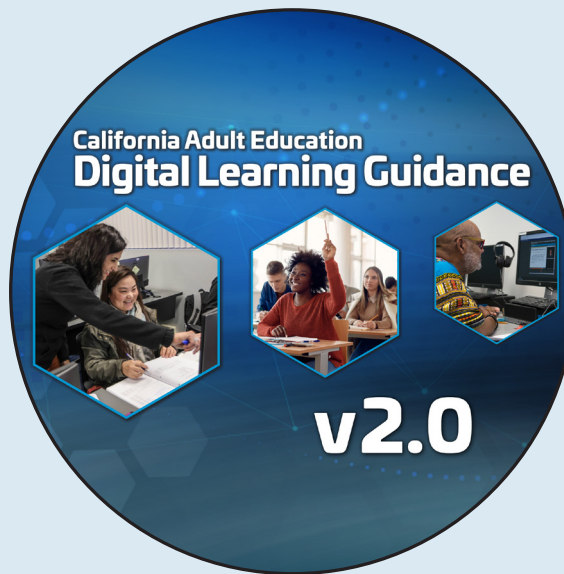
So far, the work has focused on gathering feedback from advisors, updating literature reviews, and launching a statewide Tech Trends Survey to understand the digital tools educators and learners are using, or should be. AI, Universal Design for Learning, and career-focused learning emerged as hot topics, with an emphasis on real-world application and culturally responsive strategies.

With over 6,000 website visits, 14 statewide events, and 43 Canvas course enrollments since its initial release, the DLG continues to support adult education programs in transforming digital learning environments. This next version will offer even more instructional examples, tech integration strategies including the use of AI, and implementation tools in multiple formats, including an enhanced course and facilitator guides.

Stay tuned! The final DLG 2.0 will be published this Fall. Learn more at otan.us or reach out to the OTAN team with questions – support@otan.us.

Empower Teaching and Learning with Canvas!

What if there were a way to bring Canvas training to your region? OTAN is hosting its inaugural OTAN Canvas Regional Summit on May 9 at the Sacramento County Office of Education in partnership with the Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium. This is a free, hands-on professional development summit tailored for adult educators, administrators, and support staff that we hope to replicate around the state. Whether you're a beginner exploring how to build a Canvas home page, an administrator learning the backend of Canvas, or someone ready to create personalized courses with Mastery Paths, this event has dedicated sessions to meet your needs. Learn by doing, collaborating with colleagues, and get ready to elevate your Canvas expertise.

Consider inviting OTAN to your region for a Canvas Summit! OTAN plans, schedules, and pays for Subject Matter Experts to design sessions based on interests, roles, and customized needs for your region's professionals. Whether your colleagues are Canvas novices or seasoned users, this opportunity creates time to learn, process, and ask questions in an in-person supportive environment. We are also excited to talk more about OTAN Canvas training and our Stages of Learning that help our colleagues map their own learning based on their needs and skill abilities.

Email aecanvas@scoe.net to schedule your region's Canvas Summit. We look forward to working with you on developing Canvas for learners and educators!

Technology and Digital Learning Symposium Highlights

Another one in the books – TDLS 2025 concluded on March 8 at the Long Beach School for Adults! Here is a recap in case you missed it!

Over 300 attendees spanning a variety of roles joined us for two days of edtech-enriched training and collaboration with fellow educators. As usual, we didn't forget about those who couldn't join us in person; 34% of our attendees joined virtually from locales across California and other states.

Our keynote address started us off with momentum as Leticia Citizen, an educator of 23 years, spoke about current trends in education, including edtech implementation and the ongoing importance of DEI practices. Afterwards, our attendees experienced the core of TDLS: the professional development sessions! Attendees had a choice of over 60 different sessions throughout the conference across a range of topics, including: AI and its myriad applications, best practices in hybrid teaching, hands-on training in edtech tools to implement in the classroom, and niche topics such as one agency's experience developing a CTE drone program.

Keeping with tradition, TDLS closed with our famous Tech Slam, an open-mic event where any attendee could get on the mic and show off a tech tool or tip they learned!

Join us for next year's TDLS March 6 and 7 at the Monterey Adult School; both the call for presenters and registration open in October. We'll see you then; don't miss out! ☉

OTAN Staff Updates

There have been some exciting changes in OTAN staff over the last few months! After over 20 years of supporting the adult education field, OTAN's beloved Google Guru and accent extraordinaire, Melinda Holt, retired at the end of June 2024. We are incredibly grateful for Melinda's dedication and wish her all the best in retirement.
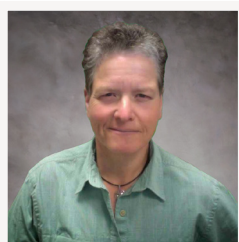
We're pleased to announce that Marjorie Olavides has been promoted to Project Specialist II, Technology Integrator. In her new role, Marjorie will be working closely with adult education agencies to coordinate and schedule staff professional development opportunities. Congratulations, Marjorie!

Replacing Marjorie as Project Specialist I, Technology Training Development, we're excited to welcome Gerald Dumaguing! Before joining OTAN, Gerald worked as an A/V tech with the CNTS department at the Sacramento County Office of Education, and, prior to that, spent time in the culinary industry, from restaurants to skilled nursing facilities. At OTAN, Gerald supports adult education programs with both software and hardware needs and contributes to our video production efforts.

Jong Choi has also been promoted, now serving as Lead App Developer / Programming Coordinator. Jong has been a driving force behind the development and maintenance of the WIOA application for both the agency (OAR) and CDE (AMS). In addition to his programming work, he now leads the coordination of programming projects within the OTAN development team. Way to go, Jong!

Please join us in welcoming Gerald and congratulating Marjorie and Jong on their well-earned promotions! ☉

Melinda Holt

Marjorie Olavides

Gerald Dumaguing

Jong Choi

Techie's Tech Tip

Maximize Productivity with Virtual Desktops

Virtual desktops can help you organize your workspace and boost productivity. Virtual desktops allow you to separate tasks, reduce clutter, and maintain focus. Whether you're managing multiple projects or balancing work and personal tasks, virtual desktops can streamline your workflow.
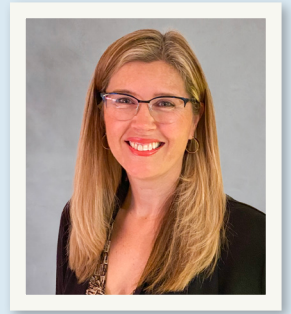
- On Windows, use Windows + Ctrl + D to create a new virtual desktop. Switch between desktops with Windows + Ctrl + Left/Right Arrow and close a desktop with Windows + Ctrl + F4.

- On Mac, access Mission Control with F3 or Control + Up Arrow to manage your desktops. Create a new desktop by clicking the + button in the top-right corner. Switch between desktops with Control + Left/Right Arrow.

Try out virtual desktops today to help you get organized!

From the Adult Education Director

One of OTAN's key missions is to deliver high-quality professional development (PD), and one of the many ways we do that is to present at local, regional, and statewide events. But here's an important reminder—those of us who provide PD also need continued opportunities for learning and growth.

When OTAN staff aren't presenting, we want to be engaged learners, modeling continuous improvement and lifelong learning. Ongoing professional development allows us to stay current with new technologies, research, and best practices. It also creates a sense of community and provides opportunities for sharing insights and practical applications of new learning

This spring, our team has had the privilege of not only presenting at but participating in great PD conferences organized by CAEAA, CCAE, ACCE, TESOL, and CUE where these principles of actively growing and learning as a field with a growth mindset were at the forefront.

Investing in our own development helps us serve you better. Let's all commit to learning at every level—because strong PD begins with strong PD providers.

Renee Collins
Adult Education Director

OTAN
Outreach and Technical Assistance Network

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

The Teaching with Technology tool helps teachers locate lesson plans that integrate technology tools that can be used as-is or modified for use with your learners.

Follow OTAN on social media! We're on Facebook, X, and LinkedIn – stay in touch on the latest OTAN developments!