

Narrative Item 4.2 - Distance / Hybrid Learning

Describe how the consortium's distance/hybrid learning programming has expanded. Address the lessons learned and best practices adopted in recent years, as well as intentions and plans for continued improvement of distance and hybrid learning.

Prior to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, ABE services across the consortium were largely offered in two ways: on-site instruction offered throughout the consortium at local classroom locations, or online asynchronous instruction provided through approved Distance Learning platforms accessed by students outside of regular classroom hours. ABE Instructors at various locations adopted different Distance Learning platforms most fitting to the needs of their local classroom as a way to expand upon what was being taught in class, to expand classroom access for sites with limited hours, or to reach students who had difficulty attending class because of scheduling issues. Local instructors were expected to train on the use of various platforms, enroll students, monitor assignments and student activity, and report proxy contact hours on a monthly basis. This, in addition to their already busy roles as classroom instructors. The consortium did not have a strong system in place to support the expansion of distance/hybrid learning programming, and each site was largely doing the work independently and to a very limited extent.

In January of 2020, the consortium appointed a staff person to take on additional hours in the role of Distance Learning Coordinator, tasked with the following responsibilities:

- Maintain access to all requested distance learning platforms on behalf of the staff
- Train/orient new staff to DL platforms
- Add/delete students to requested platforms
- Count monthly proxy hours for all learners on all platforms
- Report monthly proxy contact hours in the SID database
- Keep SID classes up to date (enrolling and exiting students, staff, etc..)
- Maintain proxy contact hour records
- Participate in training and professional development to stay up to date with platforms
- Encourage use of DL platforms with staff and students
- Analyze distance learning trends
- Assist in making purchasing decisions for platform seat access
- Develop and share [Distance Learning Cheat Sheet](#) with ABE staff
- Develop and share [Annual DL Analysis](#)

The variety and number of state approved online platforms utilized by the consortium changes slightly from year to year. Each classroom in the consortium has access to any of the various platforms adopted for use within the consortium, although some platforms are more conducive to curriculum utilized at one site than another. Every effort is made to ensure that we provide access to platforms that address the various academic needs of our learners, from reading instruction to math, and from adult education to English language instruction. See the table on the following page for current platforms being utilized by the consortium:

23/24 Distance Learning Platforms	Cost to Program	Purpose
Burlington English	Commercial Purchase	Burlington English offers a wide range of easy-to-use, blended learning courses for your students' English language learning and career readiness needs. Burlington's curriculum is flexible for any learning environment: F2F, hybrid or virtual online learning. The platform offers several courses.
Common Lit	Free	The CommonLit Literacy Model is built on a foundation of over 2,000 high-quality free reading passages for grades 3-12, complemented by aligned interim assessments, growth-oriented data, and expert-led teacher development.
GED Ready	Commercial Purchase	GED Ready practice tests are used to determine readiness for the actual GED and for the diagnostic reports to guide targeted instruction based on student demonstration of knowledge mastery and knowledge gaps.
IXL	Commercial Purchase	IXL provides a comprehensive resource of interactive content to give students and instructors the tools to identify and close skill gaps, personalize learning, and track progress in math, English language arts, science, and social studies.
Khan Academy	Free	Khan Academy, modeled after computer gaming, uses YouTube videos to cover a wide range of subjects, including math, science, computer programming, history, art history, economics, and more.
MobyMax	State Supported	MobyMax is an online program designed for K-8 schools to offer differentiated learning and fill gaps in student knowledge. It provides beginning literacy instruction for Pre-Beginning and Beginning ESL learners.
Northstar Online Learning	State Supported	Northstar includes 15 online assessments in the areas of Essential Computer Skills, Essential Software Skills, and Using Technology in Daily Life. Northstar Online Learning (NSOL) provides self-directed instruction and review for select assessments. Comprehensive classroom curricula, which can also be used at a distance, are available for most modules.
Quill	Free	Quill allows students to practice grammar, punctuation, sentence combining, etc. at starter, intermediate and advanced levels.
Read Theory	Free	ReadTheory focuses on helping students learn to read and think critically.
Reading Horizons	Commercial Purchase	Reading Horizons provides a detailed guide and resources for implementing research-based reading and spelling instruction in the classroom.
Townsend Press	Commercial Purchase	Townsend Press focuses on developing reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing skills.
Typing.com	Commercial Purchase	Typing.com has been approved as a DL platform. In recognition of the importance of keyboarding to effective ABE participation, ABE programs will be able to record up to 20 hours per student per month for online typing practice.
USA Learns	Commercial Purchase	USA Learns includes six English courses to help students learn beginning and intermediate English, prepare for the U.S. Citizen naturalization process, and master communication skills for nursing assistant work.

According to a recent analysis of Distance Learning platforms used during the current fiscal year, the Distance Learning Coordinator shared that the top three platforms being used by students to generate proxy contact hours since July 1, 2023 are IXL (generating 23.6% of the PCH), Burlington English (generating 16% of the PCH) and MobyMax (generating 16% of the PCH). From July 1, 2023 through April 30th, 2024, Distance Learning platforms have generated more than 3970 proxy contact hours in the consortium, which when multiplied by our current FY24 Contact Hour rate of \$11.05/hour equates to approximately \$43,868.50 in funding generated through Distance Learning platforms. The average teacher salary per year in the consortium is \$39,212.94, which demonstrates just how important it is to put students on a DL platform, and the year is not complete for another two months!

The platforms which have generated the most student engagement between July 1, 2023 and April 30, 2024 are:

- Reading Horizons: averages 22.97 hours/student
- Burlington English: averages 18.77 hours/student
- Khan Academy: averages 17.23 hours/student

The following graphic demonstrates a comparison of the proxy contact hours generated through Distance Learning platforms over the past five program years. The consortium has seen the highest platform usage to date during the 2023-2024 program year!:

5 Year Monthly Hours Comparison													
Northwest Service Cooperative ABE													
Subsite: NWSC													
Student Contact and Proxy Hours													
Year	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	Total
Year 2019/2020	351	335	401	316	326	373	258	157	213	287	300	423	3,738
Year 2020/2021	233	178	151	214	298	368	258	354	437	376	522	259	3,648
Year 2021/2022	321	264	155	236	247	244	286	153	178	167	183	141	2,572
Year 2022/2023	224	249	128	230	307	273	495	320	351	325	363	397	3,661
Year 2023/2024	462	326	246	302	501	446	434	420	561	514	458	352	5,020

* In addition to the Distance Learning platforms, the subsite NWSC includes 264 contact hours for virtual intake, assessment testing and advising of adult learners.

Integration of technology and distance learning platforms varies by site according to student needs, instructional time, access to technology outside of the classroom, and how well the curriculum can be embedded into other instructional units. A number of strategies have been implemented over the past two years which have resulted in a 95.2 % increase in contact hours generated through Distance Learning platforms since the low point during the 2021-22 program year, including:

- **Platform assignments:** Beginning with the 2022-23 program year, all teachers have been encouraged to enroll all learners in at least one Distance Learning platform as a way to encourage the development of digital literacy skills.
- **Blended or Hybrid Instruction:** Providing students time while in the classroom to offer them instructional support on assigned distance learning platforms fosters familiarity and increases the likelihood of successful use of a platform by the students outside of the classroom. For example, many ESL classes utilize *Burlington English* as a companion platform to on-site lessons, and instructors at

many classroom locations utilize the “In Class Lesson” feature of the platform to introduce a lesson to the students as a large group during class, after which they will complete the assigned distance learning lesson as homework.

- **Platform correlations:** Sites with leveled classes have been exceptionally good at adopting a particular platform that correlates well to the content of the class to assign homework, extend the instructional day, and expand upon the lessons they are teaching in class.
- **Virtual Learning Days / Student Challenges:** As mentioned in Section 2 narrative response 3, some classrooms have begun to encourage the use of distance learning platforms by assigning distance learning lessons on days when classes might be canceled due to weather (similar to virtual learning days in the K-12 system) or by challenging students to reach a minimum number of DL hours to qualify for a special award or outcome at the end of the challenge period.
- **iPad Access:** For ease of access, apps or links to all Distance Learning platforms being used by the consortium are added to the mobile management system for teacher, student and loaner iPads to make it easier for learners to locate their DL platform on Adult Education devices.

Intentions and plans for continued improvement of Distance and Hybrid learning include:

- Explore the possibility of offering Hyflex classes to on-site classes where a student could choose to attend either in person or virtually, depending upon which option would be most beneficial, especially when students are facing barriers to participation, such as transportation, childcare, or weather related issues.
- Expand the use of Teacher Verified Model lessons to allow students to work at their own pace through materials related to the Adult Diploma program or the Fast Track Online GED Prep classes currently offered synchronously.
- Participate in ongoing professional development to learn how to better implement Distance Learning platforms into instruction.
- Expand the iPad lending library for students who need a device to access online instruction.