

# Accelerated Learning Program Development Considerations & Checklist

Use this checklist to guide program development, decision-making, and implementation. *The Accelerated Learning Program Development Checklist* will help adult education practitioners build or integrate accelerated learning approaches into their programs. The tool is a companion to the *Designing and Implementing Evidence-Based Accelerated Learning* webinars. It provides an overview of accelerated learning programs and considerations for designing a well-conceived and relevant accelerated learning program.

## Accelerated Learning Approaches

Accelerated learning approaches constitute programming that provides adult learners with the opportunity to multitask their learning. Accelerated learning is a strategy that combines educational and language experiences alongside training, career planning, civics, community integration, digital literacy, work opportunities and other experiences in a way that propels the learners to achieve their goals more quickly. Accelerated learning approaches contrast with the traditional linear approach. The traditional approach can stall learners due to the length of time it may take an adult to successfully complete each level. In contrast, the accelerated learning approaches allow learners to engage in training in adult education and workforce preparation at the same time. Furthermore, accelerated learning approaches meet adult learners' needs by drawing on the principles of andragogy, wherein adult learners see the immediate purpose for their educational endeavors and the applicability of those endeavors to their immediate contexts and goals.

- **Integrated Education and Training (IET)** is a federally defined program approach (see [WIOA Performance and Accountability Definitions](#)). It is an educational approach that combines basic skills training, such as literacy, numeracy, and English language learning, with occupational skills training within the context of a specific industry or occupation. The three required components for Title II programs are workforce training, adult education and literacy (and English language), and workforce preparation activities. The goal of IET is to equip individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce, particularly in high-demand fields. Key concepts of IET include contextualized learning, collaboration among partners, and programming tailored to a job or industry. IET includes support services to enhance student learning, retention, and success and fits into a career pathway.
  - » Resource: [Integrated Education and Training Design Toolkit and Train-the-Trainer Resources](#)
  - » Resource: [IET Quality Indicators](#)
  - » Resource: [ADVANCE Integrated Education and Training](#) (a resource bank including IET Strategies in Action series)
  - » Resource: [CAEP Integrated Training and Education in CA Research Brief](#)
  - » Resource: [Appendix B: Title II Program Specific Requirements and Assurances: Adult Education and Literacy Programs](#) (CA)
  
- **Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)** is a federally defined program featuring activities that combine English language, literacy, and civics instruction and may include workforce training (see [Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education](#)), all of which are designed to support immigrants and multilingual learners to acquire the skills needed to navigate and integrate into their local communities. IELCE must be offered in combination with IET activities (see above reference). Typically, IELCE will include contextualized English language and literacy classes and classes on the rights and responsibilities of citizens. It commonly includes career exploration, workforce training, or other workforce development content. The California Department of Education website states, “While Section 243 IELCE programs must include workforce training, not all IELCE students need to be enrolled in workforce training. However, English language learners in an IELCE Program must have the opportunity to be co-enrolled in a class or program that offers workforce training within their career pathway” (see [WIOA, Title II: AEFLA FAQs](#)).
  - » Resource: [QuickStart Guide to Using the IET for English Learners Desk Aids](#) (these accompany the IET Toolkit listed above under IET Resources)
    - [IET for English Learners Desk Aid 1: Research and Assess](#)
    - [IET for English Learners Desk Aid 2: Design and Plan](#)
    - [IET for English Learners Desk Aid 3: Develop and Implement](#)
  - » Resource: [Enhancing Access for Refugees and New Americans \(EARN\)](#) (resource bank focused on designing and serving adult learners in IELCE, including digital literacy, regional approaches, and bridging options)
  - » Resource: [CASAS IELCE](#)

- **Dual Enrollment** is an approach that allows adult learners to enroll in both adult education classes and credit courses. In California, guidance is provided through [Senate Bill \(SB\) 554](#), wherein an adult learner enrolled in high school equivalency courses or a high school diploma program is able to simultaneously enroll part-time in community college courses at no cost.
  - » Resource: [CAEP Adult Dual Enrollment: Lessons and Opportunities](#)
  - » Resource: [CCC Dual Enrollment](#)
- **Co-Enrollment With WIOA Partners** refers to a collaborative strategy that enables adult learners to take advantage of and access adult education services alongside services delivered by Titles I, III, IV, and V. Similar to the other approaches, co-enrollment offers learners access to streamlined services that focus on employment, such as resume writing, job searching, access to training dollars, and other services that can help move a learner into employment or paid training.
  - » Resource: [Co-enrollment Across WIOA Core Programs: Requirements, Promising Practices, and Resources](#)
  - » Resource: [Co-Enrollment as a Key Workforce Strategy in California](#)
  - » Resource: [Co-Enrollment Strategies](#)
- **Work-Based Learning** opportunities allow adult learners to apply skills they are learning in a classroom to a real-life context. Work-based learning includes paid or unpaid jobs or experiences that align with learners' course content. The work-based portion can be a short- or long-term opportunity. The work opportunities are a vehicle for learners to gain experience during their programs so that they are more prepared and qualified for employment once they have completed their programs. Examples of such work-based opportunities are internships, mentorships, job shadowing, and apprenticeships (see below).
  - » Resource: [Work-Based Learning Policy Toolkit](#)
  - » Resource: [Diversifying Partnerships for Success in Work-Based Learning](#)
  - » Resource: [Making Work-Based Learning Work](#)
- **Pre-Apprenticeship** is a type of work-based programming that helps learners explore and bridge to a career pathway. This type of programming provides a structured approach that incorporates specific skills and content knowledge, alongside academic and language skills, that may help a learner decide whether the career is for them prior to making a full commitment to an apprenticeship program. And, if the learner chooses to continue into that occupation, the pre-apprenticeship supports access to the formal apprenticeship program; it also prepares them for success in the program. An **apprenticeship** combines work and training opportunities that allow a learner to earn an income while also preparing for a living-wage job in a particular industry, thereby eliminating the need to find additional work or figure out how to pay for education or training programs prior to working.
  - » Resource: [Adult Educators Partnering With Scaling Apprenticeship Grantees](#)
  - » Resource: [Virtual Learning for Apprenticeships: The Good, the Bad, and the In-Between](#) (while focused on high school, this resource provides interesting information and additional resources for virtual learning opportunities and lessons)
  - » Resource: [Adult Education and Apprenticeship Expansion](#)

- » Resource: [Pre-Apprenticeships: Building Strong Apprentices](#) (provides additional resources for apprenticeship frameworks and quality indicators)
- **The Contextualized Bridge Program** is an approach that offers a supportive approach for low-skilled adults to transition to a more structured career pathway or classes that focus on an occupation. This approach is particularly relevant for adult learners who are interested in taking further courses that focus on an occupational sector or a more academic course of study. Sometimes these courses are known as transition courses, boot camps, on-ramps, pre-IETs, or pre-apprenticeships. Regardless of how they are named, the contextualized bridge courses offer a supported transition to a higher level career pathway step.
  - » Resource: [Enhancing Access: Using Bridge Strategies to Connect IELCE Activities to IET Programs](#)
  - » Resource: [Compendium of Innovative Practices: Adult Education Bridge Programs and Integrated Education and Training \(IET\) Programs](#)
  - » Resource: [Supporting Transition From Adult Education to Postsecondary Education and Employment in California](#)
  - » Resource: [Creating a Successful Bridge Program: A “How To” Guide](#)

## Identifying an Accelerated Learning Program

Now that you are familiar with some of the accelerated learning approaches, you will want to choose the approach that works best for your program, learners, local labor force, and community. Listed below are things you will want to explore before making a decision.

**Understand Your Community Needs.** Explore community needs by collecting and reviewing local data. Here are some examples:

### Local Labor Market Data

#### ASK

- » Are there unfilled workforce or employer needs?
- » Are there anticipated or upcoming new labor needs?
- » Are these living wage jobs? If not, will these jobs lead to living wage jobs?
- » Are there employers who need to hire well-prepared workers?

#### EXPLORE

- » High-priority occupations
- » Job growth
- » Job growth predictions
- » Local employer data and needs

## Local Demographic Data

### ASK

- » Are there people in the local community or surrounding communities who could benefit from this type of programming?
- » What are the local educational needs of the community?
- » Do they align with the services that will be provided?

### EXPLORE

- » Local poverty maps
- » Census data

## Student Outcomes Data

### ASK

- » How are students in local adult education programs performing?
- » Are they academically and linguistically prepared for employment or further training?

### EXPLORE

- » CASAS
- » CAEP
- » COMIS
- » Local high school graduation data
- » Transitions to education, training, and employment

## Career Pathways Data

### ASK

- » Are there similar existing education or training opportunities already developed?
- » Are there existing pathways programs already developed?
- » Are there gaps in programming that need to be filled?

### EXPLORE

- » Current education and training opportunities
- » Alignment of those offerings (i.e., where are the gaps?)
- » Current or planned pathways programs, including those that are established in companies or by employers

## Identify Target Population(s)

### ASK

- » Who is currently being served in adult learning programs?
- » Is there any interest in occupations being considered?
- » Are learners eligible for accelerated learning programming?
- » Is there a group of adult learners that can be readily enrolled and successful in an accelerated learning program, or is there a need for preparation or bridging courses?
- » Is there an anticipated population influx or growth (e.g., incoming refugee populations, impact from COVID-19 high school attendance)?
- » Are there cultural concerns or other issues that might hinder enrollment?

### EXPLORE

- » Conversations with local service organizations
- » Student surveys
- » Career planning with current students
- » Use of collected data to make an informed decision as to the target content of the program, the intended student audience, and the type of program approach

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**Build, Leverage, and Establish Partnerships.** Strong partners will be needed to ensure that a well-built, sustainable program is in place. Partners are key for ensuring robust and aligned content and that student needs are met through shared networks to ensure the best possible completion and success rates, that transitions to next steps are available and supported, and that resources can be shared to help sustainability. Often, partners will be identified through the community needs exploration phase above.

### ASK

- » Who would be appropriate partners?
- » What gap or need do they fill or support?
- » What can they bring to the table?
- » Are they willing to commit time, resources, or advisement?
- » Who else may be needed for additional partnerships?

### EXPLORE

- » Converse with employers, social service providers, other educational institutions, WIOA partners, and trusted local community leaders
- » Identify what services are being offered across your community and identify any overlap

- » Convene local community members
- » Engage with present and past learners to gather input and help direct programming
- » Identify and establish commitments and responsibilities
- » Create formal agreements (e.g., MOUs)
- » Work with identified partners to set common goals and outcomes

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**Identify and Create a Program Design and Implementation Team.** This team will be essential to building your program. They will be engaged in the day-to-day establishment of scope and sequence, curriculum writing, development of the orientation and intake processes, and identification of services and structures that support adult learners to be able to successfully participate in the program and meet their day-to-day needs.

#### ASK

- » Who can inform the different aspects of program design?
- » Who can help identify the occupational skills and competencies needed?
- » Who can help integrate and contextualize adult basic literacy and language content?
- » Who can help identify needed student services?
- » Who can ensure that career pathways and navigation support are included?
- » Who can help review the curriculum to meet employers' needs?

#### EXPLORE

- » Hold planning meetings with educational, training, employer, and workforce partners
- » Identify shared curricular concepts
- » Set learner, program, and interest holder goals with measurable outcomes
- » Explore learner needs and review orientation and intake processes
- » Explore possible schedules that support integrated or work-based learning experiences

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**Develop the Program With the Learner in Mind.** A program's success is based on the participants' success in meeting their goals and transitioning to employment or the next step of their training or education pathways. Therefore, it is important to plan the program with the learner in mind.

#### ASK

- » What information do you need to center and serve learners?
- » What do learners need to be able to attend the program?
  - daily needs

- program materials
- family needs
- » What schedule will best meet the learners' needs, especially if it is combined with a program that has a work-based learning component?
- » What can assist learners in building social networks that can help them navigate local organizations and employers?

### EXPLORE

- » Use a learner journey to identify diverse learners' needs through their lenses
- » Conduct informational interviews with past and target learners
- » Meet with trusted community members
- » Verify transportation schedules and locations
- » Consider offering programming in different locations that are accessible to target learners
- » Consider offering virtual learning or hybrid offerings

## Program and Curriculum Design

Building a robust student-centered accelerated learning program requires a focus on the particular aspects of the approach you have chosen; however, best practice necessitates that accelerated learning approaches focus on contextualized programming that considers the academic, training, and employability content and the intentional inclusion of student supports, career planning, career navigation, and transition supports. A well-designed program will also identify and collect data throughout the program to ensure that decisions and program improvement efforts are based in data and evidence. Without these, the program may fall short, and adult learners may not be able to master the content and skills needed, may not be able to persist due to family or daily life concerns, may not be able to make the transition to the next step on their respective pathway, or may fail to meet employer expectations. Ensuring that instructors and other staff are well-prepared is key; identifying and offering professional development opportunities to support curriculum development and instruction can support program stability, implementation, and student outcomes. Finally, dedicated and collaborative planning can ensure that gaps in programming and student needs are identified and addressed across the program components. It also supports a strong sense of investment and understanding across the different content areas. A well-conceived program can help avoid these issues and successfully support adult learners to plan and achieve their learning, employment, and life goals. Use this checklist to ensure you are building a curriculum that meets student, partner, and program goals.



## Intake and Orientation

Ensure that the intake gathers relevant learner information that can help staff understand and identify student needs and backgrounds.

Ensure that the orientation clearly lays out student requirements, expectations, and timelines.

Offer opportunities for credit for prior learning or experience.

Identify learner supports and ensure that they are accessible and relevant.

Include initial goal and career planning.

Create and initiate peer groups that offer smaller peer interactions.

Create schedules for adult learners to check in with career navigators, student support managers, or advisors.

## Curriculum

Identify industry or employer credentials, certificates, and assessments required for successful completion, employment, or transition to the next step on the pathway.

Identify curriculum content, including target competencies and skills:

- » occupational
- » academic (literacy, numeracy, digital, linguistic)
- » employability or durable skills

Ensure that different content instructors or people engaged in the curriculum design have the opportunity to experience the content that is unfamiliar to them.

Include dedicated time for learner career planning and transitions (may be part of class time or a separate activity).

Revisit and refine program goals to align with the curriculum, or vice versa.

Verify that goals align with your identified career pathway.

## Best Practices for Accelerated Learning Curricula and Student Engagement

Contextualize and integrate components

Build bridges between components

Build in opportunities for social capital building

Establish and communicate clear goals and expectations

Ensure preparation for needed credential requirements

Conduct regular and frequent career pathway planning that addresses continued interest, transitions, and future plans, and respond to changes in student life

Ensure hands-on application and practice of content

Provide multiple ways to demonstrate learning and competency

Provide mentoring, volunteering, and learner leadership activities

## Incorporate a Feedback Loop From Interest Holders

Student

- » Exit Tickets
- » Portfolios
- » Surveys (needs and feedback)
- » Career Navigator Check-Ins
- » Assessments (pre/post; formal/informal; transitions; industry licensing attainment)

Interest Holder

Employers

Staff

- » Surveys
- » Discussions
- » Identification of needs for professional development and training

## Remember: Dedicated Planning Time and Professional Development Are Key

Ensure professional development to support instructors and other staff

Ensure planning time for instructors

Ensure interest holder meetings and reports