



Adult Literacy and Education: Strategies to Alleviate the Literacy Gap

December 12th, 2019
1:00pm – 2:30pm ET

Moderator:

James Butler, Family Assistance Program Specialist,
Office of Family Assistance, Administration for
Children and Families



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Welcome



- **James Butler, Family Assistance Program Specialist,
Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Administration for
Children and Families (ACF) (Moderator)**



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Learning Objectives



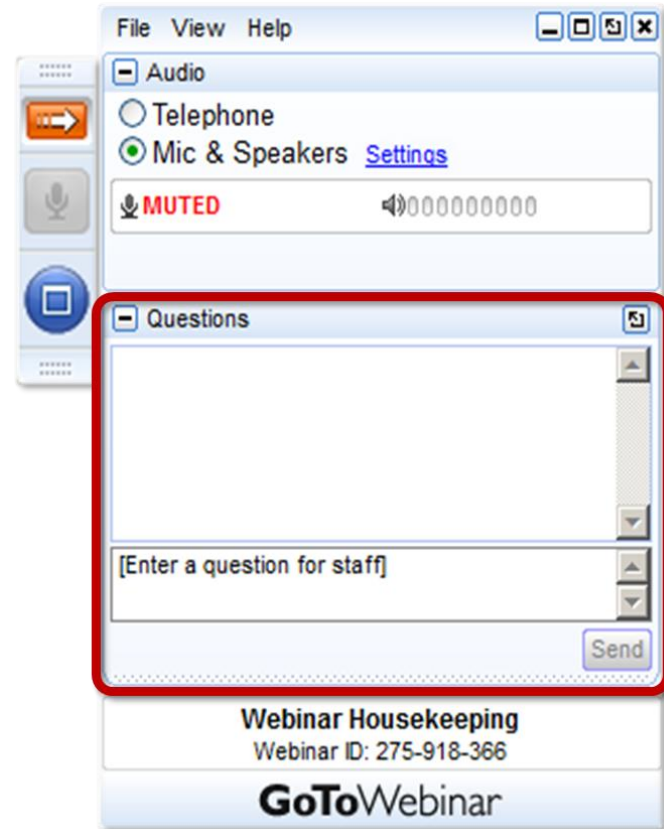
- ❑ Understand emerging trends and current context surrounding adult literacy and basic education among TANF and low-income populations in the United States.
- ❑ Identify service strategies to maintain, implement, and strengthen adult basic education and literacy programs at the local, state, and regional level.
- ❑ Explore lessons learned and best practices from programs that have successfully incorporated adult literacy and basic education components into their service offerings.



Using GoToWebinar

Participation

Please submit your questions and comments using the Questions panel on the right hand side of your screen while phones are muted.



Presenters

- ❑ **Dr. Daphne Greenberg**, Distinguished University Professor and Principal Investigator, Center of the Study of Adult Literacy, College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University
- ❑ **Cheryl Keenan**, Director, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), U.S. Department of Education
- ❑ **William Durden**, Policy Associate, Basic Education for Adults, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)
- ❑ **Stacy Wedlake**, Research Coordinator and Analyst, Technology and Social Change Group, University of Washington Information School



Polling Question #1



How familiar are you with the national landscape of adult literacy programs and basic education initiatives?

- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Somewhat unfamiliar
- Very unfamiliar



Introduction To Adult Literacy

Adult Literacy Research Center
Georgia State University

Daphne Greenberg, PhD
Department of Learning Sciences

Literacy

“An individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and develop one’s knowledge and potential.” The National Literacy Act of 1991



Adult Literacy in the US – PIAAC Results

- Overall International Results (2012/2014)
 - **14th** Literacy (32 countries)
 - **23rd** Numeracy (32 countries)
 - **21st** Problem Solving in Technology Environments (28 countries)
- Proficient Skills (2017)
 - Literacy (Levels 4 and 5): 14%
 - Numeracy (Levels 4 and 5): 10%
 - Problem Solving in Technology Rich Environments (Level 3): 6%
- Elementary Skills: Level 1 and Below (2017)
 - Literacy: 19%
 - Numeracy: 29%
 - Problem Solving in Technology Rich Environments: 62%

SOURCE: https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/current_results.asp



Consequences of Low Literacy

- **Individuals** struggle
 - At the workplace
 - At the doctor's office
 - Helping children with homework
- **Society** struggles
 - Lower tax base
 - Higher health costs
 - Lower productivity
 - Intergenerational transfer of low literacy



Who are adults with low literacy?

- They belong to all races, religions, ethnicities, genders, and live in all neighborhoods.
- They may be:
 - employed
 - recent high school dropouts
 - non-English speakers
 - prison inmates
 - parents
 - high school graduates
 - people with special learning needs
 - senior citizens



How do you know who has low literacy?

Excuses:

- “I don't have time to complete this form today.
- “I hurt my hand so I need help with this form.”
- “I forgot my glasses and I can't read this now.”
- “The doctor put drops in my eyes, so I can't read.”

Behaviors:

- Person becomes agitated when a form appears.
- Person walks out when presented with reading/writing tasks.
- Person does not respond to mailed information.



Adult Literacy Students' Goals

- Functional (balancing a checking account; reading bus schedules)
- Spiritual (reading the Bible)
- Pleasure (reading the newspaper; playing word games)
- Family (reading to children; helping with homework)
- Job/economic advancement (HSED; completing job applications)



Types of Instruction

- English Language Acquisition
- Basic Skills
- Functional Skills
- Pre HSE
- HSE
- Developmental/Remedial



Different Approaches to Instruction

- Family Literacy
- Workplace Literacy
- Community-Oriented Literacy
- 1:1 Tutoring
- Small Group Instruction



Where Programs are Located

- Technical Schools/Community Colleges
- Community Based Organizations
- Work Sites
- Libraries
- Prisons
- Religious Institutions
- Housing Projects
- Homeless Shelters

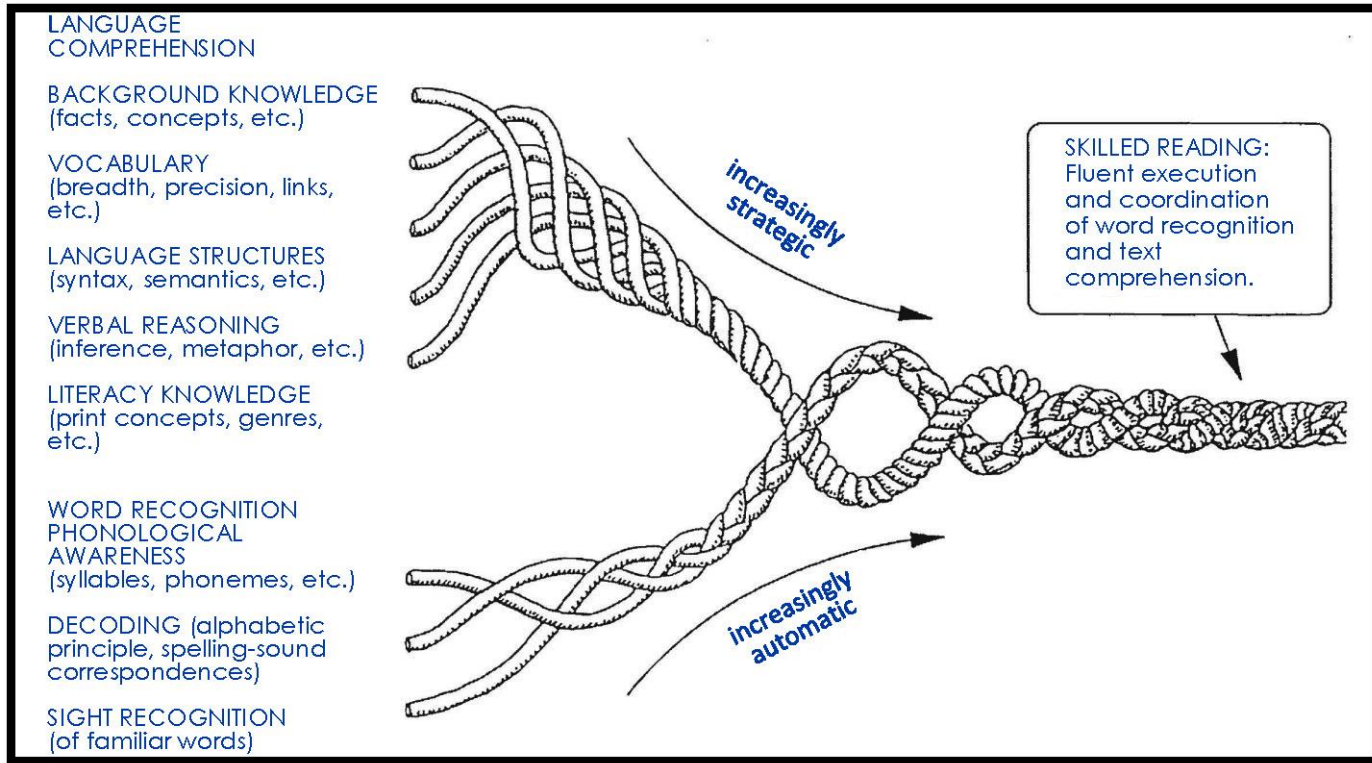


Quotes from Adult Literacy Students

- “I like how the class taught me to pronounce words”
- “Reading all of these books helped me gain knowledge in other areas.”
- “For the first time in my life, I can explain things after I have read it”
- “I can understand advanced graphs and tables”
- “I now know how to surf the Internet”
- “I can write a memo at work without asking for help”
- “I can create and follow a simple budget for the first time”
- “I understand the Social Studies facts that my 8th grader is learning”



Learning that is multidimensional and a focus that changes over time



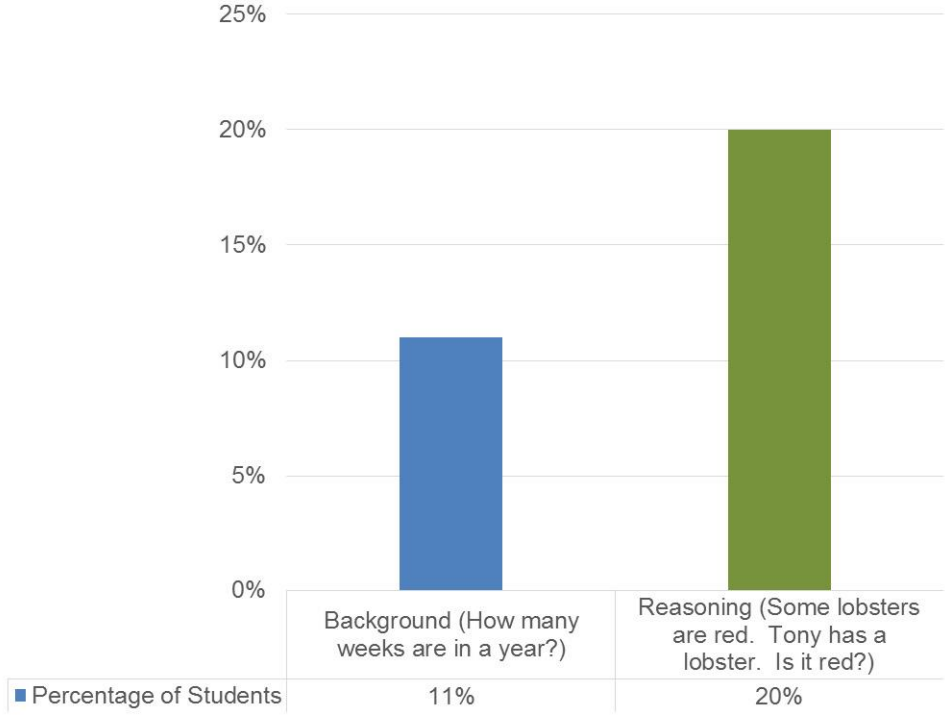
Hollis Scarborough (2003)

What Needs do Adult Literacy Students Have?

- Decoding
- Comprehension
- Oral Language
- Mathematics
- Writing
- Background Knowledge
- Reasoning Skills
- Content Areas
- Digital Literacy
- Integration of Skills
- Non-Academic Issues



Example of Background Knowledge and Reasoning Skills



Heterogeneity

- Age
- Language Background
- Previous Educational Attainment
- Motivation
- Reading Patterns
- Computer Familiarity
- Underlying Literacy Gaps



Demographics from Recent Study

- Age: range = 16-73; mean = 38; standard deviation = 13.9
- 65% female
- 28% reported having a paying job
- 61% reported receiving some kind of government assistance
- 65% native English speakers
- Non-native English speakers represented 66 languages and 8 language families.
 - The prominent languages were Spanish (24%), French (7%), and Arabic (7%).



Demographics from Recent Study

- 23% reported having a high school diploma
- 53% completed the 9th grade
- 85% completed the 6th grade
- Fewer than 1% indicated that they completed no formal schooling
- 4% had a special education diploma
- 28% attended at least one special education class while in school
- 20% reported being tested for a learning disability, 12% an educational problem
- 17% had family members who had problems learning to read



Work and Lifestyle from Recent Study

- 91% say keeping a regular schedule is important to them
- 23% keep the same schedule every week
- 15% report that unexpected things happen often that interfere with their schedule
- 12% have to change or cancel an appointment once a week or more because of unexpected situations



Reading Patterns from Recent Study

- 61% say they like reading
- 24% report often or always avoiding reading material that looks too difficult for them
- 61% report going to bookstores sometimes or frequently to look at books, 63% say the same for libraries (66% have a library card)
- 76% say they read as well or better than their friends do



Findings from NorthStar Digital Literacy Assessment (an adapted version)

Strengths

Computer Functionality

- Click on the picture of a mouse. (98%)
- Click on the keyboard. (96%)
- Click on the jack where you plug in headphones. (94%)

Program Use

- In the picture below, drag the document called "September Calendar" into the Recycle Bin. (93%)

Internet Use

- Click on the hyperlink. (88%)



Findings from NorthStar Digital Literacy Assessment (an adapted version)

Difficulties

Program Use

- Open the Word document in the taskbar. (37%)

Internet Use

- Type the web address in the address bar below: www.hotmail.com. Then, click NEXT. (37%)

Filling Out Forms

- Choose the most secure password from the list below. Type the password in the "Re-enter password" box. (18%)



What we Know

- Adults can improve their skills
- Learning takes **TIME**
- Explicit instruction is important
- Many learners attend, stop, and then come back, or go to a different location
- Other issues involved:
 - Child care
 - Transportation
 - Work
 - Housing
 - Counseling



What we Know

- Teaching skills to struggling adult readers is complicated due to splinter skills and demographic differences.
- It is not too late to focus on basic foundational letter-sound and decoding skills in adulthood.
- Motivation is important to consider in adult literacy students.
- Struggling adult readers' interest in texts can matter.
- Reading comprehension is still a tough nut to crack.



What we Know

- Researchers can provide Kindles to adult literacy students and expect that they will return them!
- All adult literacy programs, with work, can provide an Internet friendly place for an interactive web-based program.
- Struggling adult readers have different ways of engaging with an intelligent tutoring system and this engagement interacts with reading gains.
- Adults who are not familiar with computers will not realize that a computer program can be “rigged” so that the “human” student will always win in competition against a “computer” student



Health Insurance

- Approximately 63% younger than 65 have health insurance through employer-sponsored insurance plans (Kaiser Family Foundation, n.d.)
- Health insurance information is typically specialized, complicated and confusing,
 - 88% of U.S. adults cannot calculate their share of costs for health insurance from a table
 - 49% cannot calculate their out of pocket costs
 - most insurance offers are primarily online, which is problematic for those without Internet access and poor digital literacy skills

(Greene, Peters, Mertz & Hibbard, 2008; IOM, 2009; Lupton, 2015; Kunter, Greenberg, Jin, & Paulsen, 2006)



Health Insurance

Only 12% of individuals with employer-sponsored insurance have proficient health literacy (Kutner et al., 2006) and therefore many have difficulties with:

- Understanding insurance terminology,
- selecting the best insurance coverage,
- knowing what they have to pay for
 - emergency room or office visits,
 - prescription drugs,
 - their deductible.

(Barnes & Hanoch, 2017; Bartholomae et al., 2016; Lowenstein et al., 2013).



Low Wage Earners and Health Insurance

- LWE have average annual incomes at or below \$43,992 (BLS, n.d.).
- They are likely to be:
 - nonwhite,
 - have a high school diploma or less,
 - report lower health status and more chronic diseases,
 - have low health-information seeking skills or knowledge,
 - have low digital skills to access online insurance forms and information

(IOM, n.d.; Levitt, 2015).



Low Wage Earners and Health Insurance

Best to explain health insurance in face-to-face conversation rather than giving them insurance information to read.

Best to use everyday terminology

- In one study, 100% preferred the word “doctor” over “primary care provider” or “health care professional”

(NASEM, 2017).



Low Wage Earners and Health Insurance

Documents should focus on a few main points and:

- use common terminology, simple numerical examples, and meaningful visuals.
- use headings and bullets
- use white space and a simple font that is at least 12 points
- use short sentences,
- use an active voice

(CDC, 2017; White, 2012).



“Do’s” and “Don’ts” of Adult Literacy

- Be matter of fact
- Emphasize that others have same difficulties
- Reading difficulties DON'T constitute a crisis.
- Don't suggest that the person needs to improve his/her reading.



Want More Information?

Contact:

Dr. Daphne Greenberg
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Polling Question #2

What population/area do you generally work with?

- TANF
- Reentry
- Adult Basic Education/Literacy
- English Language Learners
- Digital Literacy





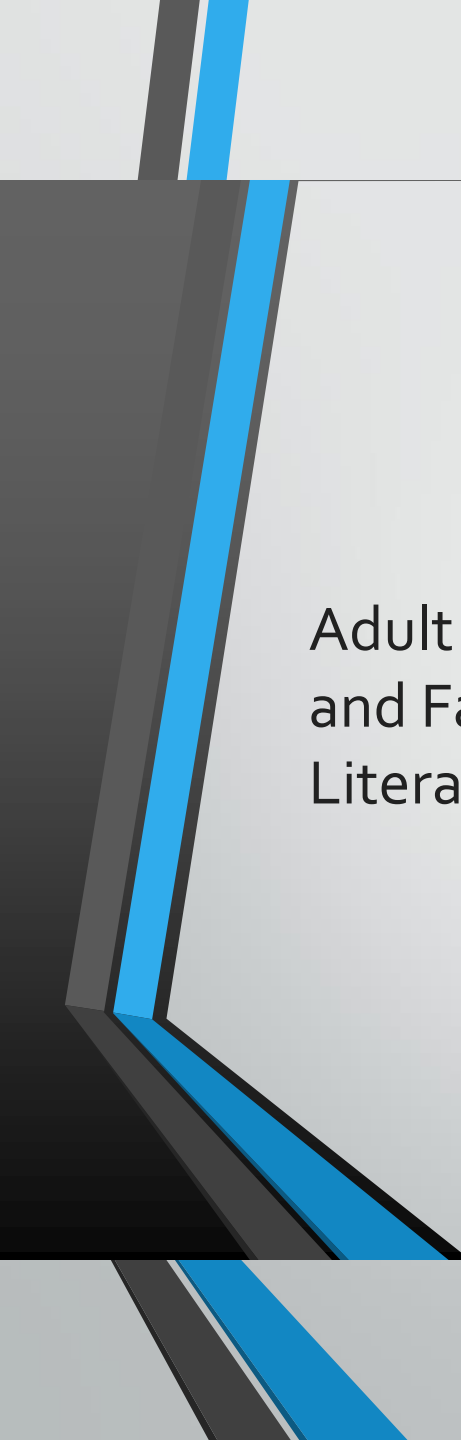
National Trends in Adult Education

Cheryl Keenan

Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education

U.S. Department of Education





Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

- What is the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)?
- What are some emerging trends and interests relevant to TANF recipients?

What is AEFLA?

- Provides basic skills instruction (reading, writing, speaking in English and perform mathematics) to adults
- Helps adults attain a secondary school diploma and transition to postsecondary education and training
- Assists English language learners to improve English proficiency acquire and understanding of the American system of government and civic responsibilities
- Serves approximately 1.3 million adults

AEFLA Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)



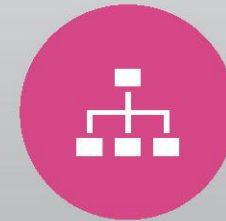
STRENGTHEN THE TIES
BETWEEN SERVICES FOR
LOW SKILLED ADULTS
AND EMPLOYMENT



CREATES STRONGER TIES
BETWEEN ADULT
EDUCATION PROGRAMS
AND LOCAL WORKFORCE
BOARDS AND THE
AMERICA'S JOB CENTERS



AUTHORIZES THREE NEW
ACTIVITIES: INTEGRATED
EDUCATION AND
TRAINING, WORKFORCE
PREPARATION, AND
INTEGRATED ENGLISH
LITERACY AND CIVICS
EDUCATION



USES CAREER PATHWAYS
AS AN ORGANIZING
FRAMEWORK ACROSS THE
WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Four Emerging Trends in Adult Education

Integrating

Integrating workforce preparation into the adult education curriculum

Integrating

Integrating basic skills instruction and occupational skills training

Organizing

Organizing learning using career pathways, bridges, and on-ramps

Supporting

Supporting learners with individualized and targeted supports

Workforce Preparation

- Designed to help an individual acquire a combination of:
 - Basic academic skills
 - Critical thinking skills
 - Digital literacy skills
 - Self management skills

Integrated Education and Training (IET)

- Integrates basic skills concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and occupational training
- Has the purpose of educational and career advancement
- Must be a part of career pathway
- Federal IET program is based on Washington State I-BEST model

Emerging Trends in IET

- Approximately 42 States are funding IET programs
- Enrollment is trending upwards with an 18% increase between 2017 and 2018
- Emerging research supports increased employment and earnings outcomes for participants

Bridges and On-Ramps

- One of the first steps in a career pathway for low-skill adults
- Support the transition from adult education to the next step in an occupational pathway.
- Help adult students identify career and education goals and develop the skills, content knowledge, and learning strategies they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and employment.
- Combine basic skill instruction with occupational content, employment skills, and college success strategies.

Individualized and Targeted Support Services



Growing trend among States to fund career supports, such as career navigators or coaches and providing wrap around services



Emerging research supports that individualized and targeted support services have a positive effect on student outcomes

On the Horizon: Pre-Apprenticeship

Designed to prepare individuals for apprenticeships

Have a documented relationship with a Registered Apprenticeship Program

Focus on foundational skills, such as math and literacy and career skills

Provide significant potential for under-represented groups and increase the diversity in apprenticeship programs



Summary

- Federal policy continues to move towards stronger ties between education and workforce development
- Emerging research is supporting that certain services and supports are having positive impacts on employment and earnings outcomes
- States are adopting policies that support more work relevant services in adult education

Poll Question #3

What is an example of the “Basic” literacy level for adults according the National Center for Educational Statistics?

- Comparing viewpoints in two editorials.
- Calculating the total cost of ordering specific office supplies from a catalog.
- Using a television guide to find out what programs are on at a specific time.
- Signing a form.





I-BEST Overview

OFA Adult Literacy and Education: Strategies to Alleviate the Literacy Gap Webinar

William S Durden
Policy Associate
State Board for Community & Technical Colleges



I-BEST: A Delivery Model for IET

- IET tells us how adult education integrates with career pathways.
- Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training or I-BEST is the most well-known and research-verified model for how IET can be implemented as a collaboration between workforce education and adult education.
- I-BEST meets criteria for both IET and Career Pathway definitions.

Washington State's Adult Education Plan

- After 15 years of success, I-BEST remains our most successful delivery model for moving under-skilled adults to living wage jobs.
 - I-BEST transforms the world of adult education through contextualization
 - I-BEST taps the combined expertise of faculty through integrated team teaching
 - I-BEST provides wraparound support and navigational services to promote student retention and completion

I-BEST Roots: The Tipping Point Research

- 35,000 working age adults tracked for five years
- Population had a high school credential or less, or were English language learners
- Sample included students enrolled in ABE/ESL and Developmental Education

The Tipping Point



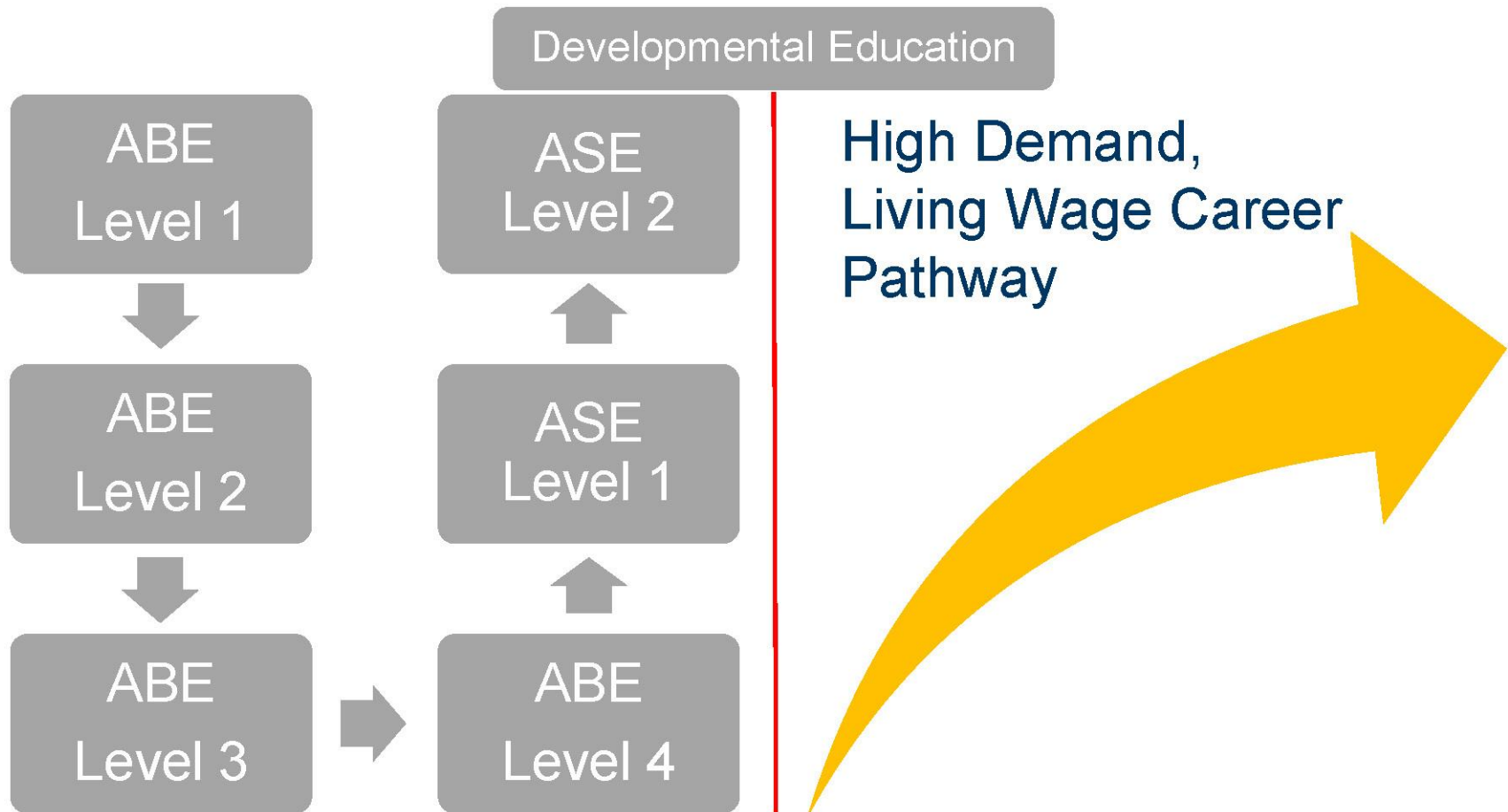
Success Defined

- English Language Learners who reached the Tipping Point earned \$7,000 more per year on average.
- ABE students who reached the Tipping Point earned \$8,500 more per year on average.

The Tipping Point: Before I-BEST

- Approximately 5% of ABE/ESL students reach the Tipping point after five years of tracking.

Before I-BEST



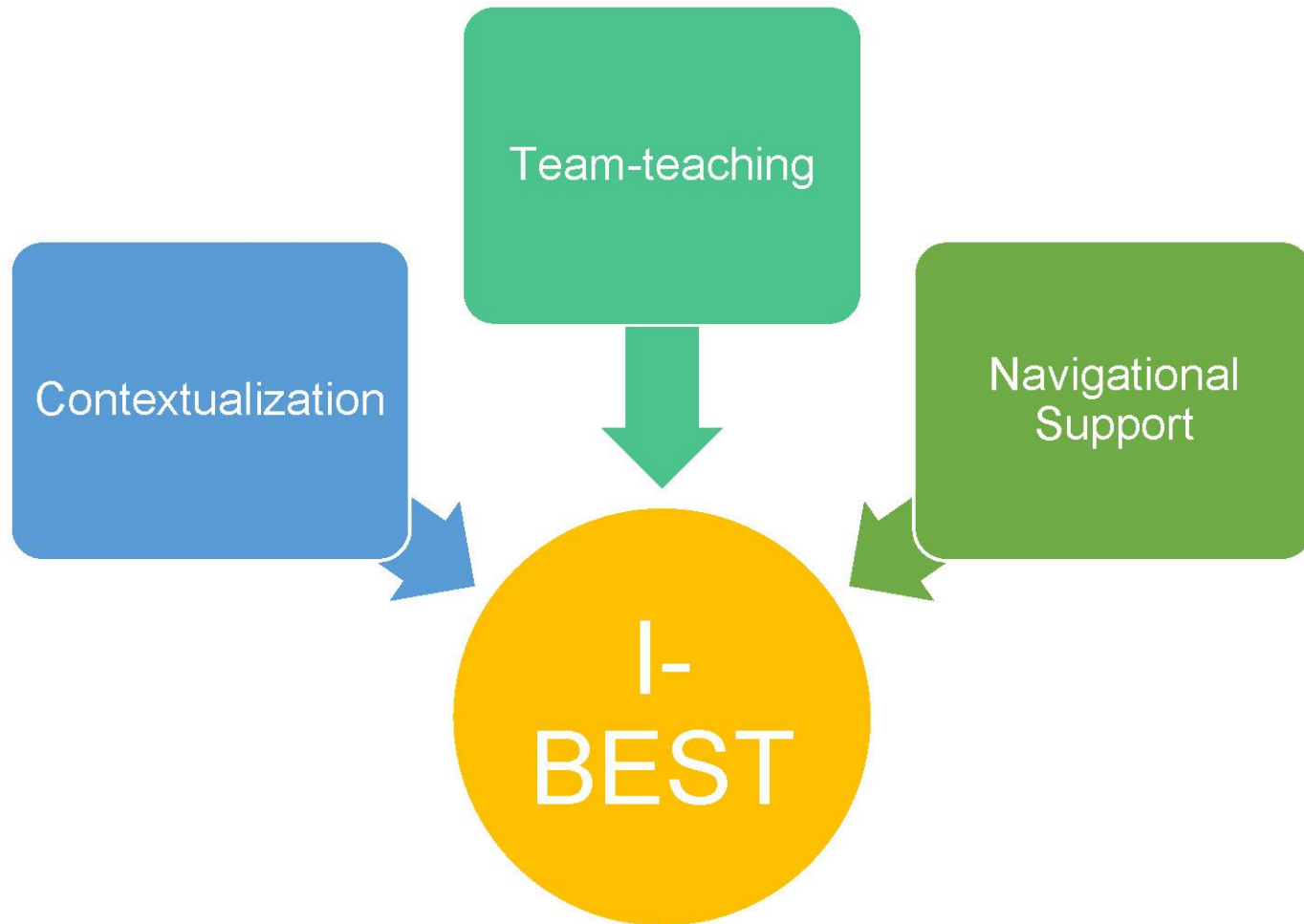
The I-BEST Transformation



I-BEST Defined

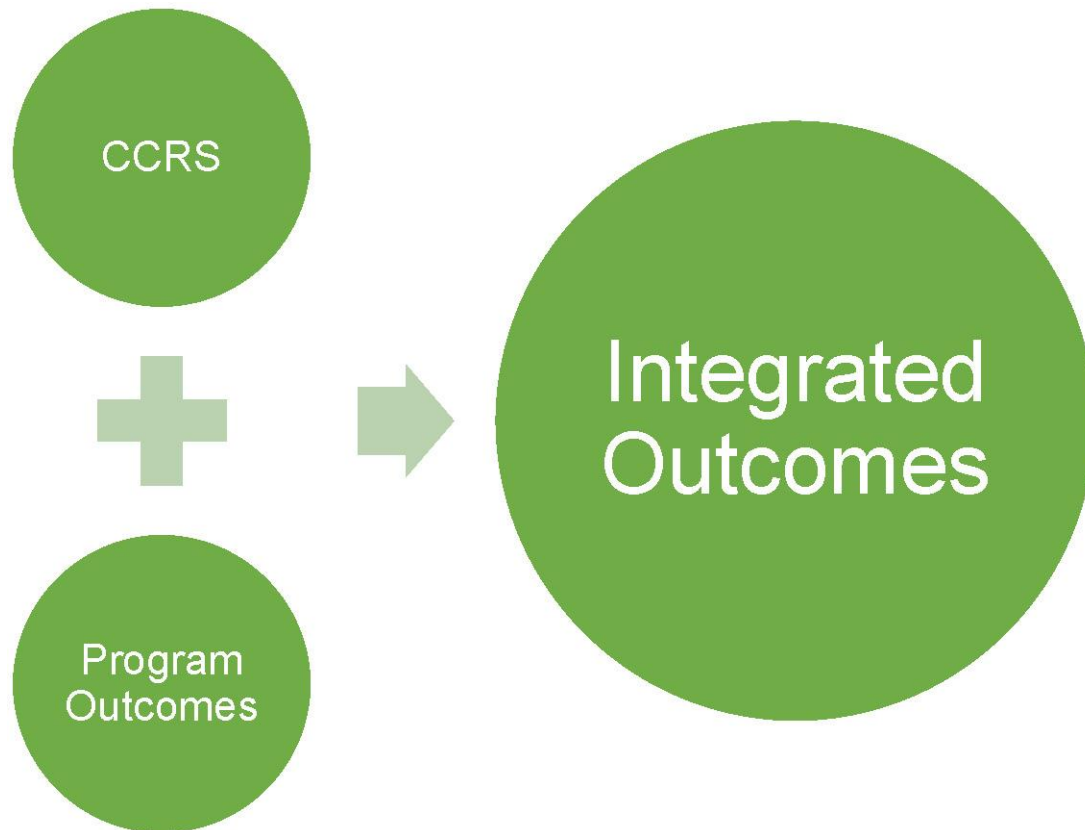
- I-BEST creates accelerated pathways that allow students to go further and faster in reaching the Tipping Point and beyond.

The Components of I-BEST



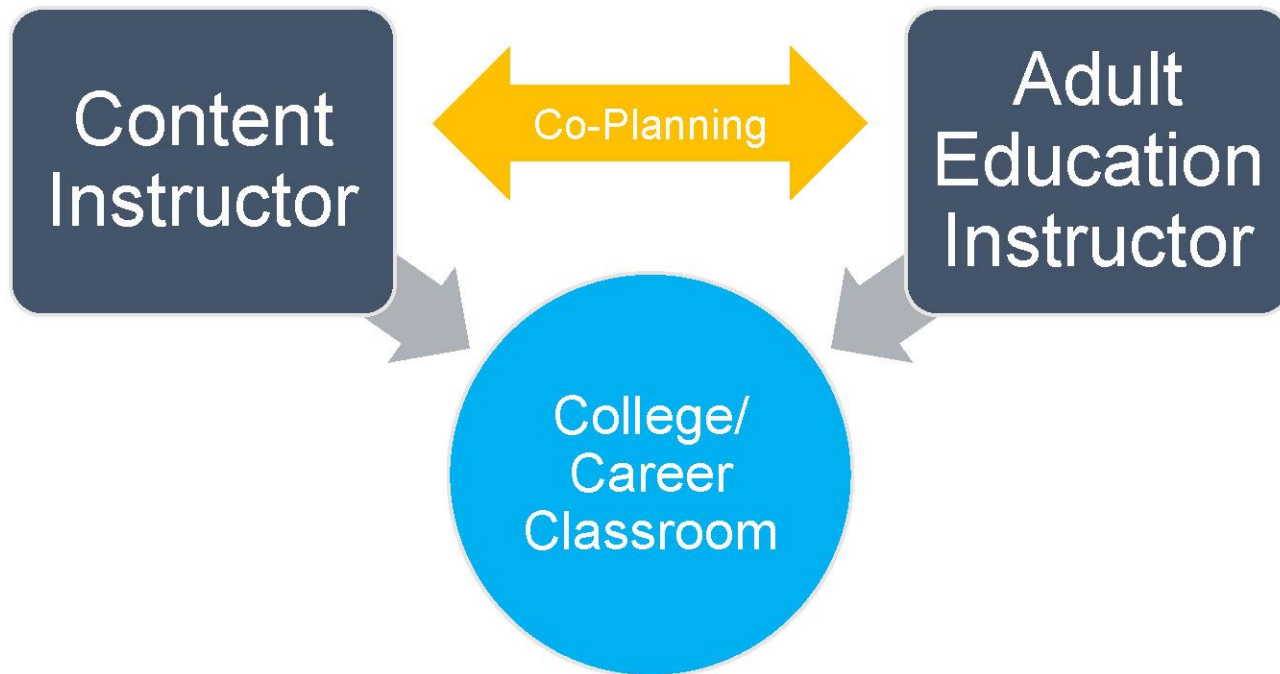
Contextualization

- Contextualization makes basic education relevant for students.



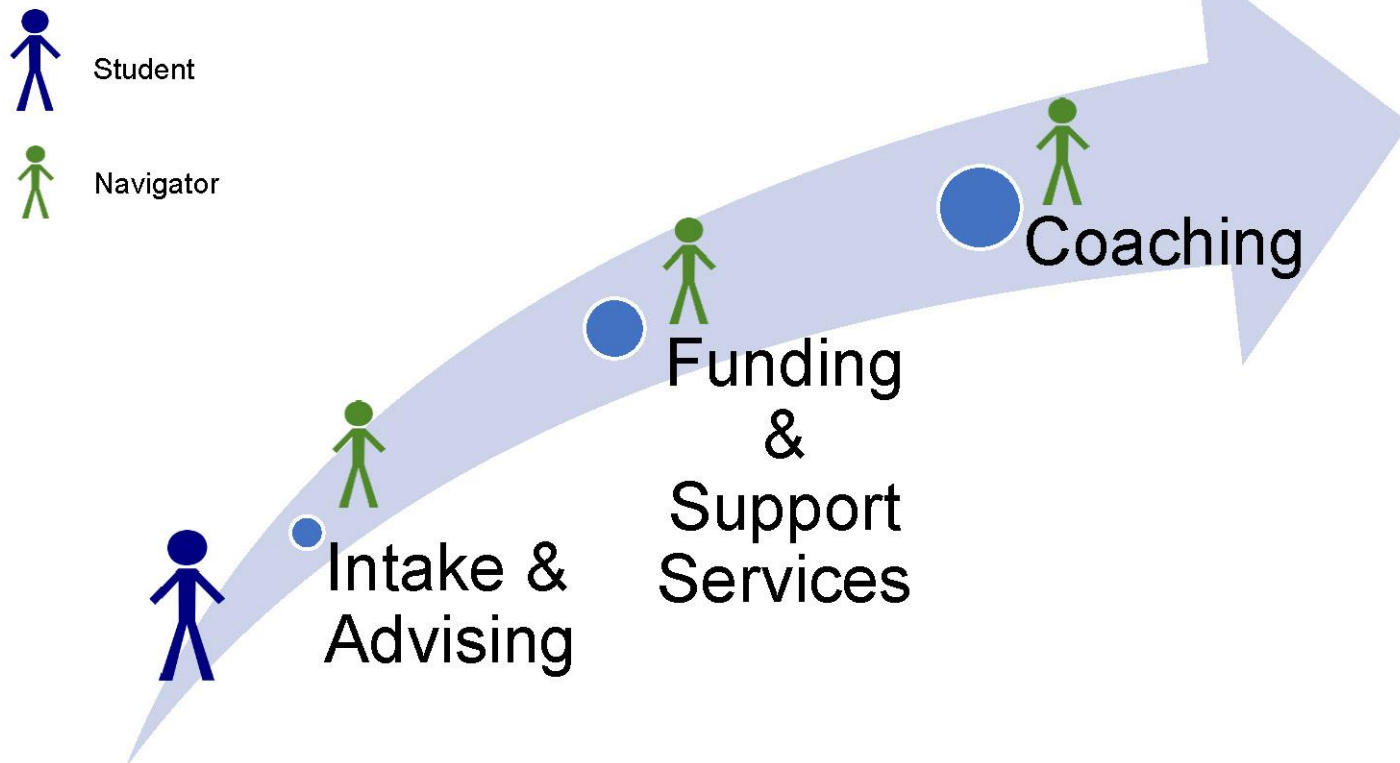
Team Teaching

- Team teaching brings the Tipping point within reach for students.



Navigational Services

- Wraparound support and navigational services keep students in the game and guide them to completion.



I-BEST Results: CCRC Study

- According to Columbia University's Community College Research Center, I-BEST students are:
 - Three times more likely to earn college credit
 - Nine times more likely to earn a certificate or degree



I-BEST DATA

(SAI 3.0)

Data Point	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019*	Total*
Students Enrolled	3,745	4,187	3,592	11,524
FTE	1,472	1,567	1,034	4,073
Degrees & Certificates	1,917	2,012	1,074	5,003
Total Performance (SAI) Points Earned	18,785	21,065	14,162	54,012
Performance Points Earned per Student	5.0	5.0	3.9	4.6
Federal Level Gains	1,257	1,447	1,047	3,751

*Through Fall 2018

SAI POINTS FOR I-BEST AND COMPARISON GROUPS (SAI 3.0)

2017-18 Student Achievement Points for I-BEST and Comparison Groups

	Headcount	Basic skills points	Basic skills points per student	College points	College points per student	Total points	Total points per student
Transfer	134036	0	n/a	190312	1.42	235824	1.76
Workforce	79753	0	n/a	100662	1.26	134028	1.68
I-BEST	5600	4579	0.82	16668	2.98	23730	4.24
Basic Skills No I-BEST	36729	36729	1.00	5397	0.15	39842	1.08
Total	256118	41308	1.02	313039	1.22	433424	1.69

2017-18 College-level credits for I-BEST and Comparison Groups

	Headcount*	Credits attempted**	Credits earned	Credit earned ratio
Transfer	118,506	3,056,994	2,631,194	86%
Workforce	72,136	1,890,107	1,694,361	90%
I-BEST	5,376	164,540	147,909	90%
Basic Skills No I-BEST	2,584	41,764	35,496	85%

Program	Total points per student
HS 21+	1.1
I-DEA	1.3

*Includes students taking courses at multiple institutions

**Transcript database, credits attempted (CLVL_IND = Y) credits earned (earn_ind = Y)

Cohort definitions (SAI database):

Transfer	Intent last = B, Kind of basic skills = null, targeted program indicator = not like 1*
Workforce	Intent last = F,G,M,I, Kind of basic skills = null, targeted program indicator = not like 1*
I-BEST	Targeted program indicator = 1*
Basic skills No I-BEST	Targeted program indicator = not like 1*, Kind of basic skills = not null

Ability to Benefit: Equity in Federal Financial Aid

- Ability to Benefit passed in 2014 and aligns to the definition of career pathways advanced in WIOA and now shared with Perkins V.
- It allows eligible students without a high school credential to apply for federal financial aid.

Questions & Contact Info

- Contact Information:

William S. Durden

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UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Information School



Information School
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Digital Literacy and Adult Basic Education

Stacey Wedlake

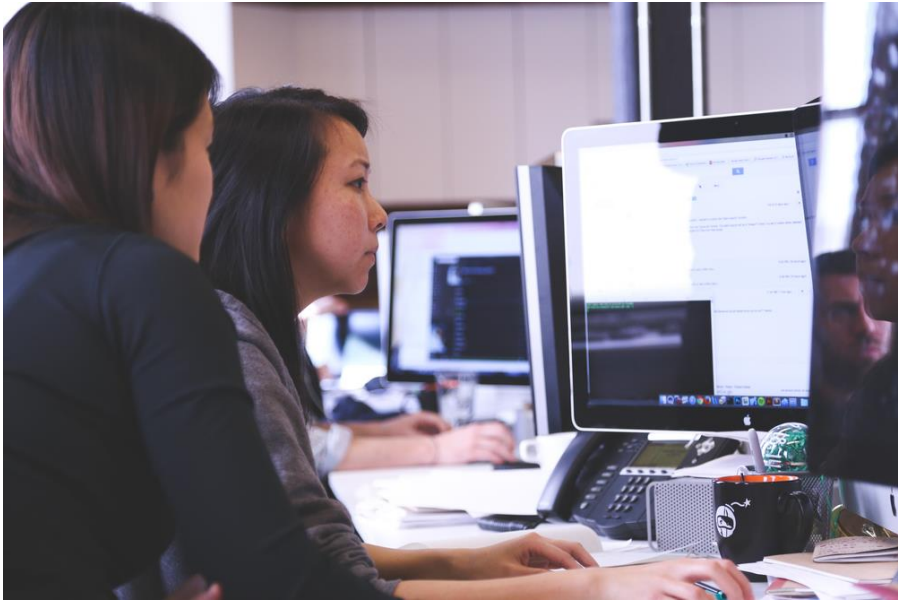
December 2019

Digital Literacy

The ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both **cognitive** and **technical** skills

- [American Library Association](#)

Digital literacy instruction works best when it's made relevant to a person's needs



A review of 15 popular resources found 10 skill use categories

Gateway (11 skills)		
Communication (8 skills)	Creation (8 skills)	Online Life (11 skills)
Workplace (9 skills)		Privacy & Security (7 skills)
Mobile (6 skills)		Information skills (7 skills)
Device ownership (4 skills)		Lifelong Learning (3 skills)

Sample of skills covered

Gateway

- Password basics
- Basic internet searching

Online Life

- Using social services
- Online banking

Information Skills

- Info search strategies
- Evaluating for credibility

Privacy & Security

- Avoiding phishing, scams
- Managing digital identity

Workplace

- Using a word processor
- Employment search skills

Curriculum resources

[GCF LearnFree](#)

Goodwill Community Foundation

- Wide range of lessons on many digital and other literacies (some in Spanish)
- A collection of teacher guides for classroom instruction

[Digital Learn](#)

Public Library Association

- Modules video-based narration with PDF transcriptions (also in Spanish)
- Good coverage of gateway and includes mobile phone basics (Android)

[Northstar](#)

Minnesota Literacy Council

- Online assessment available to everyone
- Certified testing centers can use curriculum and proctor certificate exams
- Good coverage of gateway and information skills



**There are more
public libraries
than McDonald's in
the U.S.—a total of 16,417
including branches.**

Public libraries and digital literacy

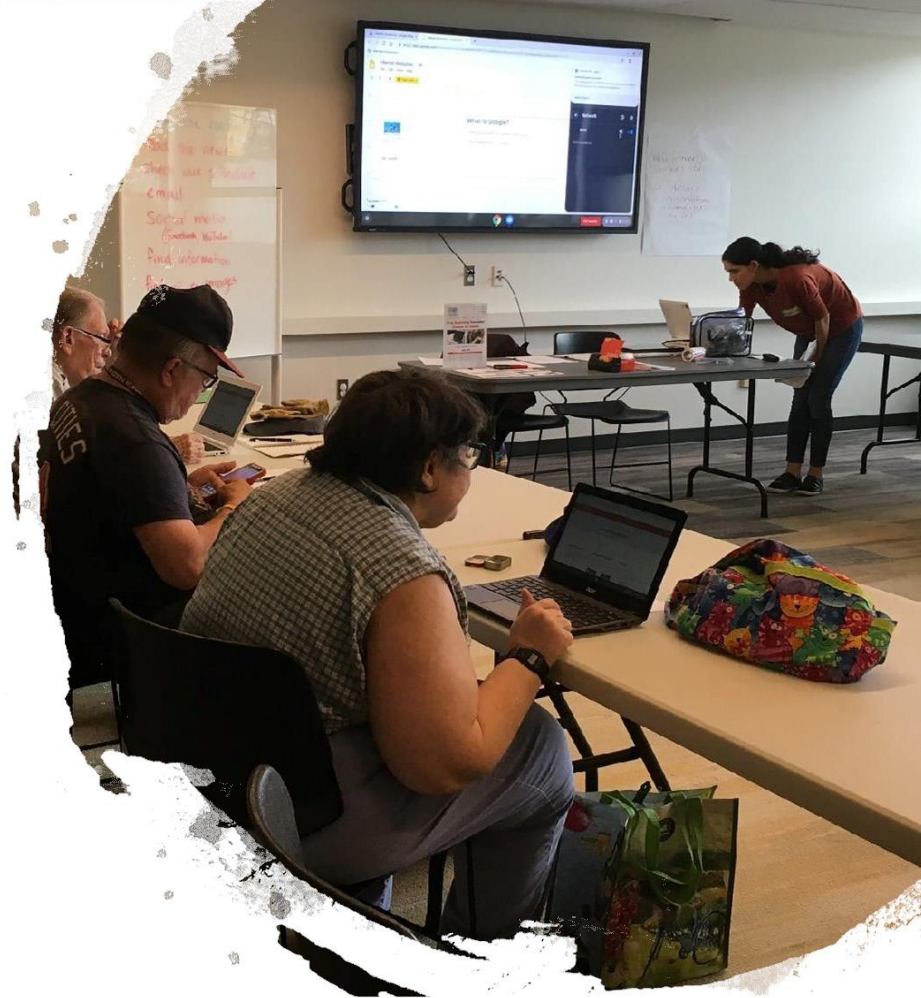
Libraries of all sizes have digital literacy training, but each library may have their own approach.

- Drop-in trainings
- Multi-session classes
- One-on-one appointment-based assistance
- Ad-hoc help



Literacy Source – Seattle, WA

- Integrates basic digital literacy and computer skills into ESL, ABE, workforce instruction using Google Drive
- <https://www.literacysource.org/>



ACE the Computer/Workforce – Chicago, IL

- Program of Literacy Chicago
- Computer basics, read the news, social media, email etiquette, communicating with coworkers and supervisors, job search skills
- <https://www.literacychicago.org/digital-literacy.html>



ISBA, Inc – Topeka, KS



Provider for adults receiving TANF eligible for employment and training services since 1994 (plus youth too)



When funding allows, participants receive computers



www.ibsa-inc.org

Community Technology Network

- Partnership with City of Sunnydale, CA
- Covers how to communicate with schools, job search, and being a “digital parent” (role model tech use and ensuring children are protected online)
- Taught in Spanish at elementary school
- Receive a Chromebook after the course

<https://www.communitytechnetwork.org/blog/sunnyvale-parents-enjoy-new-digital-literacy-program/>





Somali Safety Task Force – Seattle, WA

- Partnership with Seattle Public Library (SPL)
- Two 10 week courses
- Taught with Somali women
- Computer basics, job search, local school's digital communication system
- <http://www.somalifamilysafetytaskforce.org>

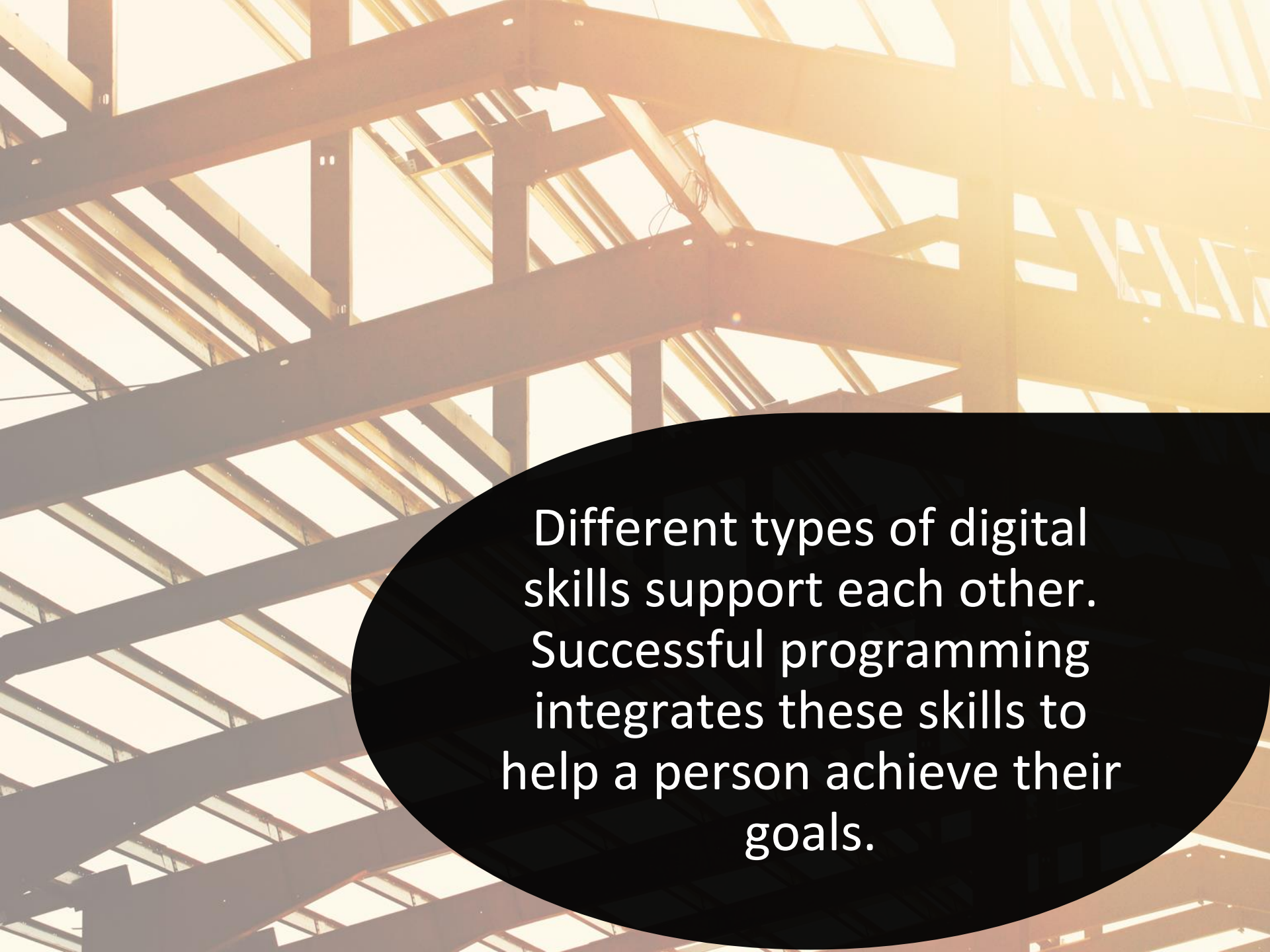
National Digital Inclusion Alliance

- Resources for digital literacy and digital inclusion organizations:
 - Guidebooks on best practices
 - Information on discount Internet
 - Knowledge sharing through listserv and annual conference
 - Other data, research, and policy work

<https://www.digitalinclusion.org>



Net Inclusion
PORTLAND 2020 April 7TH - 9TH



Different types of digital skills support each other. Successful programming integrates these skills to help a person achieve their goals.

Thank you

Download Digital skill sets for diverse users: A comparison framework for curriculum and competencies [report](#) and [comparison spreadsheet](#).

Stacey Wedlake, Research Coordinator and Analyst

Technology and Social Change Group (TASCHA), University of Washington Information School

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Questions



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Poll Question #4



What topics would you like to see in future webinars?

Please submit your answers in the Question box.



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Additional Information

- ❑ A recording of this webinar will be available shortly on the PeerTA Network website at: <https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/>.
- ❑ We would also like to hear from you about future webinar topics. Please send us your ideas by e-mail to peerta@icf.com.
- ❑ OFA PeerTA website (<http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov>)



Webinar Feedback

- Please remember to provide your feedback using the brief survey that will launch when the webinar ends.

