



Technology for e-Teaching

Distance learning is now commonplace at colleges and universities, and it will soon be a widespread option for adult education students. The technology used to deliver distance learning to our students does not have to be intimidating to the student or the teacher. As with most processes, you should start with the familiar and move to the more complex as skills are mastered.

Telephones, including cell phones, are the most readily available technology and are necessary for maintaining contact with students. Professor Steven Donahue of Miami Dade College has taken telephone use to another level by developing the "Write by Phone" system for ESOL students (<http://s89496372.onlinehome.us/moodle/>). According to his press release, "The phone learning system is capable of processing student essays by telephone and returning instant holistic scores."

Video is another delivery system that is familiar to students and can be placed on a website for easy access. Instructional video clips for math topics are especially helpful, and video clips can incorporate other media forms. Our website, adulthood.owc.edu, hosts a video using PowerPoint and audio which was created with relatively inexpensive software called Camtasia (www.techsmith.com).

E-mail is, of course, an essential ingredient of any distance learning course. Students usually find e-mail an easy and effective way to communicate. As students become more comfortable with clicking and keyboarding, you may wish to introduce them to collaborative methods such as document sharing, chats, and message boards. The Virtual Classrooms section of our e-Teaching Toolbox has links to a free virtual classroom and the Moodle learning management system, both of which offer collaborative tools.

We will be using Elluminate Live! (www.illuminate.com) in order to supplement our training across the state. Our project does not endorse any commercial products, but we are able to use Elluminate through the resources of the Florida Distance Learning Consortium (www.distancelearn.org), for which we thank them.

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SeLF Training with Suzy Wood

- **June 28, 10:00 EDT – Elluminate Live! Web Conference** for all who attended SeLF trainings in Pensacola and Jacksonville and conference sessions, moderated by Suzy Wood.
- **June 29, 10:00 EDT – Elluminate Live! Web Conference** – Open to all adult education teachers and administrators throughout the state who would like an overview of the Successful e-Learning Forum, moderated by Suzy Wood. If you have not received an invitation, contact Suzy at woods@owc.edu.

Essay Writing and the e-Student

Essay writing is a subject that often makes our students anxious and reluctant. To instruct and assist students to become more confident in their writing ability, I have discovered several websites that my students rave about. The websites, along with a supplement of my own, have guided many students along the path of essay writing.

There are several websites that explain how to write an essay. Give students detailed instructions how to locate the website and what to read. There is also a website that explains the Language Arts, Writing Part II of the GED test and displays a GED essay scoring rubric. I give my students specific instructions to read this portion of the website and save or print the rubric as I will be grading their essay according to this rubric.

My job does not end here. I have typed an example of a GED essay and an explanation of how to write an essay that I e-mail to my students along with simple, step by step instructions of how to write an essay. I saved this in a folder so I do not have to recreate it each time I want to use it.

The first writing assignment is for students to write on the same topic as the sample essay. The essay is due within a week of assignment. Some students send it as an attachment; others type the essay in a regular e-mail. No one has snail mailed an essay.

When I receive the essay from the student, I write a detailed, bulleted evaluation of the essay using the scoring rubric. I edit the essay in Microsoft Word by highlighting in yellow changes that need to be made, keeping the reply short and to the point.

The feedback I have received on this teaching method is excellent. One student wrote to me that she never understood until now what she needed to do to make her writing better. Another student was so excited and challenged that she would ask for a new topic every week until she took the GED test. As e-teachers, we can take the mystery out of essay writing and guide students toward purposeful, proficient essays.

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[Websites mentioned above and Suzy's GED Essay e-mail are available in the e-Tips section of the SeLF e-Library.]
