

# What Tech Skills Do Learners Need to be Successful Studying Online

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**Marian Thacher:** I'm going to turn the mic over to Mariann Fedele to introduce our speaker.

**Mariann Fedele:** Thank you Marian. Hi all. This is Mariann Fedele, the director of CALPRO, and I am very, very happy to introduce you to a colleague of mine Dr. Heidi Silver-Pacuilla who's a Senior Research Analyst with the American Institutes for Research which is also the parent organization of CALPRO.

Heidi has done a lot of work with CALPRO and we're looking forward to engaging her as we go forward with our project and she's provided technical assistance on research and policy associated with adult learning and has been involved with the development and conduct of CALPRO's online courses which I hope many of you have taken or will certainly go to our Web site to see what's available for this program year.

I am also very pleased to be partnering with OTAN to bring you this distance learning forum and to bring Heidi to a supportive role to all of California's leadership projects. We are really happy about that.

Heidi has a 20 year background working in literacy. In addition to the work she is going to be talking about today, which is really I think of as a seminal work done for the National Institute for Literacy exploring the threshold language and literacy skills that adult learners need to work independently online, she's also been very involved with the American Institutes for Research's adult education projects, including the National Reporting System project, the NRS as many of you may know it, the Explicit Literacy in Adult ESL Study and the Adult Education Content Standards Project.

At AIR we are really excited about a project we are going to be beginning this year and that will be going on into the future called the Supporting Teacher Quality Across Content Area's in Adult Education Project and AIR is going to be working with the U.S. Department of Ed. Office of Vocational Adult Education on a national technical assistance on professional development projects so you may see Heidi both through the work here at CALPRO that we do in partnership with OTAN as well as through this national professional development project.

She's published a number of scholarly works in adult pedagogy, disability services and in the integration of technology into literacy and learning and she does a lot of technical assistance work on many AIR projects that include product development on projects addressing the needs of struggling students through innovative uses of technology. It's a pleasure to work with her and a pleasure to introduce you to her today. Thank you.

**Heidi Silver-Pacuilla:** Hello everyone. I feel so special. Thank you for the wonderful introduction and thank you for the opportunity to deliver this webinar. This is a treat. This is

work I did a couple of years ago. It took a couple of years to get published and now it's out and about and it has generated some nice conversations, given people some footing to get some ideas going in their programs and their states on the use of technology for adult literacy and adult ESL students so I couldn't be happier about that. I'm happy to see all of you today and maybe I know some of you from a CALPRO class I taught on learning disabilities, so that's fun. I am in charge here so I need to advance my own slides.

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This is the title of the article and it is available for download at [nifl.gov](http://nifl.gov). It's on the home page so you'll be able to find it.

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NIFL decided to ask for this work because they realized that the world was changing. Student and adult learners had more access to computers and the internet and what did that mean? Were the systems that we had now working? We often have computer classes that we require students to take before they can take more computer classes. What should be in a computer class? These were all questions that kind of prompted the commissioning of the paper. They aren't the research questions but looking at the new world order in 2005 and how ubiquitous or not access was for adult learners they wondered which adult learners. Who could benefit? How low literacy levels could benefit from using online learning? They put the word independent in the title so we're going to talk about independent in just a minute.

But I wanted to ask you how many of you have taken an online course or learned independently a particular topic that you put your mind to? Go ahead and raise your hand, Marian is showing you where to do it, or a green check is fine. So several of us have taken online courses now and my guess is that, more and more of you are doing it all the time here, my guess is that many of our adult learners now in 2009 have also. I just want to preface this with the work I did was in 2005 and of course the work that was published at that time was even older so they were really looking at what was happening in say 2005.

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The methodology that I used to address this question, given the fact that the research base in adult literacy is a little shaky to say the least, was to try and triangulate from what we did have. We did have large scale surveys. We had the NAAL; it had just come out. We had the Longitudinal Study of Adult Literacy that Steve Reder was running out of Portland State University. There were international surveys that looked at whole countries so I used these large scale surveys to get a snapshot of what was going on. I looked at what online resources were available to supplement instruction. I had phone calls with experts in the field with experience creating content and online learning portals for this population to find out what they knew, one of them being your very own John Fleischman. And then I engaged practitioners through the NIFL listserv and actually Mariann helped me be a guest moderator so that was fun to work with her in that way.

So I tried to triangulate from all these different sources of information from very high level large scale surveys all the way down to practitioners who said 'yesterday my students and I did xyz' so big view all the way down to yesterday.

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There are some key definitions that you need to understand before you can read the report and not argue with it all the way through because these words are so loaded, the words in the title.

So for Online what we agreed to was that the activities that people were engaging in were web-based content and an internet connection was critical to that experience, at least for part of the time. So it was not CD ROMs, it wasn't video check out, it was online with an internet access.

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Independent was particularly critical. What does that mean? We determined that we would call this activities that are engaged in by users outside of class time, and as life went along we realized that much of the research is about supplemental instruction not pure independent of class time. So outside of class time, could be supplemental but people did not have to be sitting alone in their den doing this to be considered an independent activity. I'm going to say more about that in a minute.

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What does Learning mean? We decided that learning, for this paper, meant activities that are either self-directed or self-studied towards an academic or credentialing goal. So self-study worked its way in here as it does in Steve Reder's longitudinal studies. It's a very important term and we know from his work that many, many more students are doing self-study than are attending our classes so this is something that we need to understand as adult teachers.

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And lastly Success: what do we mean by success? Especially when you're talking about something that doesn't get credited, that doesn't get scored right? So we determined that success for this paper would mean activities that left the user feeling satisfied or that he or she had fulfilled a question or search, found helpful information or advanced target skills. So that is a very, kind of strange definition of success but when you realize what we are trying to study it was self-directed learning. How do you label success for self-directed learning?

Now I want to jump back to the word Independent for a minute. We are Americans. Hello Nancy in Toronto. You can happily call yourself Canadian here because Americans are very big on independence to the point that we like to see that we can learn on our own, we like to be able to make it on our own, and yet that's not really how we actually do things. When you really watch somebody they are often asking their colleagues, walking down the hall to ask a coworker 'how do you do this?', 'hey I'm stuck', turning to their neighbor in class and saying 'what do you make of this question?' I know that when I get stuck on the computer the first person I call is my now 17 year-old son. I don't feel like I'm alone. I will turn and ask somebody pretty quickly before I get so frustrated that I turn off the computer.

So let me ask you: When you think about the last thing you learned how to do on the computer, it could be anything, it could be how to sort columns in an excel spreadsheet, it could be how to download a music file to your iPod, anything that you learned recently working online, did you

ask or watch somebody else? So give me a check mark on that. (Presenter checks the Attendee List window) Oh, the Canadian comes on first. I think that many, many of us are asking each other and I think that we need to encourage that and learn how powerful that social learning is and the social modeling of technology. We often watch our kids and then learn how to text. We watch our kids and learn how to turn on the Wii. All of those things are not usually learned by reading the manual and so I think that the findings of the group in England, their big study was called Adult Learning @ Home, where the at is the at sign, Adult Learning @ Home, they found a huge role for family and friends in adult skill learning. I would like to emphasize that in my work and make sure that those of us who are in positions of educators emphasize that.

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So the big studies that I looked at, the ones that occurred in the United States are the National Assessment of Adult Literacy and the Longitudinal Study of Adult Learners, that's the one that Steve Reder has been running and he actually contributed unique analysis to the report.

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In the NAAL, which I'm going to talk about most today because I was able to, the NAAL had just been published, the data files had just been published when I was writing this and I was able to get in there and do some unique analysis on technology.

So most of you probably know about the NAAL and have read some of the fact sheets and are comfortable with the language of the NAAL; the Below Basic, Basic, Intermediary and Proficient and you know there are scales; Prose, Document, Quantitative and Health. So I'm going to show you some analysis that I did on technology use.

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Now the factors in the literature on who was using technology in 2003 when the NAAL was collected and probably up until 2006 for this list. Since then technology use has absolutely exploded and if you read some of the new pew reports you will see that immigrants, for example, have more cell phones per person than middle class non-immigrant Americans. The use of technology has really shifted in the last couple of years but for the NAAL, to analyze the NAAL, these are the kinds of factors that would play into how technology was defused in the population in 2003.

You would see that age plays a role; older adults use less. Gender was still playing a role in 2003 although it was fading. Race and ethnicity; whites were using technology more than immigrants in 2003. Educational attainment; you saw higher education levels with more technology use. Native language; English speakers used the internet, for example, much more. In 2003 there was so much less native language/other language Web sites. Now I am sure you know being in California with all of your languages there, there's just so much more content for speakers of other languages. Disability status has remained quite stubborn. It is associated with less technology use and household income we use to be able to say pretty clearly was associated with more technology use but even that's budging, especially with mobile access and different kinds of access.

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So what I did is make a profile in the data set of the NAAL and figure out who would be a tech user based on the questions they had asked people. So I figured someone who lived in a home with an internet or connected computer, who used the internet as least once a week to find public events or news, again I had to work with the questions they had asked, or who sent or received at least one email a week was a technology user and that represented 44 million American adults in 2003.

The non-tech user then is the opposite of all of those things. Didn't live in a home with a computer, didn't use the internet, did not send or receive at least one email a week and that represented 81 million Americans in 2003. So you can see the difference there.

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So when I analyzed literacy on the different scales I came up with this repeating pattern. It was so interesting. There is nearly an identical positive 10 point shift from Basic to Intermediate on all the scales between technology and non-tech users. You see more...let's see now. If I do this do you see my mouse? Give me a 'thumbs up' or something if you can see my mouse moving and circling. (Presenter checks Attendee List window for response) No. Ok, then I won't do that. I'll just explain it explicitly.

**Marian:** I fixed it. Now we should be able to see it.

**Heidi:** Ok. Thank you. Ok so here in the yellow, this little more than half tech users are Intermediate. Here's the legend here. Among non-tech users you see a 10 point drop in Intermediate and that shift is coming out of the Below Basic. Look at that. The Below Basic of non-tech users is 23% and this is Document Literacy. The Below Basic in tech users is only 13%. So let's keep going for a minute and look at the next one.

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Alright so here is Prose Literacy. Prose Literacy is...go ahead

**Marian:** I'm just going to interrupt you for a second. Deborah are you raising your hand because you have a question? Oh, nevermind.

**Heidi:** Ok. This is Prose Literacy. Prose is connected narrative texts, stories, etc. Tech users, again, little over half are Intermediate literacy levels, 13% are Below. Among non-tech users its 10 points less, 43%, and the Below Basic group is 10% higher. Ok so that holds true in Document and holds true in Prose.

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Here's Quantitative. Ok, so we've got 54% are Intermediate versus 44% and the Below Basic group, again, that's just about a 10 point spread. Now what we can't say is which direction this is going. It's a survey, all you can say is what is co-occurring. What we are seeing is higher literacy rates generally for people who use technology and that is a very slim definition of 'using technology' that I employed here. What we see are generally lower rates of literacy for people who don't use technology.

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Even on the Health Literacy scores. You see a large group of Below Basic and you see a smaller group of Below Basic among technology users and you think about how much health information is available on the internet these days. If you can't get to it you are out of luck because a lot of health material and nutrition material is only distributed these days on the web. It's not so easy to read every time but that's where it lives. Tech users had that 10% higher Intermediate level of literacy. So that was just so striking.

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And then last year the Prison survey was published. Maybe it's been just a little over a year. The Prison survey I did not have access to when I did my analysis, but low and behold when it was published it has the same spread. They also have a very slim definition of technology user. They say computer use for various tasks. So they're saying 'have you ever done word processing?' Used and never used. Have you ever used a CD ROM? Have you ever used a spreadsheet? And here are the literacy types. So in Document Literacy you see the average literacy rate about 10% higher, 10 points higher excuse me, for those who ever have used technology higher than those who have never used these particular technologies.

And again, what we can't say is what's causing what. That has to be answered by different surveys and different research methods. In the large scale survey you can't answer that question but you can say this is what's happening and this is very clear and now it's across 5 scales so I think it's really very solid.

Let's look at some other things that we find in the NAAL.

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Who is using technology and what do their scores look like? This is by age; young 16-18 to older. This is technology users on the left and their Document Literacy scores, non-technology users and their Document Literacy scores on the right. So you see higher, overall, Intermediate bars and colors in the technology users. Those higher Intermediate literacy rates that we were seeing in the pie charts and your seeing lower, I'm saying it the wrong way. You're seeing higher Basic and Below Basic rates in non-tech users. What you don't see is that only the young people are using technology. So I think that that's really changing and the over 65 is the population that we're really looking at as being left out of technology.

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In terms of Educational Attainment; people who are still in high school, so those are young, number 1, they are still growing their literacy right? We hope they are still learning if they're still in high school.

Here are our adult ed. people, right. Less than or some high school, these are people who have their GED, and then high school graduates and you see the literacy rates rise of course, we hope, with educational attainment.

This is technology use so these are technology users. I'm going to switch to the next slide so you can see non-tech users.

\*Slide 20\*

Here are non-tech users by educational attainment. Look at this one. I am hoping you are seeing my cursor. Give me a green check if you're seeing my cursor (Presenter checks Attendee List box). Ok. Aright thank you. Good. So these are our people here in the second cluster to the left, 'less than/some high school'. Look how many Below Basics we have that are non-tech users.

Let's go back and see our group.

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These are our people here, lots of Below Basic but not as many. Not as many people are in that category.

\*Slide 20\*

So here we are back at the non-tech users. There are some non-tech users who have succeeded, right, and they are in college, they have finished college or they have finished vocational school, but I think that you are going to see this in the next NAAL, you're going to see this starting to drop. It's hard to imagine a student getting through college these days without being tech literate. But these are our people and this is what we need to be looking at here and wondering why and wondering how to get technology to them and the role of technology in improving their literacy.

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Here is Native Language and this is something that you all should really be digging into the NAAL and struggling with and helping the rest of us understand what is going on with native language. This was a real grim finding in the NAAL, I think. For people who started school not speaking English they simply never caught up and that is a national shame. We really need to understand that and we look to you in California to help us understand how that can be improved cause you have the right population.

This is technology users by native language; English only, English and Spanish, Spanish only, etc., other native languages. These are the tech users....

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And these are the non-tech users. Much higher...oops. Oh ok.

\*Slide 21\*

You know what? I don't have the non-tech users in native languages. I think there was something missing from that data set.

So just looking at this we're seeing, look how low our Intermediate Document Literacy is. It's so low for those whose native language is Spanish, Spanish or Spanish plus another language. That needs to be addressed.

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Household Income as I said in 2003 and up through 2006 we were still saying as technology researchers that household income was very important to the uptake of technology and so here are some slides on the use of technology by people's income level and their Document Literacy scores. So of course you would expect to see people who are making more money, over toward the right, having higher literacy rates. I still am disturbed by the fact that so few people have proficient literacy rates. What does that mean? And you see higher rates of Below Basic and Basic literacy at the lower income end of the spectrum and we know that literacy and poverty are linked. There is no question about that. That has been studied at nauseam. We don't need to study that anymore but here is another factor and that is technology use. So here's the technology users, so look at that and we're going to look at this one.

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Look how many more Below Basic and Basic in these low income categories are here in the non-tech users...let's go back.

\*Slide 22\*

You see that? You've got much more Intermediate and even the Basic literacy rate in these low income clusters for technology users...

\*Slide 23\*

...than non-technology users.

\*Slide 22\*

Even with low income technology seems to be a mediating factor and we can't tell which way the relationship goes. Are people who are living in poverty and using technology, they're with greater literacy skills before they got to be using technology or are they using technology and improving their literacy skills? You can't tell from this survey but it's something that needs to be addressed because this is a clear finding. They are finding ways to use technology and it may be public libraries, etc. Different public places.

Now before I put up the next slide I wanted to ask a question. One of the questions on the NAAL gave me pause; do you ever feel limited by your computer skills? So I always ask that when I present this because there are things that I can't do that I actually think 'oh, I hope nobody knows I can't do that.' I think we all kind of feel that way but let's see what you think. Are there things that you can't do on a computer or in technology generally that in some way limit your job advancement potential? So I'm sorry you have to do this publically. (Presenter checks Attendee List box) Thank you. There you have it. It was kind of a silly question because we all could say that.

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People who took the NAAL were asked that question in terms of reading; whether their reading skills limited them. A lot, some, a little or not at all; I had to collapse them into dichotomous categories and if they felt limited by their computer skills. So I thought that was interesting.

As literacy decreased, right, towards the left, as literacy decreased people realized and felt more that they were limited by their abilities and that was true for computer skills too. They felt limited as their literacy rates were lower.

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So before I go on do you all have any questions? Let me just stop here for a second.

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Do you have any questions before I dig into the other part of the study? Alright. (Presenter is reading Chat box). 'There are many things I can't do, but I ask everybody' thank you Leila. That's a fantastic comment because that's what I was talking about in terms of independent. We are all smarter when we work together.

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That was my study of the large scale surveys, the big picture. Then I dug into the literature to find out what people were publishing, what studies they were publishing. As I said most of them looked at how teachers were using technologies to supplement instruction. There are just very few published studies on independent self-directed learning because what researcher can get funding for that right? It seemed like a no brainer once we had won the award and were asked to actually do the work. Well, how are we gonna find that? But the research is in the paper and all the citations are there so you can find what I found there.

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So I went to learn from the field also and as I said there were several content producers such as John, such as Alex Quinn who helped produce 411, TV 411; people who had done content for our population. We talked several times on the phone. Talking through what does it take, what's successful content, what's a successful interface, what's the real challenge here? And then I was on the NIFL Technology and Literacy Discussion list in the summer and heard some nice comments like this; that students do enjoy working at the computers, they want to feel part of the modern world, I like that, and learning technology is a great incentive for the lowest skilled people we serve and I just love hearing things like that because these people are parents they need to be helping their children with homework, all of the things that we all need to be doing and this just opens a whole new world for them.

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So from the listserv we heard the following themes: that aging equipment is a barrier, aging equipment in our programs as much as at home. The new digital content that's flooding the internet you really need a better connection, you need bigger pipes, you need some good equipment.

However the multimedia, multimodal engagement of technology learning is very effective and it's engaging for adult learners even though we get frustrated and don't have the same kind of confidence that young people have to just click around, we are still engaged by it.

Video games and online multiuser environments are compelling delivery alternatives. They are being developed at a very great rate and they are being used widely in training situations so somebody who goes for a UPS job these days does a whole virtual training system and they need to be able to navigate that and learn from that virtual, it's like a game, how many packages can you deliver? So we need to be teaching these to our learners, allowing them to get on them and clearly they're engaging.

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One thing that really emerged as a theme was that orientation activities are very important. When programs start up a distance learning program for their adults on waiting lists or for students who have to stop out, the orientation activities have proven to be very important. They promote retention, they make sure that students technical skills and equipment and their learning dispositions are matched to the offering. They provide a safe and penalty-free way to try out new learning modes, so that's very important. People can sign up, try it, not make a commitment, see if it's going to work and then have no penalty to leave. Orientations are just important in all kinds of ways but it would be nice if there were some shared standards on orientation, some shared manuals so we all are not creating from scratch. There are just not enough things that are shared in the field.

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We also heard that computer literacy courses compliment both academic and workforce skills. As I was saying, some industries now are using virtual training, even for their very entry level workers so our students need to be doing this and they can is the message here.

So distance pieces can be folded in. They can be taught as stand alone. They can be offered as drop-in labs with onsite support or on-call support. There's just a lot of creative maneuvering going on of how we are going to offer this to students and I know that you all had a call a couple of weeks ago talking about how could we be creative. You've got a mechanism to offer distance learning in California, and very little money now, but you've got the creative go ahead to try it and you need to get together. I will be interested to listen in with you as you think about all these things and figure it out.

I think it's also important to realize that students are engaging with the content and referring to each other. They are creating a network, they are recommending sites to each other, if you listen to your students you will hear them recommending sites and online content to each other. Have any of you had this experience? You can put up a check mark? And hear how they talk about online content, thank you Nancy, and how they share that. It's a very powerful way to get the word out and you also realize that they don't have a real vocabulary for sharing and neither do we. We tell each other 'hey, I'm trying this with my class, I really like it' and beyond really liking it there is no standard vocabulary to talk about what programs are doing for our students and that's something that I recommend we really need to look at; that we have some standards to evaluate sites and online content.

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So overall, on the key findings, I really come down on the fact that there are no low threshold levels. Everybody can get online if they have some help and the help can be in many, many forms. It doesn't mean that they are in a class and that they are registered and that their teacher

belongs to a program. There are lots of ways to deliver help but everybody can get online and even the lowest skilled workers, as Nancy knows from AlphaRoute that she's going to be sharing with you later in October, even the lowest skilled workers and learners can succeed and can engage in this content and this learning modality in a way that's very positive.

All reports indicate that learners are eager and there is no reason to underestimate what motivation can do for learning. I think for many years it was a touchy feely kind of word, motivation, and we took it for granted. I think that's a complete mistake and people are turning around a little bit on that. We cannot squander people's motivation. It is a key, natural resource that we need to take advantage of and if people want to learn something than that's where you deliver it.

When adult learners are engaging in online content they're reporting increased self-confidence, self-directedness and independence in their learning and those 3 terms are the key words that people will say over and over again 'if my students could be more confident they'd make bigger gains.' 'If they could self-study and be self-directed they'd make bigger gains.' 'If they could work on their own sometimes and not leave it only for the time in class, we would all be making bigger gains.' and these are key words, they don't show up on the NRS, I know I work for AIR, they don't show up on the NRS but they are key to learning. So this is a big positive for using technology and again, motivation, the adult learners themselves are so focused on work advancement. Again and again and again people connect technology advancement, technology proficiency with work advancement. They say that 'if I could, then I would be promoted at work, then I could work at dollar general, then I could do this, then I could do that. If only I could.' Work advancement is a real motivation to getting people some technology proficiency.

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So that's the key findings that we're looking for a balance between the task, the learner's skills and the available supports. As I said the supports can come in many forms and I would love to investigate ways to do that; have an on-call help line, a 1-800 number, having tutors on call, having people in labs that are open all hours so the learners can just drop in, having a tutoring core of young people who say 'here I can help you older learner.' There are so many ways we could do this. We just need to be creative.

Think about things that you do. You are probably, as I am, more confident and independent and self-directed in things that are easier for you. Would you say that's true? Give a check mark. (Presenter checks Attendee List box). And certainly for me, the things that are difficult and that I'm learning new for the first time, I'm gonna want a little more help. I'm gonna want a little closer support. I want a ramp that's a little bit easier and less of a learning curve and I think our learners are like that too. They may be able to just zip on to online math, get it, run with it, love it. They may need a little extra support to learn how to word process and use the spell checker, or vice versa. So it's a balance between the task, the skills and the available supports. What a person needs in one content area may not be the same in another. Sometimes I think that we lump people into a profile and not think about the situation.

I think social networks as I've said many times, have been just proven to be absolutely critical and there is no reason to not use family and friends. Have a family day so that the kids understand what the parents are learning and vice versa so they can go off and help each other.

We also know that adult learners are finding the sites that are built for them such as *English For All*, *TV411*, the *CDLPonline* with fantastic videos and the new *USA Learns*. The numbers of people who are finding these sites are incredible, in the millions, and they are coming from all over the world. They are learning English from everywhere with *USA Learns* for example.

What we don't have is an understanding of what they're doing there. We know they're getting there. We know they're clicking around. We know they're spending some time there. We don't know what they're doing there and the field is just ripe for some evaluation studies and some usability data. Get some good researchers to sit with some of these people and listen and watch and assess their skills before and after a semester of doing this. All kinds of models of research could come out of this. We really need to understand how emerging readers, adult readers and writers are engaging with online content.

We know that the rates of access and connectivity are growing but they are not ubiquitous yet among our population. There is still a lot of scrambling of 'I know somebody who's got a good internet connection. I go over to his house Wednesday nights. And whenever I can I go to the library sometimes and then they kick me off after 30 minutes'. There's a lot of scrambling for good access among our population. We need to understand what that means when we assign things in supplemental and how we chunk up online content for their use. If it's too big, too long, they may not be able to tackle it in the patchwork that they have.

I'm also fascinated by the emerging technologies and I think that's something that we all need to watch. All of this content that's being made available on cell phones, on iPod's, on cheaper MP3 players, on smart phones, there's just so much going on and we need to get ahead of that so we can deliver content and broadcast content to all of the millions of people who are not in our programs. We feel like we serve as many as we can every day but that is the tip of the iceberg of people who could be learning.

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So as I said it's the interaction between the learners' skills, the opportunities they encounter, and supports available that determines the threshold levels and that is situational; it could be different for different tasks, different times of the day, different situations. There are several questions here: how can we assess this, how do we match learners to opportunities, how do we help learners understand what supports are available to them once they get into online content? They may not have the strategies to learn from online content that would really benefit them. How do we support each other and trained instructors to help learners learn in various ways? How do we prioritize programs' opportunities, content, supports, platforms, etc., outreach? And that's what I'm hoping to learn as I stay on with these distance learning webinars happening in California over the next few months.

I'd like to hear from others and from you all, what you're thinking and how you're managing because you're really making it happen and you certainly have the populations to do it.

\*Slide 33\*

I'm going to stop and ask you all to chat in some questions and we'll get a bit of a discussion going here and in prep for the next session.

**Marian:** Heidi this is Marian and while we're waiting for people to chat in their questions if they have questions, I just want say thank you. This was so enlightening and even though I have read your study, just hearing you frame some of the issues was really helpful to me. One of the things I was wondering, one thing that's happened here in California with the budget cuts is that programs that never had waiting lists before now have waiting lists and so those students could be referred to a distance learning through some kind of online program but I wonder, if in your research, you heard of any exemplary screening tools? As you said it's not going to work for everyone. They are going to have to have the right combination of supports and I wonder if you feel like there is somebody out there that has the answer to how to screen students for that?

**Heidi:** Well, and I think Nancy, you'll have some answers to that when we hear from you. There are some screening tools being used by different programs and there are screening tools being used in Australia. You want to, for sure, screen for equipment. It's just a sure failure if somebody signs up for something that they can't log into later, but I would caution you from using a screening instrument that's much older than a couple of years because everyone is changing and technology is changing so rapidly. It might be the right thing to do to create a screening instrument for this group of people here on the call today because the kids are growing up digital now and even people who are not such kids are digital natives so we want to look for self-directed learning, you want to look for motivation and you definitely want to check for equipment. But I think that you would find some screening instruments out and about that are a little too old and have a bit too dated of an outlook.

**Marian:** I just want to repeat a question from Debbie Glass from Merced Adult School is wondering if anyone has instructors assigned to monitor distance learning online to be that person that answer student's questions by email or phone and how do you account for the hours of that person? In other words how do you pay that person?

**Heidi:** And that's not a question for me, that's a question for you all.

**Marian:** Yeah if anybody has an idea about that, please chat it in the Chat.

**Heidi:** And it's critical. Teaching online is not less time consuming. Anyone who's done it will tell you, it's not less time consuming.

**Marian:** Nancy's bringing up a good point that we have another session, a follow-up session to this one, on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, which is 2 weeks from today, also 1:30 to 2:30 and we're going to hear from Nancy from Toronto and other people from Toronto as well as John Fleischman and some people here in California about how they are answering some of these questions and there are plenty of spaces in that session so I encourage you to register for that. In fact I'm going to drop the link in the Chat in a second.

**Heidi:** Yeah that would be great. And I think it may be time to do another NIFL Technology Listserv conversation or if there is another similar listserv in California where you can ask these kind of programmatic, state-level requirement questions and get support from each other because like all of these questions about 'how can we?' 'Is it legal?' 'is it approved by our funding body?' there is a lot of misinformation and people are afraid to, you know, put their program at risk but there seems to be a lot of misinformation about things like that so getting real information out to people about what they can do and what they can offer I think is very important. Especially as we're trying to do things that are creative.

**Marian:** Everyone sorry. I didn't mean to freak you out but I just wanted to change the layout so that we can have this File Share pod down here on the bottom right and if you'd like to download the slides now or the instructions for joining the listserv you can. Any other questions? Thoughts? So I want to encourage you to sign up for the next session and also if any of you have a microphone, a headset with a microphone that you can attach to your computer and you'd like to use it then you would get to talk like we are right now and you are welcome to do that. So if you want to try that, like do a dry run before the next session just contact me or Branka or Penny here at OTAN or call the OTAN Tech Support number and we'll help you get set up with that. Heidi I want to thank you so much.

**Heidi:** This has been my pleasure. If I could be in anyway associated with shaking loose the notion that adults need to learn to read before they're allowed to use the computer I would be so pleased. With all of us doing it together maybe we can make it happen for our adults. The world needs them and they are waiting to be involved so I'm happy to be part of the series and I look forward to learning more from you all next time.

**Marian:** So everyone, if you look under your status on the bottom left you can click on *Applause* and we can give Heidi a hand and Mariann Fedele, any last words?

**Mariann:** No. I would also like to thank Heidi very, very much for her time today and for supporting all of California's adult leadership projects. Heidi, we're just looking forward to continuing to have you work with us through CALPRO and through CALPRO supporting all of the leadership projects. So again thank you and thanks Marian for planning this out with us.

**Marian:** Yes it's great and I'm looking forward to the next session and Heidi will be answering some more questions on the next session. Now when I close this meeting everyone, a new window is going to open, it might be behind this window, but just look for it because it's going to take you to the evaluation. Thank you so much. Have a great day.