

California Adult Education Digital Learning Guidance Reader's Guide

Chapter 6: Data-Driven Instruction and Digital Assessments

Chapter Summary

Purposes of Assessment – Assessment is essential for guiding instruction and improving learning outcomes in adult education. Ongoing assessment and consistent data collection help educators monitor learner progress while encouraging reflection and self-awareness. Digital tools expand access to data and make tracking progress more efficient. Assessments also promote learner ownership by helping individuals recognize strengths, address gaps, and stay focused on clear learning goals.

Advantages and Analyzing Data from Digital Assessments – Digital assessments provide timely, detailed information that supports effective instructional decisions. Immediate feedback helps learners and educators quickly identify strengths and areas needing improvement. Reporting tools reveal patterns in performance, allowing for targeted instruction and support. These insights can also indicate readiness for certification or further education. However, results should be interpreted carefully, considering factors such as attendance, timing, and external influences.

Standardized and Performance-Based Assessments – Standardized assessments are important for measuring progress, determining placement, and ensuring consistency across programs. They support diagnostic, formative, and summative purposes and help predict readiness for advancement. Performance-based assessments, such as citizenship tests, emphasize applying knowledge in real-world contexts. Remote testing has expanded access and flexibility but requires secure systems, identity verification, trained proctors, and attention to technical and cost challenges.

Digital Skills Assessments – Digital literacy assessments measure key technology skills needed for education and employment. Tools like Northstar provide structured modules, certifications, and instructional resources. Programs such as SkillRise and NEDP integrate digital skills into broader learning goals, while EL Civics and COAAPs incorporate online communication and internet safety into instruction.

Informal Assessments – Informal assessments offer ongoing insight into learner understanding. These flexible methods help educators quickly identify needs for additional support. Digital badging allows learners to document and showcase skills, increasing motivation, recognition, and the development of a portfolio reflecting real-world abilities.

Digital Assessment Tools – Various digital tools support effective assessment. Educators should select tools based on instructional goals, resources, and learner familiarity. Options

include discussion platforms, gamified tools like Kahoot and Quizizz, polling tools such as Mentimeter and Poll Everywhere, and quiz builders like Google Forms or Microsoft Forms. Digital portfolios can track growth over time.

AI in Assessment – Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude can support assessment by generating questions, adapting materials, creating rubrics, and analyzing data. Educators must review outputs to ensure accuracy, reduce bias, and maintain instructional quality.

Guidance Engagement Questions

Advantages of Digital Assessments – Digital assessments offer flexibility through varied question types like drag-and-drop or audio responses. For your learners who may struggle with traditional writing or typing, how could an audio or video response give you a more accurate picture of their actual subject-matter knowledge? What tool could you pilot that might enable varied types of interactions?

Analyzing Data from Digital Assessments – Assessment data can help staff understand learner progress, but scores need to be interpreted alongside attendance, timing, access, confidence, language, health, work schedules, and other factors. When a learner's assessment result does not match what we usually see from them, what else could you check before deciding what the score means? What data point, conversation, or follow-up routine would help you better understand whether the learner needs reteaching, technical support, more time, or another kind of support?

Remote Testing – Remote testing benefits from clear expectations, learner preparation, technology readiness, identity verification, and test security. What parts of your current testing process are hardest for learners to navigate before or during a remote test? Which orientation step, such as checking the device, practicing the login process, reviewing the testing environment, explaining allowable supports, or confirming who to contact, should be made clearer before test day?

Performance-Based Assessments – Many performance-based assessments (like drafting a resume or navigating a healthcare portal) are directly tied to workforce or civic goals. How do you currently help your learners connect the test they are doing in class to the real-world value it provides?

Digital Skills Assessments – Performance-based assessments can connect classroom learning to real tasks, such as completing a form, drafting a resume, writing an email, using a workplace tool, or navigating a community resource. Which assessments in your program already reflect tasks learners may need outside of class? How could you make the connection more visible by naming the real-world purpose, using a more authentic scenario, or helping learners save the finished product for future use?

Informal Assessments – Informal assessments can make digital skill use part of regular instruction rather than a separate event. Where do learners already practice small digital

tasks, such as posting a response, submitting a form, sending an attachment, using a spreadsheet, recording audio, or responding to a poll? Which repeated classroom or service routine could help you identify progress while helping learners build comfort through regular practice?