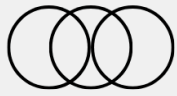
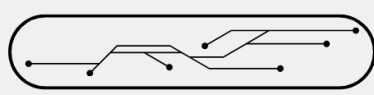


# 2025



## DIGITAL LEARNING INSTITUTE

### Friday, October 3 - ONLINE ZOOM CONFERENCE - FREE EVENT

PLEASE NOTE: Portions of this event will be recorded, and recording links will be added to this document after the event. All times listed are Central Daylight Time (UTC/GMT-5).

[PARTICIPANT MATERIALS FOLDER](#) - presentation slides, handouts, etc.

[EVENT EVALUATION](#) - to be completed after the event in order to receive CEUs

8:55 am

Join meeting and test your sound ([link located in your registration confirmation email](#))

#### 9:00-9:30 am - WELCOME AND OPENING SESSION

*Statewide Digital Learning Team Staff and Community Advisors*

([link located in your registration confirmation email](#))

9:30-9:45 - BREAK

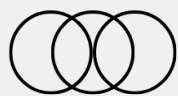
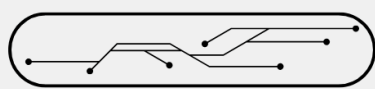
#### 9:45-10:45 am - CONCURRENT SESSION 1 (CHOOSE ONE):

a) **DL Basics 1: Distance Learning in Minnesota Adult Education**, *Elizabeth Bennett, Literacy Minnesota; Adam Kieffer, St. Paul Public Schools Adult Education; and Astrid Liden, Minnesota Department of Education*

This session provides an overview of distance education generally and of distance (asynchronous) learning in Minnesota Adult Education specifically. We'll discuss platforms, policies, requirements, best practices for SID, etc. ***DL Basics Session 1 is intended for ALL staff involved with any aspect of distance learning.*** [JOIN LINK](#)

b) **Canva 101: A Beginner's Guide to Graphic Design Tools**, *Katey Miller, Literacy Minnesota*

Say goodbye to boring slides, plain worksheets, and uninspired flyers! In this session, we'll dive into Canva, the free and easy-to-use graphic design tool that can help you transform your classroom or program materials without being a master of graphic design! Whether you're brand new to Canva, feeling overwhelmed by all of its options, or just curious about where to start, join us to discover just how easy (and fun) design can be! [JOIN LINK](#)



c) **Integrating Digital Literacy and Resilience in the ESL Classroom**, *Dr. Glenda Rose, Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning (TCALL)*

In today's increasingly digital world, English Language Learners (ELLs) face unique challenges—and opportunities—in developing the skills needed to thrive. This interactive session explores the concepts of digital literacy and digital resilience, offering practical strategies for integrating technology into ESL instruction. Participants will engage in hands-on activities, discover tools like the DART curriculum, and learn how to scaffold digital skills in emotionally safe environments. [JOIN LINK](#)

10:45-11:00 - Break

11:00-12:00 pm - CONCURRENT SESSION 2 (CHOOSE ONE):

d) **DL Basics 2: Instructional Approaches to Distance Learning**, *Elizabeth Bennett, Literacy Minnesota, and Adam Kieffer, St. Paul Public Schools Adult Education*

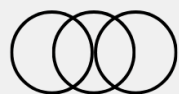
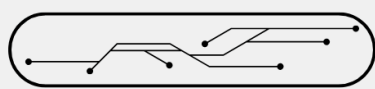
This session covers instructional approaches to distance learning and strategies to promote learner success and persistence. ***DL Basics Sessions 2-4 are intended for instructional staff and program managers and coordinators.*** [JOIN LINK](#)

e) **EdTech Routines: Easy Ways to Get Learners Using Technology in Any Class**, *Susan Wetenkamp-Brandt and Nicholas Houlson, Literacy Minnesota*

In this session, we will explore routines that are easy to implement in any class to get learners using technology and building digital skills. Examples will be drawn from the [EdTech Integration Strategy Toolkit](#) from the EdTech Center at World Education, [Northstar Digital Literacy](#), and from routines developed by Minnesota adult educators who have completed the *Building an EdTech Strategy Toolkit* cohort. [JOIN LINK](#)

f) **Minnesota Teacher Orientation to Ellii and Ellii Solo**, *Ben Buckwold, Ellii*

This session will support Minnesota adult education teachers getting started using Ellii and Ellii Solo with their learners. You'll leave with a clearer understanding of the similarities and differences between these two sides of the platform, as well as some tips and tricks for supporting learners with distance learning outside of class time. There will be time for Q&A. (This session will **not** cover the same content found in this [asynchronous training](#), which focuses on procedures for creating Ellii classes and learner accounts. The asynchronous training is required



for all staff to receive an account on the state-supported Ellii plan for Minnesota adult education.)

[JOIN LINK](#)

12:00-12:45 - LUNCH BREAK

12:45-1:45 pm - CONCURRENT SESSION 3 (CHOOSE ONE):

g) **DL Basics 3: Digital Literacy and Digital Resilience**, Adam Kieffer, St. Paul Public Schools Adult Education, and Elizabeth Bennett, Literacy Minnesota

This session covers all things Northstar, digital literacy, and digital resilience and their application in many different adult education contexts. **DL Basics Sessions 2-4 are intended for instructional staff and program managers and coordinators.** [JOIN LINK](#)

h) **Differentiated Digital Literacy Instruction**, Nicholas Houlson and Katey Miller, Literacy Minnesota

Students come from many different backgrounds, but they all have to share the same classroom! The goal of this session is to outline tips and best practices for differentiating digital literacy instruction. We'll share our own experiences from running push-in lessons and computer labs, where we regularly manage large classrooms with the full range of learners: from those who are just starting on their digital literacy journey, to learners eager to tackle more advanced skills.

[JOIN LINK](#)

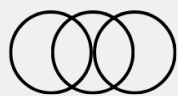
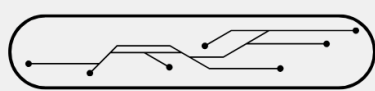
i) **Pointful Courses for Adult Career Pathways**, Danny Plyler, Edmentum

There's a new suite of [career pathways courses](#) this year! These courses are on the Apex platform, but they are available to all Minnesota adult education staff and learners through our state-supported Edmentum subscription. Minnesota staff can [request a staff account here](#), and attend this session to get started with the platform. [JOIN LINK](#)

1:45-2:00 - Break

2:00-3:00 pm - CONCURRENT SESSION 4 (CHOOSE ONE):

j) **DL Basics 4: Orientation and Digital Navigation for Distance & Digital Learning**, Adam Kieffer, St. Paul Public Schools Adult Education, and Elizabeth Bennett, Literacy Minnesota



This session will help you plan or refine your program's distance learning orientation and support processes. Effective orientation and ongoing support are critical for learner persistence in distance learning! ***DL Basics Sessions 2-4 are intended for instructional staff and program managers and coordinators.*** [JOIN LINK](#)

k) **Ellii in Action (Panel Presentation)**, *Laura Moyer, Metro North, and Azul Kmiecik and Ifeng Hsu, Literacy Minnesota*

You've asked, and we listened! Join this highly requested teacher panel as educators share how they are using Ellii, the new state-supported distance learning platform, in their own classrooms. Come discover how Ellii can support you and your students! (Q&A included: Bring your questions!) [JOIN LINK](#)

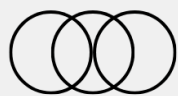
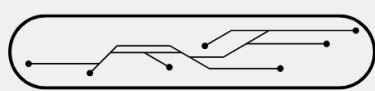
l) **Managing AI Waste**, *Rachel Riggs, World Education*

You may have heard or wondered about generative AI's impact on the environment. In this session, learn some teacher-friendly tips to manage AI waste based on the top priorities of the waste management hierarchy: prevent, reduce, reuse, and recycle! Of course, part of the "waste" that can happen is wasting your own time and energy. Learn the strategies that will keep you from spinning your wheels and help you hone in on high-quality AI-generated output. [JOIN LINK](#)

### Presenter Information

**Elizabeth Bennett**, *Literacy Minnesota* - Elizabeth is the Statewide Digital Learning Specialist at Literacy Minnesota. She has taught in a variety of general education and ELL/MLL roles in K-12 and adult education settings. Adult education staff, volunteers, and learners inspire her each and every day. ❤️ [ebennett@literacymn.org](mailto:ebennett@literacymn.org) [LiteracyMN.org/distancelearning](https://LiteracyMN.org/distancelearning)

**Ben Buckwold**, *Ellii* - After teaching English and developing curriculum in Tokyo, Japan, for five years, Ben launched Ellii (formerly known as ESL Library) in 2002. Ellii is a subscription-based resource site providing easy access to highly engaging, relevant content for English teachers. Over the past 20 years, Ben has held the position of CEO at Ellii and has helped build the company into one of the world's leading ELT content platforms.



**Nicholas Houlson**, *Literacy Minnesota* - Nicholas Houlson started in ABE/ELL in 2018, first as a volunteer and then as a VISTA for Literacy Minnesota's Lake Street Open Door Learning Center. His current role is to support learners and instructors at Open Door-Minneapolis in distance learning platforms and digital literacy. He has served on the Statewide Digital Learning Team since 2020. [nhoulson@literacymn.org](mailto:nhoulson@literacymn.org) [LiteracyMN.org/distancelearning](https://LiteracyMN.org/distancelearning)

**Ifeng Hsu**, *Literacy Minnesota* - Ifeng has been with Literacy Minnesota since 2022. He teaches two beginning English classes at Open Door Minneapolis as well as an Ellii conversation class. He has his B.A. in Language Teaching and a TEFL certificate. [ihsu@literacymn.org](mailto:ihsu@literacymn.org)

**Adam Kieffer**, *Hubbs Center/St. Paul ABE* - Adam is an ABE teacher and a member of the Statewide Digital Learning Team. He facilitates the Best Practices in Digital Learning cohort, and various other PD centering around distance learning, digital literacy, and digital resilience. [hubbsadam@gmail.com](mailto:hubbsadam@gmail.com)

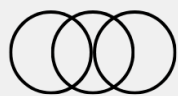
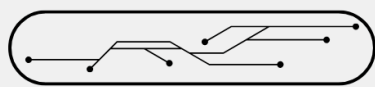
**Azul Kmiecik**, *Literacy Minnesota* - Azul (they/them) is an English Language teacher with Literacy Minnesota at Open Door Learning Center Minneapolis and is also a member of the Language and Literacy Advisory Committee. [akmiecik@literacymn.org](mailto:akmiecik@literacymn.org)

**Astrid Liden**, *Minnesota Department of Education* - Astrid Liden has been the Adult Education Professional Development Specialist with the Minnesota Department of Education since 2006. In this role, she coordinates the Minnesota Adult Education Support Network of supplemental service grantees and provides support and technical assistance to adult education staff and programs. Prior to joining the state adult education team, she worked as an ESL instructor, teacher trainer, and ABE program manager. [astrid.liden@state.mn.us](mailto:astrid.liden@state.mn.us)

**Katey Miller**, *Literacy Minnesota* - Katey (she/her) is currently a digital literacy teacher at Open Door-Minneapolis. She loves to explore and share new and exciting ways technology can help others accomplish their goals. Katey joined the Statewide Digital Learning Team in 2025. [kmiller@literacymn.org](mailto:kmiller@literacymn.org) [LiteracyMN.org/distancelearning](https://LiteracyMN.org/distancelearning)

**Laura Moyer**, *Metro North* - Laura Moyer, M.A. English, has taught advanced ESL & Citizenship at Metro North in Columbia Heights/Fridley for the past 11 years. Prior to working in Adult Ed, she taught college composition in Minnesota and Colorado. Laura is an avid runner, outdoor explorer, and Women Who Explore Ambassador. [Laura.Moyer@ahschools.us](mailto:Laura.Moyer@ahschools.us)

**Danny Plyler**, *Edmentum* - Danny Plyler worked in public education in North Carolina for 30 years as a classroom teacher, Instructional Technology Facilitator and a Director of Digital Teaching and Learning before retiring and joining the Edmentum team as a PD specialist. When he is not



training teachers, he enjoys music, disc golf and spending time with his family.

[Danny.Plyler@edmentum.com](mailto:Danny.Plyler@edmentum.com)

**Rachel Riggs**, *World Education* - Rachel Riggs, MATESOL, works on various research, professional development, and digital learning initiatives for World Education. Before joining World Ed, she taught ESOL in an adult education program. Rachel focuses on promoting digital equity and supporting educators in their use of technology. She is national adult education leader on digital skills, artificial intelligence, and professional development to support the open education movement. [Rachel\\_riggs@worlded.org](mailto:Rachel_riggs@worlded.org) [linkedin.com/in/racheltesol](https://www.linkedin.com/in/racheltesol)

**Dr. Glenda L. Rose**, *Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning (TCALL)* - As the Director of TCALL, Dr. Rose is a nationally recognized expert in digital literacy instruction and effective implementation of technology in adult education. She is the author of the DART curriculum and a passionate advocate for helping all adult learners build their digital skills. [glenda.rose@tamu.edu](mailto:glenda.rose@tamu.edu) [TCALL website](#)

**Susan Wetenkamp-Brandt**, *Literacy Minnesota* - Susan is the Senior Manager for Educational Technology & Digital Literacy at Literacy Minnesota. She has been working with technology and online learning in adult education for over 20 years. She provides training, technical support, and consultation to adult education practitioners on effective practices in technology integration, digital literacy, and distance learning. [swbrandt@literacymn.org](mailto:swbrandt@literacymn.org) [LiteracyMN.org/distancelearning](https://LiteracyMN.org/distancelearning)