COVID-19 RAPID RESPONSE REPORT FROM THE FIELD[1]

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Introduction

In March 2020, much of the U.S. suddenly shut down in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the Evidence-Based Adult Education System (E-BAES) taskforce set out to learn how the pandemic was affecting the field of adult basic, secondary, and transitions education (ABSTE). Two complementary inquiries were implemented, one drawing on interviews and the other on surveys. A diverse pool of practitioners (e.g., administrators, instructional leaders, and teachers) and state staff participated. The goals were 1) to describe the instructional and programmatic shifts programs made in response to stay-at-home orders and 2) to illustrate the challenges and successes they experienced.

Interviews were conducted between late April and the third week in May. Thus, most programs had been working under stay-at-home orders for 6 to 9 weeks when the interviews were conducted by 14 E-BAES taskforce members. The 49 respondents from 20 states included 9 state directors, 15 program directors/managers, 6 program coordinators/instructional specialists, 14 instructors, and 5 individuals who did not fit any of the previous categories.

The survey responses, collected between May 23rd and June 5th, reflect program operating conditions approximately 9 to 11 weeks after face-to-face teaching was halted. Responses were collected from 773 teachers, tutors, and program administrators.

Interview and survey participants were non-representative and voluntary; they were recruited through word of mouth and a wide variety of listservs and other online communities, with the goal of quickly collecting information from a broad range of practitioners and state staff from around the country. Therefore, the findings are not generalizable. We see them as helpful, however, in affirming shared experiences, communicating unique innovations, and raising important implications for policy, practice, and research with regard to effective distance learning, professional development, access to technology devices and broadband, and ongoing needs for learner support.

The report is organized around nine key topics designed to capture recurring themes and patterns across interview responses. "Key Takeaways" are listed at the end of each section and are followed by a list of innovations/recommendations that represent distinctive program responses that are not necessarily captured in the descriptions that precede them. Where relevant, survey results are added to substantiate or elaborate the interview data.

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How Programs Implemented Distance Education

Most adult basic skills programming moved to a remote education format during the pandemic. Although the majority of survey respondents were working in programs that had not been providing distance education prior to the pandemic, 97 percent of administrators reported that at least some services had transitioned to a distance format. Seventy percent of the instructors who had not previously taught at a distance had moved all of their instruction online.

All staff who participated in the interviews reported they had implemented some form of distance education in order to continue serving adult learners; only 28 survey respondents reported that they had stopped serving learners because of the pandemic. Programs that continued operating were using whatever tools and resources they could access given their budgets and in-house expertise, while also taking into account what they believed would be most usable for learners. In some cases, emergency funding was required for additional expenses incurred for things like digital tool licenses or hardware (e.g., Chromebooks and digital hotspots). Some programs had been utilizing virtual learning prior to the pandemic, which seemed to make the transition smoother for them. Yet, even these programs generally had to scale up due to expanded need, and they found it challenging.

Others started more or less from scratch. Many were using a combination of digital and non-digital approaches (e.g., phone, mail, and drop off or pick up of print materials). They did this because learners did not have access to the internet or necessary hardware or were resistant to accessing digital tools; in many cases both digital and non-digital approaches worked well and complemented each other. In at least one case, a program kept its building open with one person in the office so that learners could pick up books for classes that started up soon after the shutdown began. Another program used the food drop-off organized through their school system to deliver work packets for adults. The survey data indicate that 66.5 percent of instructors were using non-digital materials with adult basic education (ABE) and adult secondary education (ASE) learners; 56.75 percent of instructors reported doing so with English language learners (ELLs).

For programs employing digital tools, many interviewees reported they were doing a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Respondents reported that classes held in real time using video conferencing tools such as Zoom or Google Hangouts give everyone a chance to interact in ways similar to face-to-face meetings. In real time, teachers can provide direct instruction, share video and visual resources, and facilitate large- and small-group work. In other words, as one teacher described it, using tools synchronously has enabled teachers to create (more or less) "normal class time."

> "Students like the Zoom class because they're getting to interact with the teacher and each other. This gives them a human connection."

Asynchronous learning opportunities utilize communication tools and social media, computerized instructional platforms, and learning management systems (e.g., WhatsApp, Remind, Messenger, Facebook, Google Classroom, Aztec, Plato, Burlington English) enabling teachers to post assignments, upload instructional materials, and provide feedback; learners can spend as much time as possible, when it is most convenient for them, on these sites. Some respondents noted a preference or a requirement to use platforms that capture learner contact hours. A low-tech asynchronous strategy described for those who do not have access to formal learning tools was to use phones to take pictures of and send assignments and completed work via text. One teacher posted assignments on her Facebook page. Teachers were also "pushing out" asynchronous

instruction using homemade videos or linking learners to YouTube videos, Khan Academy, and other online information sources. The balance between synchronous and asynchronous work sometimes depended on skill levels or types of learners. For example, some programs were running longer Zoom sessions for ELLs than they do for others; higher-level learners are often assumed to be more able to work on their own.

The survey data indicated teachers providing over half of their instruction to ELLs synchronously. Teachers working with ABE and ASE students use asynchronous instruction somewhat more (see Figure 1).
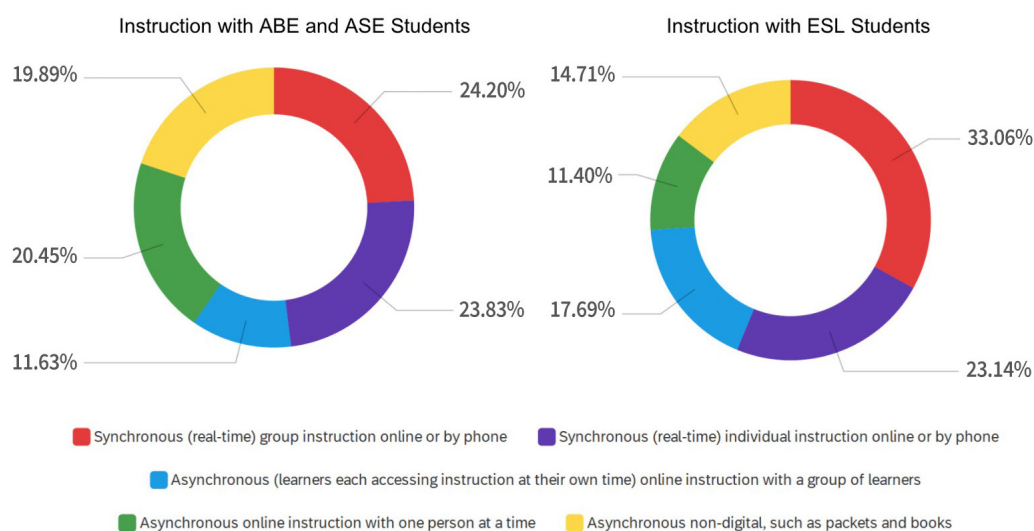

Figure 1. Instruction Format Used with ABE/ASE Students and ESL Students

These same instructors indicated using multiple strategies to support learning (see Table 1). Notably, the top two strategies focus on affective support.

Strategy	%
Providing direct feedback to individual learners	18.6%
Beginning each real-time lesson with a check-in on how learners are feeling	15.1%
Reviewing the previous lesson at the beginning of each lesson	13.3%
Providing paper packets to learners who do not have internet access	9.4%
Relying on an online curriculum created by a publisher or software developer	9.1%
Creating a structured online course in a learning management system (e.g., Moodle, Canvas, Google Classroom)	8.9%
Assigning a video or another online educational resource for learners to watch before the real-time lesson (flipped classroom)	8.7%
Having learners collaborate	6.0%
Using an online discussion forum	5.7%

Table 1. Strategies to Support Content and Skill Instruction

The interview data emphasize that programs' distance education responses were evolving. Some have taken time to acquire and learn how to use new tools, others have adjusted because of learner feedback, and some have switched instructional strategies in response to changing circumstances, such as policy clarifications or learners needing more work after completing initial paper packets. Several respondents talked of implementing distance education in distinct "phases." For example, one program described three phases; the program remained closed during the first two. The first phase was assessing needs and planning, the second phase was staff training, and the third phase was implementation. This practitioner anticipated another phase for long-term planning and improving on their initial efforts.

- In terms of policy changes, some states have designated which learning platforms are allowable and have required that programs submit a digital learning plan. While some administrators observed that state policies constrained them, one state director observed that the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education's (OCTAE's) flexibility with states has allowed programs to respond flexibly and be responsive to learner needs. "It's a domino effect that starts with being flexible with students."

Key Takeaways

- Although many programs had no prior experience with it, they shifted rapidly to offering distance education to their learners, generally with little preparation time; many had no prior experience with distance education. Their approaches are evolving as they gain knowledge, skill, and access to digital tools.
- Programs are implementing distance education using a combination of digital tools, social media, and text-based materials.
- When operating online, teachers often combine synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities and digital and non-digital materials.

Innovations/Recommendations

- Develop teacher-created instructional videos tailored to learner needs.
- Photograph assignments and learner work, send back and forth via text messaging apps.
- Design and present animated PowerPoint presentations to engage learners.
- Use Khan Academy assessments following teacher-driven, synchronous instruction.
- Design and launch a Google website to provide course material and COVID-19 resources.
- Take advantage of school bus food deliveries to drop off adult education materials.
- Utilize a variety of platforms to keep learners interested, or consistently use one platform or set of tools so that learners can gain confidence and master them.

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Technology: Access and Capacity Issues

Although almost all programs have been using technology for instructional purposes in some way since the shutdown began, being forced to do so was experienced as a boon or a barrier to learning depending on the program and the learner. In some cases, going online created opportunities for new experiences and new learning for both teachers and learners. In others, technology became a barrier, leaving some learners without access to educational opportunities or frustrated by their inability to use it.

Interviewees noted that "lack of preparation and inconsistent direction" hampered their efforts to get classes up and running online, and "to deliver comprehensive education while [also] trying to figure it out." Many programs prioritized quickly connecting with learners and reconfigured themselves as distance education centers almost immediately. Here, the emphasis at first was simply on connecting with learners rather than determining and implementing the most effective instructional strategies. Many programs skipped just a few days of instruction or less. For example, one teacher reported they had "only a weekend to try to get everyone online" with "little or no support." A lack of planning and diverse levels of technology and tool knowledge and access often meant that teachers in the same program were using different tools with little collaboration, leading to different outcomes for similar classes.

> One administrator reported, "As long as they [instructors] were doing something, I wasn't being strict about what program they were using. My goal was to keep the students engaged."

Access to Technology: The Digital Divide Exposed

Most interviewees identified lack of access to devices and broadband as core barriers for learners. Many learners who did have a device were limited to using a phone; program staff noted that learning on a small device is problematic, and some computer-based learning tools are not optimized for mobile devices. Even when programs were able to provide devices, restrictions due to COVID-19 exacerbated issues of internet access as public hotspots were closed. Some teachers also lacked hardware and even broadband. One administrator said, "It was a big surprise for all of us to discover how many instructors and staff didn't have the capability to do the online work because they didn't have the proper equipment or they didn't have internet; some people were still on dial-up service."

> "Because of the pandemic, we now have a clear window into technology disparity, the digital divide, when students, including adult learners, are supposed to be learning online and many cannot because they do not have access to remote education technology."

Programs did not necessarily have the means to make up for this lack of capacity. They needed "computer supplies, distance learning licenses, hot spots, [and] disposable phones . . ." that were hard to come by, expensive, or needed to be shared across different departments. Others were restricted by policy; as one interviewee reported, "school systems are not permitting teachers to even work remotely."

Additionally, rurality played a part in service delivery. A state adult education director stated, "This situation illuminated existing problems with the digital divide. A lot of areas do not have basic access to broadband. In rural areas they don't have internet access or learners don't have the right devices. . . . For people

who live far away from classes, the state needs to provide remote access all the time and not just in crisis situations."

The survey data and results echo and elaborate on interview responses. Specifically, the most commonly expressed challenges identified were limited access to technology and limited digital literacy. Demands on learners' time in the form of childcare and work were also common responses (see Figures 2 and 3).
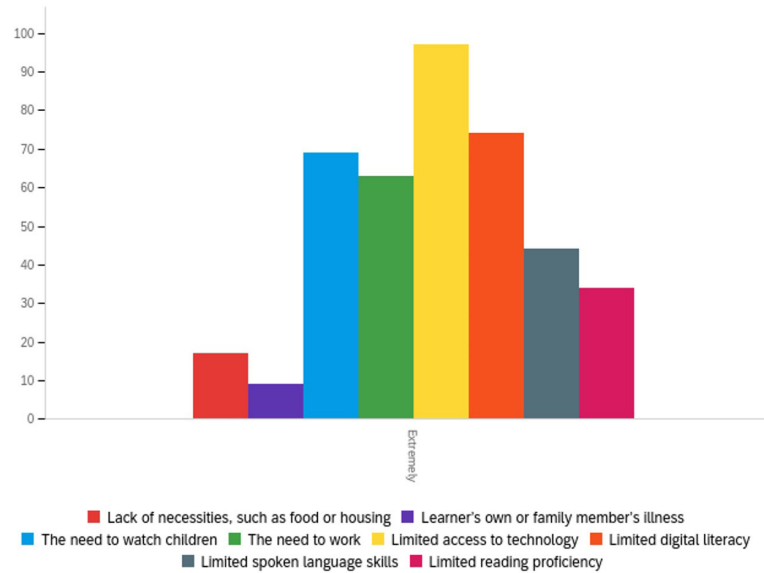

Figure 2. Challenges Identified by Administrators as Being "Extremely" Impactful on Participation
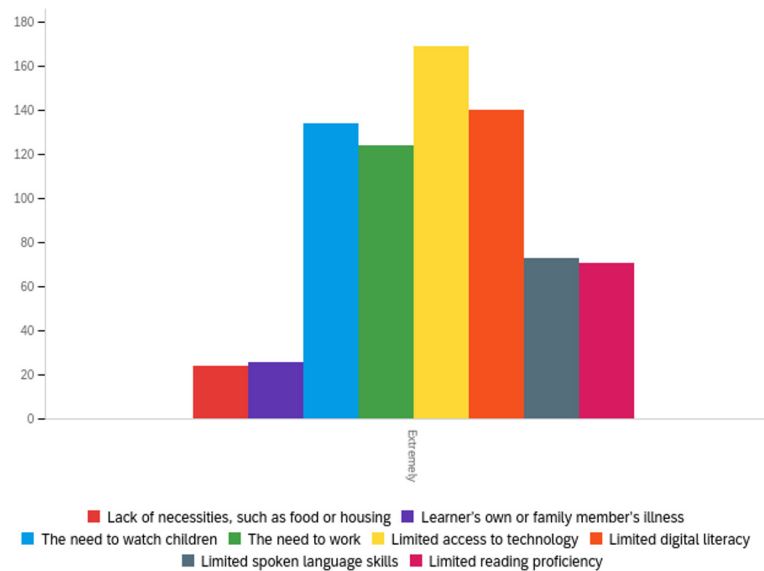

Figure 3. Challenges Identified by Teachers as Being "Extremely" Impactful on Participation

The most common strategies to support improved access, according to administrators, that were currently in place or planned for the future were sharing information about low-cost broadband programs and letting students know where they might find free public access (see Table 2). Teachers ranked these strategies in the same order.

Strategy	Yes	No	In Planning Stage
Informed learners about deals from internet service providers	76.0%	20.6%	3%
Informed learners about public hotspots where they can safely access the internet, such as public parking lots adjacent to buildings with Wi-Fi	68.7%	24.6%	6.7%
Loaned devices such as laptops or tablets	38.0%	39.0%	23.0%
Loaned Wi-Fi hotspots	10.6%	69.1%	20%
Other*	70%	14.8%	15%

*Note this field was not completed by respondents.

Table 2. How Administrators Reported Supporting Access

Technology Skills: The Downs and the Ups

As noted above (see Figures 2 and 3), survey respondents identified learner digital literacy as the second most impactful barrier to learner participation. Interview respondents identified the following specific barriers: not being able to "keep up with the pace," lack of typing skills, downloading and logging into new platforms (e.g., Zoom), and navigating across systems. For many learners, using technology was all completely new and for some, it was so daunting that without in-person support, it was not possible to access and use online instruction. Yet there were also learners who were so proficient that they reversed roles by "teaching their teachers about the technology."

This role reversal was sometimes important because instructors were also challenged. Even if they could navigate the technology, some struggled to use it effectively. For example, an administrator explained in an interview, "[Learners] don't have difficulty using [the instructional software]. It's more my staff that has difficulty when they can't work side-by-side with the student. They have to master being able to . . . see what students are doing." Some have avoided it altogether even when they can access it.

Despite the challenges of moving to a distance learning model, interview respondents also identified benefits. One participant stated, "the challenges aren't different from before: keeping in contact, understanding concepts. Sometimes it is more fun now. Also, now every student responds to every question [in the chat box]. Some things work better in person, some better online." Others found that using technology made teaching classes more manageable, and some observed that some learners "blossomed" in an online environment.

Preparation Matters

Both the survey and interview data suggest that programs that had already built in some hybrid learning opportunities experienced fewer barriers; they were able to shift to fully online instruction with some ease. One state director reported being "glad they had a solid distance learning program and policies in place [because] it would be so much harder to figure things out otherwise." Some programs and states without an online or distance program in place reported having great difficulty and are still struggling to provide services.

Key Takeaways

- Opportunities to use digital learning tools are hampered by lack of access to hardware and broadband among teachers and learners.
- The capacity to use technology tools in distance education is also hampered by inadequate digital literacy skills among teachers and learners.
- Implementation of distance learning was particularly hampered when there had been little investment in technology acquisition or use of technology in classrooms prior to the pandemic.

Innovations/Recommendations

- *Creatively locate Wi-Fi hotspots* – One district located school buses with hot spots in public parking lots so that people sitting in parked cars could access free wireless service.
- *Build on what is familiar to learners* – In a program where most learners use WhatsApp in their personal lives, they built instruction on it to decrease technology barriers.
- *Harness the expertise of learners* – "Don't just assume your students know as little as you might know or know way less than you know; it could be the exact opposite." Let them help each other and staff when possible.
- *Develop capacity through instructional leadership* – At the state level, support the development of a teacher leader in every program who has been trained to provide online learning assistance to the instructional staff.
- *Centralize tech support for learners* – To enable teachers to focus on teaching, identify point people to centralize technology support for learners with technology challenges.

Learner Enrollment and Classroom Engagement

Since the pandemic started, learner engagement was strongly impacted by the diversity of learner needs and backgrounds. In general, interviewees noted a steep decline in overall participation despite varied and multiple attempts to stay connected with enrolled learners. Like many others, one administrator reported that the "traffic of phone calls and e-mails has dried up." In contrast, some reported burgeoning waiting

lists. Estimates of attendance drops in most programs range from 30 to 60 percent. However, some programs, under great stress to figure out how to offer services remotely, had not yet begun tracking attendance again. One administrator aptly described the drop-off in learner participation as "massive quietness." It is hard to know how many "lost" learners will return when face-to-face classes resume, but most respondents were optimistic that they would.

While interviewees noted the decline in enrollment, they also found moments of inspiration and celebration. An administrator reported, their "highest retention [was] with ESL [Levels] 1 and 2" and went on to say, that "finding out that this is possible is inspiring [and a] . . . pleasant surprise." This is particularly notable because lower level ELL learners were often reported to be most negatively affected by the transition to online classes. Others observed the precipitous drop-off in participation but marveled at (and sometimes seemed more focused on) the high level of engagement among those who stayed connected.

One teacher said, "But there are so many things going on with people it's hard to make a blanket statement; some of them, even if they don't attend, they try to make up for missing class by doing other work or making up work. . . . It's encouraging how some people are working so hard using resources, and even increasing their attendance. . . . It's the fact that they've had to problem solve and have learned to use technology. Where they may have shunned it before because they didn't have to, now they've taken it on."

The Challenge of Staying Engaged

The drop in learner participation was attributed primarily to differences in learner and teacher access to and comfort level with digital technologies and online learning platforms. However, the survey results suggest that there was little difference between programs that had or had not previously provided distance education. Both the interview and survey data also indicated that decreased participation reflected changes in work and family demands that do not allow learners time or energy to participate.

Interview respondents reported that some learners told them that they had to choose between working and studying, and because many were considered essential workers, they were working additional shifts. Many learners had to share computer and internet access with family members who were also engaging in remote learning; when sharing with children, their children generally got priority. Sadly, some interviewees noted that learners had also informed them that they were not able to participate because of their own illnesses.

On the other hand, other learners reported that not having to travel or find childcare enabled them to participate more often than when classes were face-to-face. Interviewees also reported that learners have found participation in class helpful to their emotional well-being. For learners who can participate online, it is "a lifeline to be connected to peers and teachers."

The interviewees suggested that another factor contributing to the drop off in participation is that learners did not want distance education. They "signed up for an in-person class. They weren't planning on online instruction. Not everyone likes it." Observations suggested that those with more advanced skills, such as high school equivalency (HSE) and higher-level ABE and ELL learners seemed able to continue their studies somewhat more easily than lower-level ABE and ELL learners who often required additional help accessing and utilizing many of the online tools being used and were less likely to continue their studies.

For those learners who remained engaged, levels of participation varied widely, again dependent on comfort with technology, home setting, and other factors, such as employment and health. One interviewee commented that "students were doing roughly 3 to 4 hours per week online plus any additional work assigned." Another reported that while many learners stopped coming, "some of them have participated religiously, they are pretty regular." Yet some teachers recognized that they were contending with competing demands on learners' time. For example, one teacher reported that even her students who do make it to class are not doing homework.

"We are working with a population, especially on the ABE side, who failed in traditional school for whatever reason, and they need a lot of support. Teachers have to continually motivate and encourage a lot of our students, and this virtual learning environment doesn't provide as much of that as they get face-to-face. Some of our more fragile students are dropping off."

Program and Classroom Engagement Practices and Challenges

The survey results show that instructors used a range of engagement strategies to support participation. When asked what instructional strategies they found most effective, the 403 instructors that responded indicated that they relied on more than one engagement strategy: together they reported using 1,613 of these activities from the list provided in the question (see Table 3).

Strategy	%
Communicating with individual learners between class meetings or assignments	26.2%
Asking learners what they find challenging	16.5%
Calling learners who do not have internet access	15.5%
Commenting on student group's overall progress in learning the course materials	15.4%
Requiring learners to check in on a predetermined frequency, such as daily, weekly, or biweekly	13.4%
Posting a class schedule on a website	7.3%
Other (please specify)	5.8%

Table 3. Strategies Teachers Reported as Being Effective in Support of Learner Participation

As was the case for the strategies reported as useful for supporting content instruction (see Table 1), the teachers relied most commonly on personalized communication to keep learners engaged.

The rapid transition to remote learning has some interviewed respondents questioning whether new instructional practices are effective compared to pre-pandemic instruction. For example, one teacher reported that it is more difficult to adapt to the diverse learner needs in an online context. Some teachers also feel they have

"Even if we do less in class, maybe it's worth more because we're all moving through quicksand."

less time to teach. Of those teaching synchronously, some observed that normal class length was too long in Zoom, so they reduced class meeting time (sometimes replacing it with asynchronous assignments using online learning platforms). Yet, another teacher complained that everything takes longer to accomplish on Zoom. They also have shifted priorities, in some cases, spending more time addressing emotional needs before engaging with the curriculum. Teachers and administrators are happy they are engaging learners at all and feel positively about the digital and communication skills learners are gaining at a distance. Yet they routinely question the quality of instruction they can offer under the circumstances. As one teacher said, "I still haven't found ways of meeting learning outcomes that I would say are parallel or even to the level of what I would do before."

Key Takeaways

- Attendance rates have significantly decreased in most programs, as has number of contact hours, even among those who remain engaged.
- Engagement is hampered by stress, increased demands on learners' time, and resistance or lack of access to digital learning opportunities.
- For some learners, the opportunity to participate in distance education has been very positive.
- The distance learning context has enabled some teachers to rethink their practice in creative and engaging ways, yet staff has concerns about the effectiveness of new practices.
- Individualized attention is important for supporting learner engagement.

Innovations/Recommendations

- Seek ways to keep students reading even if they cannot come to class.
- Reach out individually to students who are not attending to determine if they need encouragement to come back or they have departed due to insurmountable barriers.
- Offer a variety of learning tools for asynchronous learning to engage different tastes, interests, and proficiency levels.
- Offer a math assistance call center.
- Survey students about what is working in the virtual classroom and what is not; adjust accordingly.
- Stock the program website with activities and resources.
- Embed COVID-19 related information into instruction so that learners can both continue to develop skills and apply them to coping with the pandemic.
- Build in time for movement during class (e.g., the seventh inning stretch)
- Be gentle with assignment due dates; set them so they are manageable.
- Keep things as organized as possible so learners can easily find what they need to do and where and how to do it.

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Learner Support

Obviously, many learners needed help navigating the new technology demands of distance learning. Additionally, interviewees reported that learners have had additional needs for other kinds of support as well, and program staff have worked hard to respond to them. They observed "the constant hum of high stress" that learners are experiencing due to unemployment or increased work hours, lost income, increased parenting responsibilities, sickness, and death, and caring for sick relatives, food insecurity, and safety issues. Isolation and psychological setbacks also threaten learners (and some teachers). The threats, worries, and fears are amplified for ELLs because "there is less [safety net] support for those who don't have documents" and they need more help understanding what services they can and cannot access.

> "We know that no learning is going to happen when they have those other needs [and so we] jumped into outreach mode."

In response, programs were doing more to systematically reach out and offer individualized, one-on-one support and case management, as evidenced by both the survey and in interviews. As one interviewee reported, "It is important to make sure that learners know they are cared about." Program administrators, case managers, teachers, and even office staff are reaching out by phone, Remind app/texting, videos, email, a live and constantly updated website, Zoom, and WhatsApp. The intensification of support goes well beyond the traditional tasks of maintaining instruction, attendance, and retention, and this has added on to costs and staff time.

Under these circumstances, adult education sites became a lifeline for some. They were "important to students for whole new reasons." For example, when learners meet synchronously, it provides the mental health benefit of seeing each other and their teachers.

> "The teachers have become the support . . . We're not the experts, [but we need to offer] social-emotional support. We're not equipped to deal with that . . . [but] our current students, they know and trust us."

Programs were also offering support by taking up the role of key information source for many learners on topics including food banks, emergency supplies, unemployment insurance, 12-step addiction programs, Wi-Fi access, instructional materials, mental health assistance, school help for children, work safety, rental assistance, domestic violence, housing, employment opportunities, job search, coronavirus safety procedures and updates, and legal services. Some programs were also providing concrete resources, most especially food assistance. This means that learners now expect teachers to have contacts to many resources and information that could be way outside their area of expertise, thus challenging them in other ways beyond all the new technology skills needed.

> "Our staff know that whatever they need, it doesn't have to be education related, we can pull something together. We've hammered that message in—we're here for you."

Key Takeaways

- Learners are under considerably increased stress.
- Program staff are taking extraordinary measures to meet the needs of learners even when they go well beyond education.
- Program staff are being called upon as information sources in realms well beyond education in an effort to care for learners' needs.
- Program staff are using a range of new technologies as they strive to stay connected to students.

Innovations/Recommendations

- Transfer funds, which would have supported classes that are now shut down, to pay teachers and other staff to keep in close contact with learners.
- Create and continually update a list of resources for learners that is easily accessible; provide a live and constantly updated website of COVID-19 resources.
- Seek grant funding to meet special needs (e.g., food and other necessities).
- Provide packets of necessities such as diapers, crafts, gift cards, plus encouraging notes from teachers.
- Make videos of teachers encouraging their learners and asking them to stay connected.
- Forward office phones to staff cell phones.
- Partner with a local college or university to translate critical information into multiple languages.
- Conduct formally scheduled weekly learner wellness checks.

How the Job Changed

In dealing with changes in practice and learner needs, interview respondents affirmed that their jobs have changed substantially since the COVID-19 pandemic hit. These changes were primarily related to the increased use of technology needed to offer classes and the quantity and focus of professional development (PD) they have participated in to support that change. As described above, they were also providing much more learner support. Given the human nature of teaching, it is not surprising that administrators and teachers described that their emotional well-being has been affected and they, like learners, were also expressing increased needs for support. The transition to online learning was rapid for most, and many reported working much harder to learn technology, revise lessons, and support learners.

> An administrator admitted, "Some of the teachers are very overwhelmed. I have had to talk a couple off the ledge and simplify their process. They were trying to do too much at one time, so I tried to reduce their idea of what this should look like."

Yet, the hard work served shared goals to stay connected with learners, helping them navigate getting online (when possible), and keeping them engaged and feeling supported.

Many teachers and administrators interviewed said they were using technology they had never used before or were using familiar technology for new purposes and in new ways, all in a short period of time. The survey data confirmed that they were using (often multiple) technology tools to provide instruction, outreach, and support that were new to them (see Figures 4 and 5).
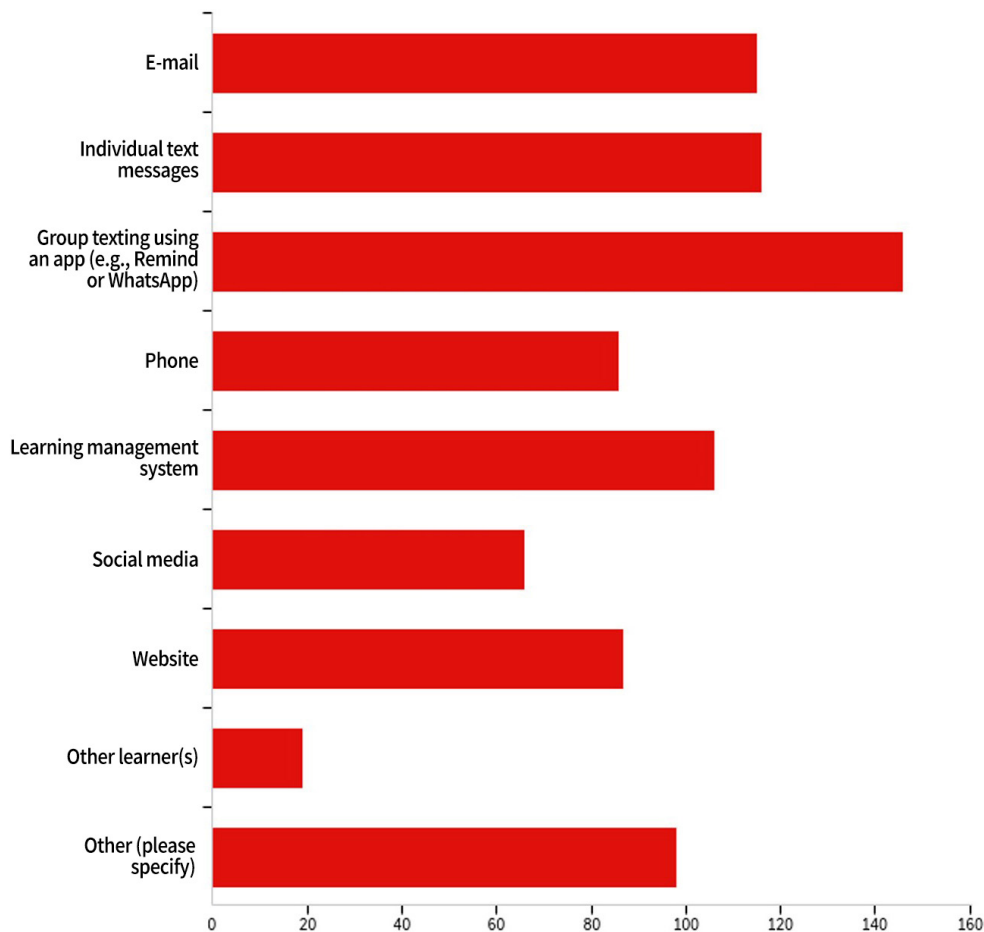

Figure 4. Technology Tools Used by Instructors that Were New to Them

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Figure 5. Word Cloud Illustrating "Other" New Technologies Used by Teachers for Communication

To use these new tools as effectively as possible, many engaged in extensive self-directed learning. Others were availing themselves of trainings and webinars provided by software developers, publishers, and national organizations. However, one teacher described the resource offerings as an "onslaught," sometimes too much of a good thing. In addition, the new teaching formats were encouraging them to rethink their teaching practices. Administrators were doing significantly more hands-on work (e.g., teaching, providing teacher and learner support, and learning the technology needed to convert to online learning) but still maintaining their normal administrative responsibilities, thus significantly increasing their workloads.

> "Teachers have always had that personal connection with the students and that got them over the hump. Without that, it's the machine and you. Yes, you have Zoom, but it's very different."

In many cases, teachers who were comfortable with technology were leading the transition to distance education. Many had taken up peer training responsibilities to bring their colleagues up to speed. Those in the know or in supervisory positions were also often providing support and doing lots of troubleshooting for staff. Not surprisingly, they felt drained by the impulse to help or the expectation that they would assist those (peers and learners) who were less knowledgeable.

Teachers and administrators reported being overworked and under stress. Some teachers said they are doing more PD than they normally would to learn new skills and principles of good online instruction. Working from home was new for everybody. For some, this created boundary challenges as well as feelings of isolation. Some who were experiencing an increased workload were also dealing with their own increased home responsibilities (e.g., home schooling and childcare, sick family members, etc.) and health concerns. They also described the

> "I miss my students, the building, the classroom, interacting with the other teachers. There's really not a good answer to this."

emotional stress of feeling they could not reach out to learners in the ways they used to. The circumstances were leading to what one participant reported as highly taxing "emotional fatigue." Another noted, "Support for most ABE teachers teaching online is not available. Compassion fatigue is a problem. . . . Teachers [in my program] have 100 plus students a day, 24/7. [We] need to learn how to set professional boundaries." An interviewee summed it up: "I don't have a lot of charge left."

Some teachers were resisting the changes. One administrator reported that "Some [teachers] are really struggling. They do not want to teach this way. They're saying, 'I didn't sign up for it.'"

While many reported exhaustion because of the steep learning curve they were experiencing, all the changes they had to make to translate their instruction to an online environment, and the emotional toll of responding to learners' expanding needs, other teachers reported feeling energized and excited by the new challenges. One person described the current environment as one where it is "fun to take risks" and felt that things she was trying now will have a positive impact on her teaching in the future.

Key Takeaways

- The workload has increased significantly for program administrators and teachers as they work to transform well-established administrative and instructional practices to support remote options.

- The sudden need for distance learning called on teachers to quickly learn how to use new technology tools or use tools they already knew in different and more extensive ways.

- Teachers and other program staff are taking care of learners in new and more intensive ways.

- Some teachers are invigorated by all the new demands on them, but others are resistant. Many feel exhausted and stressed.

Innovations/Recommendations

- Use Zoom to hold staff meetings.

- Redistribute teaching responsibilities by utilizing administrators to take on some instructional roles to assist teachers who are encountering additional workloads.

- Implement formative staff evaluation in an online environment.

- Make incremental change instead of transitioning everything online at once. As one state director said, "There was no reason to scramble and do it badly."

- Team-teach to leverage individual skill sets among staff.

- Access what is available online rather than develop new curricular materials.

- Utilize what is in learners' homes to build interactive activities without needing additional supplies.

- Recognize not every learning solution is going to work for everyone. Do not get "wrapped around the wheel" in trying to come up with one perfect solution for everyone.

Professional Development

The unusual circumstances created by COVID-19 have prioritized professional development that focuses on how to deliver instruction at a distance. The survey results showed that since the COVID-19 pandemic began, nearly all program administrators who answered the question have provided professional development or referred staff to external professional development to quickly upskill their capacity to use technology for instruction. However, interview participants reported a gamut of PD engagement. While some focused exclusively on learner engagement and did not participate in PD, others were offered a substantial amount of program-based PD. PD was also accessed through state resource centers and national organizations such as ProLiteracy, COABE, World Education, and LINCS (see Table 4). More informally, "Teachers are being creative and sharing with one another about how they are handling things." Because of these opportunities, teachers are learning to adapt their teaching as they go.

Professional Development Offering	%
Referral to webinars offered by national nonprofit or professional organizations	16.4%
Referral to webinars organized by state PD staff	15.8%
Shared links to materials posted online	15.7%
Referral to webinars provided by developers of online curricula	15.2%
Participation in national-level community of practice, like LINCS Community Groups, Innovating Distance Education in Adult Learning (IDEAL) Consortium, or less formal groups found through social networking apps like Facebook or LinkedIn.	9.3%
Participation in a state-level community of practice (online discussion groups)	9.3%
Your own webinars	9.0%
Participation in a local community of practice (online discussion groups)	7.3%
Other (please specify)	2.0%

Table 4. PD Activities that Administrators Offered to instructors

Programs that had a formal PD structure in place (especially those that had already focused on integrating technology with instruction) were better able to pivot PD activities to focus on the transition to distance learning. As one administrator regretfully stated, "Our biggest take-away lesson . . . is we should have already been thinking about this [technology]." Regardless of whether practitioners were or were not engaging in PD, they all expressed a need for it because they were underprepared to provide distance learning.

Professional Development Challenges

Interviewees reported that PD opportunities focused on distance learning and technology tools had ramped up significantly, as had time invested in participating. They also reported PD challenges. Some of the PD providers were not prepared to address the vast amount of information available and were not able to differentiate for different learner skill levels or specific instructional contexts. For example, one participant

stated that while their "state office of adult education provides PD, they don't have the expertise to deal with the unique needs of [my] organization." Other programs were unable to pivot from the PD in which they were currently engaged to quickly address the urgent need for PD on distance learning and technology use. Lastly, the sheer amount of PD offerings was overwhelming; "There's more PD about offering online learning than we could ever take advantage of. PD on this is exhausting!"

There was also the concern that the speed of the transition to distance learning, combined with the need to find and participate in needed PD was over-stretching teachers and administrators. As one administrator stated, "We are working way more than ever before because there is all this new training. If I'm not taking a webinar about something, I'm in a conference [helping a teacher manage the technology] and still doing everything I was doing before."

> "The [state] PD center turned on a dime and offered everything virtually, they scrambled and put resources together, started a webpage—having an established PD resource center increases state staff capacity. They are an extension of [the] state office, and it was great because the state office didn't have to create a new contract, [I] just told them to use money they had planned for other things for the support they are providing to programs for distance learning. They have been wholeheartedly enthused about supporting distance education."

Key Takeaways

- The need for professional development related to digital learning has rapidly and suddenly increased.
- Many local, state, and national professional development offerings very quickly became available.
- Professional staff are availing themselves of a range of professional development opportunities.
- The needs for professional development outpace time and resources available for it.

Innovations/Recommendations

- Prioritize PD even if it means reducing instructional hours. "It will make your program better in the long run as you scale up."
- Implement PD using a variety of formats:
  - Large-group weekly online discussions or networking groups that provide "opportunities for open sharing among managers, lead teachers, and curriculum specialists"
  - Communities of Practice from across programs to share best practices and resources and discuss ways to meet learner needs
  - A resource center providing supports where new ideas can be developed and tested and disseminated
  - Technical assistance, workshops, webinars, and online courses
  - Discussion groups (e.g., coffee breaks)

- Newsletters
- Online resource pages and Facebook posts
- Training manuals
- Provide a statewide single-source listing of all resources available.

Program Changes

The unpredictability of the COVID-19 crisis has created new and unanticipated challenges and worries for program administrators. They have had to assess needs and identify new technology tools and strategies quickly and in an effort to respond effectively. Funding concerns have multiplied. Some programs are facing a loss of public and private funding and are worried about making up lost revenue. Program administrators worry about the process of applying for competitive grants during the pandemic or the extent to which they can shift funds around to meet new needs.

> A program director stated, "We are requesting that the state give us a one-year continuation. This is the last year of a three-year contract. There was supposed to be a funding competition, but there is no way we can do this. The state has not yet formulated a response, but we're hopeful that this is what will happen."

Integrated education and training (IET) programs that require clinical or field experiences are at a standstill.

Staffing is also a challenge for some program administrators who fear that inconsistencies in programming would lead some paid staff to seek other jobs or volunteers to lose interest. In closed programs, administrators suspect that when services resume, some staff will not return.

Recruitment, Orientations, and Assessment

On top of these worries, the shutdown had an impact on program operations including recruitment, orientation, and assessment. Several interviewees admitted their programs were focusing only on serving adult learners who had already been enrolled at the time of the shutdown rather than recruiting new learners. Yet, some programs reported that calls from prospective students are on the rise, perhaps because of increasing unemployment, and in at least one case, one program's closure was another's windfall of referrals. Unfortunately, onboarding learners who found their way to programs now was problematic because of an inability to conduct pre-tests. Most programs reported that they have paused intakes for this reason.

> "The hardest part is not being able to accept people into the program. . . . We can't enroll anyone because we can't pre-test because there is a not an approved testing tool. What [a test vendor] is coming up with is not going to be cost effective. This is going to be a barrier for us, how to bring people into the program."

Program orientations that do occur have been conducted individually, by video, and online and sometimes focus exclusively on bringing already enrolled learners up to speed on technologies that are new to them.

Programs that are taking on new learners described a greatly modified orientation process. An ELL instructor talked about revisions to his college's new learner intake process, which had "an in-house online placement test and assessment panel set up. . . . And then [learners] have [an orientation] session. I think it's done by video chat with a placer and ultimately [we] put them in a class." An administrator described her program's process: "Orientation sessions are held online via Zoom. It's scaled back from the face-to-face version that takes two days. Now it takes a couple [of] hours. It's the 'drive through version' of orientation. It's in small groups if at all possible."

The survey results show a different picture, likely because of when the data were collected. Programs have begun to put processes into place to offer intake or orientation sessions at a distance. Figure 6 shows that of the 109 administrators who answered the question, most had moved all of their current intake online.
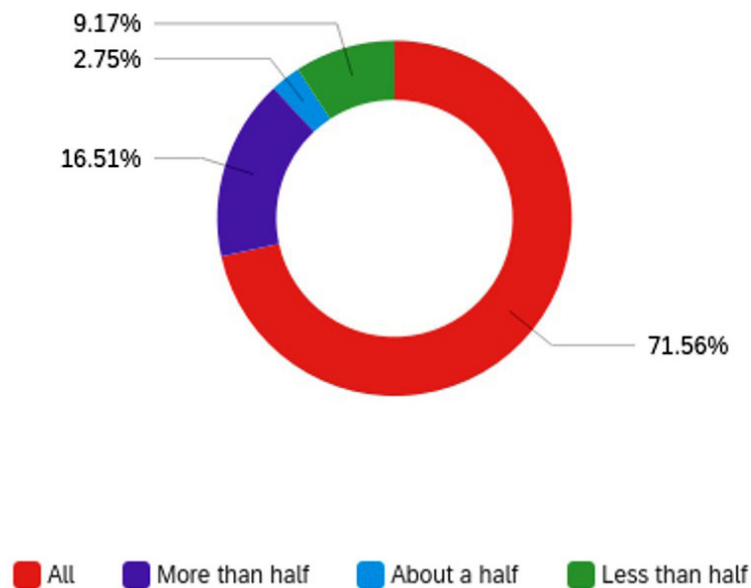

Figure 6. Percentages of Administrators and Proportion of Intake and Orientation Provided at a Distance after Onset of the Pandemic

Interview data show that a trickle of programs are doing very small-scale intakes on the phone, online, or even in person. However, most are not. A university-based administrator explained, "[We are] trying to figure out what to do about testing, because obviously we can't test people in person. So, there's just a lot of big question marks." Given that HSE testing had been halted, one administrator noted that students who had been just about ready to take the test were in danger of losing readiness if they didn't keep their skills up until testing becomes available again. She was encouraging these students to keep practicing, but was uncertain about the outcome of doing so.

Nearly all interviewees described barriers to conducting assessment. Mostly, programs are not doing pre- or post-testing because they cannot do it virtually. The graph in Table 5 shows that nearly half of the 200 administrators who answered the question reported that they were not using standardized assessment

during the pandemic. Given that a little more than half of administrators reported that they were using standardized assessments (as opposed to almost no interview respondents), this may reflect a dynamic and rapidly changing environment as testing companies scrambled to adjust to the new online environment.

Assessments Used	%
We are not using any standardized assessments during the pandemic	45.0%
We are beginning to offer virtually proctored standardized assessments that will support National Reporting System (NRS) reporting requirements	21.5%
We are using our usual standardized assessment only for placement purposes	7.0%
Other (please specify)	22.5%
I don't know	4.0%

Table 5. Administrators' Responses on Use of Standardized Assessments

Survey data also show that, for now, tracking learner progress has fallen primarily to teachers doing formative assessment, rather than established, standardized data collection practices from before the pandemic.

Multiple state directors responded to the assessment issue. "After a certain number of hours [of instruction], it is difficult to move forward without post-testing," said one state staff person. However, solutions are gradually becoming available. As one state director noted, "Testing publishers are coming up with remote assessment. It's not ready yet, but we are looking into remote assessment when it's ready." Another state director also envisioned moving to online testing. He reported that he was "mandating remote testing even though there are limitations . . . [such as only] two or three [adults can be assessed] at a time, it will take a lot longer, and some students will be not comfortable taking the test online." Until online assessment is available, affordable, and practical, however, for many programs, the inability to test will be a barrier to doing new learner recruitment, intake, and orientation. Obviously, post-testing is equally problematic. Programs are looking to state directors to make modifications to testing requirements; some states have begun to do this.

> A state director said a federal policy memo "told programs that they will allow the remote testing that publishers have approved. But it's not an option for everybody — it is way beyond the digital literacy of students, equipment requirements, space in homes, and one-on-one proctoring that is required."

Policy and Funding Issues

In addition to questions and concerns about how to meet accountability demands when pre- and post-testing cannot be done, program directors had other policy-oriented questions, especially about incurring additional expenses, grant competition, and funding. For example, one state director reported, "Programs had fiscal question[s] about whether there will be a continuation, no-cost extension, and new funds. The state office got a letter from 13 grantees asking for [a] 1-year continuation for existing grantees and that the current competition that was in progress at that moment be postponed." State directors are actively

engaged in addressing questions and seeking solutions to the new program management issues that are arising because of distance education. They have reviewed policy, activated funding, met virtually with local staff, and written frequently asked questions (FAQs) for programs. A state director "held a town hall meeting and went over the guidance that OCTAE provided." Another state director said his office "provided three million dollars directly to local providers on April 14 to use for staff-related costs . . . [because] for some grantees, salary costs went up with this emergency."

> "When the schools were shut down, the adult ed state staff started holding virtual office hours two to three times each week, and would focus on . . . 2–3 topics each week. . . . They wanted adult education staff to hear a voice and [have] someone to listen and write down their questions."

Key Takeaways

- Programs are facing funding and staffing worries.
- Student intake that cannot be done at a distance has mostly ground to a halt due to the challenges of pre-testing.
- In the absence of standardized pre- and post-tests, some teachers have developed formative assessments to inform instruction.
- Programs are relying on teachers to track student progress and then report up.
- Programs are trying to respond creatively and flexibly to changing conditions, but have many policy-related questions that will impact their decisions.

Innovations/Recommendations

- Demonstrate continued demand for services by documenting waiting lists.
- Stay flexible in responding to learner needs, shifting resources, and policy changes ("regroup, redesign, [and] refashion . . . [be ready to] drop other things").
- Prepare for phased change.
- Use existing or establish new partnerships to sustain recruitment efforts.
- Maintain communications with enrolled students who are not attending; find out why and how program can help, and offer support.
- Adjust orientation using technology and make teachers as available as possible to learners to support the entry and retention in programs.
- Rethink assessment strategies to leverage technology for accountability purposes; modify accountability policies, encourage teacher-designed formative tools.

Silver Linings

Although much of this report outlines challenges that learners, teachers, administrators, and state staff have experienced because of COVID-19, as a popular saying goes, every cloud has a silver lining. Even as they dealt with massive change and uncertainty, interviewees pointed to such silver linings. Many stated that being "forced" to offer distance education had clear benefits.

Benefits of Distance Learning

Moving instruction online went more easily than some interviewees expected, and staff identified advantages of doing so. For some there was a sense that being forced to move online meant they made a change they had wanted but had not gotten around to. As one administrator said, "[It] has pushed us to make changes that we should have made all along." In talking about the sudden transition to online services, one ELL program administrator admitted he "thought that it would be a challenge to get learner 'buy-in' for [online learning]. But it wasn't hard at all. The students seem to really want to see the teacher and interact with the teacher." An ABE/ASE instructor saw the shift to online instruction as positive, as it "is forcing learners to go outside their bubbles, their comfort zones." An ELL instructor reflected, "Now we have the context—digital learning—to serve us. It became relevant to us in the absence of a brick and mortar classroom." Another instructor enthusiastically observed that "It's fun to see students who were quiet and reserved in the classroom blossom in the online environment! . . . [They are] discovering that online learning is okay, that they can do it." A state director added, "I really think it's going to change the landscape of adult education" because it provided learners options which they might not have thought possible before. Previously, there was very little distance education in the state, according to that state director, "but now . . . I think it will continue."

> "I love [distance learning] . . . . "We should have been doing it long ago . . . . I think we're never going back." (program administrator)

Staff commented on positive changes not just in urban areas with high connectivity rates and program density, but also in rural areas. One rural state director reflected, "Almost every situation has an upside." Before the pandemic, learners could have to drive 100 miles for class, but "now students can access classes online." Additionally, one teacher observed that the flexibility of online learning enabled some learners that had stopped attending due to logistical barriers to return. Programs could be more flexible in their course offerings and learners could access asynchronous instruction at a time convenient to them making it possible for some students to increase their program contact.

Staff Response

State and program leaders praised staff for so effectively stepping up to the plate during the first weeks of the pandemic, both in getting their classes up and running and communicating with learners. An administrator said, "I think you learn a lot about your team in a pandemic. You realize what's really important. Our teachers have been

> "We're saving each other, in a way, and I feel really good about the communication with our staff. We meet more often. We talk more. We're keeping ourselves sane by helping other people right now . . . ."

taking the initiative to reach out to students, to be really creative, think outside the box." Another urban administrator saw his staff having "a sense of common cause. Everyone really embraced online learning and distance learning as a project, so things were very fast-paced and intense, and there was actually an increase in staff interaction in a lot of ways."

Many staff members demonstrated high levels of commitment, adaptability, and supportiveness. For example, a program director related, "One of my highly skilled instructors didn't want to move to remote learning but once she started Zoom sessions, she's doing the most [sessions] of all the instructors." An instructor remarked about returning from break to a new staff environment: "It was very supportive, and I saw people come together . . . giving [each other] extra space and flexibility." A program administrator was relieved when her staff was willing to work through spring break to make sure they did not lose all their learners. "I'm fortunate that I have the staff that I do. They responded immediately and jumped on board once they knew what we were doing. . . . Everyone was working very hard."

Learner Response

Adult learners showed resilience as well. One administrator observed that adult learners were helping each other. "We have [learners] who come [here], and they are taking in other families who have lost their jobs. I think it's really pulled people together amongst the fear and anxiety. . . . We have students checking on other students. . . . We're hoping that continues after this [pandemic] is over." In a local jail, incarcerated tutors are continuing to tutor peers, according to a program director who was "inspired by tutors who are jumping in and switching" to virtual options. "People joining together to help is cool."

Many adult learners were eager to reconnect with teachers and peers online. In one program, a student services coordinator claimed, "[We] have amazing learners that get along really well. . . . Their bonds are getting stronger. People who weren't as tolerant of other learners seem to be more tolerant now, because "we're all in this together, [it's] a level playing field." Another student comes every day to the online office hours. He says it makes his day better." "The fact that the students are so happy [to be in class]" impressed a program director. "They are literally thrilled to be online with their teachers and their class, especially when they get to talk to each other. They are so grateful for having this opportunity."

Key Takeaways

- Despite all the challenges that have been encountered, program staff can see some benefits emerging from the shift to distance education.

- Teachers and administrators have demonstrated commendable commitment to providing continuity of services for learners.

- Although the circumstances were of no one's choosing, some were glad to finally be learning how to do distance education.

- Distance education extended learning opportunities by creating flexible options for students to learn in their own time or without the requirement of on-site attendance

Future

Not surprisingly, the dominant theme across respondents regarding the future is uncertainty, which makes planning difficult. There were questions about when programs would return to a face-to-face format and what that would look like. Yet, most saw the moment as an opportunity to think ahead, often by first acknowledging that "this [distance education] is a direction we needed to push our program in anyway" and that they would continue to integrate digital learning into their program formats even once they could return to their physical spaces. Distance learning begun during the pandemic was viewed as an opportunity to expand access to adult education, for example, to those who live far from programs or lack transportation or childcare. However, there was an acknowledgement that disparities in access to devices and broadband would have to be addressed robustly if this opportunity were to be equally available to all learners.

> "There are so many things possible that everyone thought impossible."

The survey results indicated that program administrators intended to continue offering both intake and instructional activities at a distance; only 1 of the 204 administrators who answered the question said they would not provide instruction online in the fall of 2020 and 116 of them said they were already planning to offer intake and orientation online.

> "I think we cannot go back to the way we did things completely, [but] we are gonna have to address the digital divide at some point."

Several strategies were described that will be instituted when things get back to "normal" that could help programs better prepare for future emergencies. One frequently repeated strategy shared in the interviews was to build online learning into every face-to-face course so learners can become familiar and comfortable with the technology. Program staff spoke of the importance of having current learner contact information in case of emergencies like the one created by stay-at-home orders and suggested that a part of onboarding should be registering them for online education tools. Programs want to be better prepared for the unexpected.

> "This has given us a great lesson of what we need to do in the future and what we need to incorporate. You never know when this is going to happen again."

In the short run, programs are planning for altered summer and fall 2020 schedules with plenty of allowance for learners to make up lost time and missing work. One program coordinator stated that once they can reopen, they would suspend managed enrollment to get as many learners enrolled or re-enrolled as quickly as possible. Other programs anticipate some structural changes in the future such as a reimagined tutor training that includes distance learning as a topic and a modified orientation to support learners who would otherwise have difficulty adjusting to online instruction. Most are thinking about how to recruit students or bring in those who are on a waiting list.

Interviewed staff also described a need for longer range planning that will determine which tools they will continue using and creating a "hybrid classroom environment . . .

> "It will be an evolution [based] on learning where the sweet spot is."

[that takes advantage] of some of the things that actually have worked really well about remote learning." For one state director, forward planning means examining the post-COVID-19 labor market in relation to training that can be done remotely and that matches job openings. Another state director talked of the need for every program to have an updated distance learning plan that includes a minimum digital literacy requirement for teachers. One program described the need for a strategic visioning session to consider the parameters of a new normal that routinely includes distance learning opportunities. Lastly, one instructional coach noted that future planning should be informed by learners. Respondents felt certain that any "new normal" would continue to include some form of digital learning even when face-to-face learning is possible.

> "We've been saying for a long time that we need to move to more digital online learning, but not doing it to the extent that we should. What the pandemic has done is made us do it, and now we know we can do it."

There was considerable evidence of remorse among state and program staff that there had not been more distance learning opportunities available prior to COVID-19. As one administrator stated, "We probably should have given more instruction [using] distance learning. . . . It should have been part of our program." The words "should have" appear frequently throughout the data. In some cases, these words seem to signal a sense of deficiency; in others it is more an acknowledgement that it simply would have been good to act sooner, before the crisis hit. Either way, however, there was a sense that the time spent working at a distance was well spent; it was a spur to action that many people felt was necessary. Most seemed to believe not only that distance education will be a part of the new normal even when face-to-face instruction is a safe option but that it will be a benefit to learners.

> "What is learning going to look like in the future? Adaptability is the survival skill of the day. . . . We talk about it with learners, but we have now started to think about if for all of us."

Key Takeaways

- Most programs anticipate permanently incorporating distance education into their services.
- The future is very uncertain, but programs are beginning to try to plan for the eventuality of a blended learning context for the future.
- Many believe that even when they can open up their physical spaces again, a blend of face-to-face and distance learning will be advantageous for many learners.
- More professional development, more access to devices and broadband, and more understanding of effective blended (face-to-face and online) learning will be necessary if a variety of distance education formats become the new normal.

Conclusion

Despite little or no preparation, the field rose to the challenge of providing ongoing distance educational opportunities and intensive supports to adult learners. The process has not necessarily been easy or smooth, but state and program staff have rightly taken pride in their accomplishments. Although many learners have engaged in the new formats, many others have unfortunately been left behind. They have been unable or unwilling to learn at a distance. Situational barriers are one factor, but access to devices and broadband are another. This reality lays the needs bare: extensive supports must be provided for learners to help them overcome obstacles to participation at home and work and to eliminate the divide between those who can access online learning opportunities and those who cannot. Along with this, practitioners at all levels will continue to need extensive professional development that is targeted to their particular contexts and appropriately paced to accommodate their busy work lives, and they need to be paid for the additional time they commit to this endeavor.

Almost everyone acknowledges that distance learning is here to stay, either by necessity or preference and many see great advantages in the opportunities it offers. However, there is much to be learned about how to do it equitably, effectively, and efficiently. Additionally, there are many policy concerns that must be addressed, especially with regard to funding, assessment, and monitoring contact hours for learners working remotely. Given the new normal that COVID-19 has brought upon us all, there is a clear imperative for investment in technology tools, hardware and broadband, professional development, and research that can insure all learners participate in high quality education, whether it is offered in a face-to-face, distance, or blended format. This report begins to paint the picture of where the field is with this now, and where it needs to go to more fully accomplish this.

About E-BAES

The Evidence-Based Adult Education System (E-BAES) initiative began in early 2019, in response to a need for national research in adult education. E-BAES is led by the Open Door Collective (http://www. opendoorcollective.org/), a program of Literacy Minnesota (https://www.literacymn.org/). A volunteer E-BAES taskforce, led by Eric Nesheim (Literacy Minnesota) and Margaret Patterson (Research Allies for Lifelong Learning), consists of 30+ researchers, practitioners, government officials, professional developers, and education leaders. E-BAES' plan of action includes initial planning steps, to launch the E-BAES national network model, and implementation steps. On the taskforce's recommendation, the initiative will "start small and build" so that E-BAES' national network model has time to grow, complete its initial projects, and conduct research that has a positive impact on practice and adult learner outcomes.

"COVID-19 Rapid Response Report from the Field" is E-BAES' first project, gathering and compiling data on how the field of adult education is responding to the coronavirus pandemic. Findings in this paper are meant to inform the field and offer useful suggestions that peers can share with each other. Later phases of this work are being planned for fall and winter 2020.

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About EdTech Center @ World Education

The EdTech Center @ World Education was launched in October 2015 to leverage new digital technologies to increase the reach and impact of adult education. Housed at World Education in Boston, the staff designs and implements their work in collaboration with their EdTech Partners, who are a "Dream Team" of go-to experts in using educational technologies to increase the education, career, and life outcomes of lower-skilled adults and youth.

EdTech Center is one of few centers promoting learning exchange and partnership between edtech leaders in the United States and international experts.

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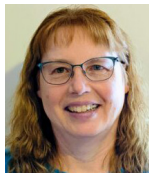
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