

DC Action Research Distance Learning Project



J. Michelle Johnson, State Director, DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Adult and Family Education

District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Project

- OSSE Adult and Family Education (AFE), in collaboration with the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), and IDEAL Consortium:
 - launched the Action Research Distance Learning (ARDL) Project, integrating action research with the IDEAL Consortium's course on the foundations of distance education and blended learning.
 - modified IDEAL 101 to be delivered as a six-week online course designed to simultaneously introduce practitioners to participatory action research as well as distance/blended learning principles, strategies, and best practices.
 - offered face to face professional development workshops and technical assistance on action research throughout the project.



District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Project Team

- Dr. Heather Bruce, who serves as the principal investigator for the ARDL Project, is the program director of the Graduate Certificate and Master's in Adult Education Program at the UDC. She has more than 30 years of experience in adult and postsecondary education, training, organization effectiveness and change management.
- Dr. Lawrence Bussey, who serves as the co-investigator of the ARDL Project, was a member of UDC State Education Agency Action Research Project team, an adjunct professor with the UDC Graduate Certificate Program in Adult Education, and a monitor for the UDC SEA funded adult education programs for more than eight years.
- J. Michelle Johnson, who also serves as a co-investigator on the ARDL Project, is the state director for Adult and Family Education at OSSE. She served as a member of the UDC State Education Agency Action Research Project team for three years, has facilitated the IDEAL 101 – Distance Learning course for two cohorts of adult education teachers and has supported agencies in the development and implementation of distance learning plans.
- Jen Vanek, Ph.D., Director of Digital Learning and Research, directs the IDEAL Consortium and implements the field testing of technologies in which the Employment Technology Fund invests. Her recent work centers on creating online content for Adult Basic Education (ABE) learners and supporting the professional development of English as a Second Language (ESL) and ABE teachers in the area of digital literacy, distance learning, and adult career pathways.



District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Project Participants

- All 10 OSSE AFE Integrated Education and Training (IE&T) providers were invited to participate in the project.
- Key project participants included the local program manager and one instructor.
- Incentives:
 - IE&T Provider Agency - \$2,500
 - Computer equipment, software, student incentives, substitute teachers, tutors
 - Local program manager - \$1,300
 - Instructors - \$1,300
 - Students - Gifts card, laptop computers
 - Learning gains (measurable skill gains and scale score gains)
 - Student persistence in engaging in distance education and completing online instructional activities




District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Project Participants (Cont.)

- Participants developed a combined Action Research Distance Learning Implementation (ARDL) Plan that addresses recruitment, screening, orientation, instruction and assessment of distance/blended learning participants.
- Each of the IE&T provider agencies piloted its Action Research Distance Learning Implementation Plan during a four-month period.
- During the implementation period, ARDL participants collected qualitative and quantitative data, made observations, gathered student feedback, and reflected on their practice in preparation for the drafting of the ARDL research report and poster presentation.



District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Plan Template

	<p>DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Adult and Family Education and IDEAL Consortium</p> <p>Action Research Distance Learning Implementation Plan Template</p>
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Agency/Site Name:	
Address:	
Instructor Name:	
Instructor Email:	
Instructor Phone:	
Administrator Name:	
Administrator Email:	
Administrator Phone:	
Name of IE&T Program:	
Brief Description of the IE&T Program:	



District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Project - Reflections

Reflections from project participants:

- *This study provided insight into how to use blended and distance learning to infuse Integrated Education & Training (IE&T) services into evening programming, allowing AoH to realize a long-term goal of supporting our working evening students to advance along their career pathways. Vital to the success of this pilot program were supportive, flexible, and cooperative evening instructors and administrators. Sasha Lotas, Academy of Hope (AoH) Public Charter School*
- *We introduced our Action Research Distance Learning project to the MA students during their 4-day orientation at the start of the year. During this time, we facilitated important sessions that would prove useful for implementation and data collection analysis. . To prepare learners, we had an entire evening devoted to logging into and practicing using WIN Learning. All students logged in for the first time together, face-to-face, with two staff members rotating for troubleshooting. Any problems or questions regarding the platform were able to be addressed then. On this evening, students also took a NorthStar Digital Literacy Assessment - Microsoft Word test, and logged on to their Google Classroom and Google Drive for the first time. We also conducted a needs assessment during this period. Elizabeth Bowman, Beth Kushner & Reena Gadhia*
- *The Catholic Charities team had three key successes: enhancement of the instructor's skills through the professional development opportunity; expansion of instructor's and students' technology skills; and an increase in student engagement. For our instructor, the professional development received was invaluable to her individual growth. The increase in confidence and her growth as a team member is something that cannot be measured. Bridgett Malley, Catholic Charities*
- *We learned that it is acceptable to have high expectations of adult learners. Initially, the participants were reluctant to buy into the use of technology. When we stated that this was a workforce program and the technology skills they gained would be transferrable to college and careers, they got very interested. As time went on, the participants started spending more time working on their online lessons in the computer lab or at home, the more they understood the correlation between technology and workforce training to college and careers. Troy Shockley & Darryl Robinson, Congress Heights Training Center*



District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Project - Reflections (Cont.)

Reflections from project participants:

- *One of the wonderful occurrences in the project was to see the peer teaching that occurred – and to see the participants using technology tools to provide this assistance to one another. Participants kept in contact with one another via cell phones, Facebook and other social media platforms. Lettica Nichols, Four Walls CTEC*
- *One of the benefits of OIC-DC's participation in the ARDL Project was the collaboration and teamwork that developed between the nursing staff and the literacy instructor. Additionally, OIC-DC staff increased their knowledge regarding the implementation of blended learning while also learning more about the instructional platforms and e-learning resources that are available in the Home Health Aide program. Dr. Jessyna M. McDonald/Dyanne Little, OIC-DC*
- *The project provided the instructional team with an exquisite opportunity to deliberate on how the school can more effectively use blended learning tools and online platforms, and it helped the team better understand that online tools are not enough to engage students in of themselves – that they are only one part of the instructional puzzle. Beatriz Vargas & Komal Bansal, YouthBuild Public Charter School*
- *The Action Research Distance Learning Project has been an eye opening experience in that it has allowed us to take the time to focus the structure of our distance learning program and refine the procedures for recruitment and screening. In addition, we have been able to focus on the actual educational and technological barriers that DC residents face and that need to be remediated for them to be successful in our programs. We have had the opportunity to assess, screen and analyze participants' scores on the Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment. YWCA NCA was able to identify technology barriers revealing that a majority of students need to develop basic computer skills before participating in distance learning. Dana Campbell, YWCA-NCA*
- *The ARDL Project has prepared us to continue to serve our students during the current pandemic and for this we are so thankful! (Bridgett Malley, Catholic Charities)*

District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Project (Cont.)

- OSSE AFE continues to work with local program providers to enhance and implement their plans.
- Offered, in collaboration with IDEAL Consortium, additional professional development to two Gateway to Careers providers and other staff within each agency who did not participate in the initial project
- Administered Distance Learning Capacity Surveys to
 - Local Program Providers
 - Staff
 - Students



District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Project (Cont.)

All 12 OSSE AFE providers responded to the survey:

- 100% (n=12) are offering adult education and literacy, tutoring and workforce preparation services at a distance only.
- 83% (n=10) are offering workforce training at a distance only, 8% (n=1) is considering offering all or some components of workforce training at a distance, and 8% (n=1) does not offer workforce training services.
- 67% (n=8) are offering supportive services at a distance only and 33% (n=4) are offering supportive services onsite and at a distance.
- 75% (n=9) are offering transition services to students at a distance only, 17% (n=2) are offering transition services onsite and at a distance, and 8% (n=1) is not currently offering transition services.
- 83% (n=10) feel prepared to offer services at a distance and 17% (n=2) do not feel prepared.

Next steps:

- Provide computers to students.
- Provide computers and cell phones to staff to use at home, as needed.
- Encourage staff to increase their knowledge of and/ or access to OSSE AFE and other online resources.
- Require/encourage staff to participate in professional development.
- Provide staff with instructional materials and supplies to use at home.
- Purchase workbooks for students to complete at home.
- Request technical assistance from OSSE, when needed.



District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Project (Cont.)

86 staff responded to the survey:

- 93% (n=80) staff have a computer at home.
- 90% (n=77) staff have a cell phone or home phone.
- 91% (n=78) are prepared to offer adult education and literacy, workforce preparation, workforce training, supportive and transition services to students at a distance.
- Most needed resources and supports:
 - Faster computer
 - Faster internet
 - Increased knowledge of and/ or access to OSSE AFE and other online resources
 - Professional development

District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Project (Cont.)

178 students responded to the survey:

- 48% (n=86) students have a computer at home.
- 67% (n=120) students have a cell phone or home phone.
- 45% (n=80) students indicated that mornings are the best time to participate in distance education.
- 63% (n=112) students indicated that they are ready to participate in distance education.
- Most needed resources and supports (barriers):
 - Computer at home
 - Internet access at home
 - Money to purchase a computer/internet access
 - Eliminating distractions at home
 - Staying motivated

District of Columbia - Action Research Distance Learning Project (Cont.)

- OSSE AFE provided additional funding to providers to purchase the fiscal, human and material resources need to offer IE&T services at a distance.
- IE&T providers received the survey results and were instructed to use this data and the funding received from OSSE AFE to address the needs identified by themselves, their staff and students.
- OSSE AFE has been sharing the distance learning surveys, plan template, resources and lessons learned with its WIOA core partner agencies.



Contact Information

- J. Michelle Johnson, State Director JMichelle.Johnson@dc.gov | (202) 741-5533
- Cynthia Brown | Cynthia.Brown2@dc.gov | (202) 741-5532
- Stacey Downey | Stacey.Downey@dc.gov | (202) 727-8446
- Nakia Lynch | Nakia.Lynch@dc.gov | (202) 741-5530
- Tracy Richard | Tracy.Richard@dc.gov | (202) 741-5531

If you have questions, please feel free to also contact us at OSSE.AFETA@DC.GOV.

