WORLD EDUCATION
A JSI INITIATIVE

Boston Digital Literacy Initiative

Final Report

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Introduction

World Education, an initiative of JSI, is delighted to submit this report on the Boston Digital Literacy Initiative (DigLit) to the City of Boston's Office of Workforce Development (OWD), within the Worker Empowerment Cabinet. This report describes the activities, approach, outcomes, and recommendations resulting from our work providing technical assistance to twenty occupational skills training providers during a 15-month period between January 2025 and March 2026.

To accomplish these results, World Education staff built on and adapted the effective project design and tools developed for the first DigLit cohort of adult education programs, which was implemented in two phases: March to July 2022 and February to September 2023. We drew on technical expertise gleaned from decades of work to strengthen the capacity of adult education and workforce development programs, combined with an extensive collection of resources we have authored and/or curated, such as the Digital Skills Library, Personal & Workplace Success Skills Library, and the BRIDGES Digital Resilience Toolkit. Each offers tools and resources for training providers, including instructors, career coaches, and navigators, to integrate technology and digital skill instruction into programming.

We are proud of the role we have played in supporting the programs through this process, recognizing that digital skills and resilience, device access, and reliable internet connectivity are critical to educational success, employment and economic mobility, health and well-being and full civic engagement of Boston residents.

1. Executive Summary

This report describes the activities, approach, outcomes, and recommendations resulting from World Education's work providing technical assistance to twenty occupational skills training programs during a 15-month period between January 2025 and March 2026. Key activities included a digital needs assessment, digital literacy action plans, a community of practice, and edtech routines.

The evaluation examined the participating programs' key digital literacy and technology integration achievements, the factors driving those outcomes, and how their capacity to integrate digital skills shifted from prior to the project as compared to after the project. Four major data sources informed the analysis: digital needs assessments, action plans, goal progression analyses, and exit interviews. After analyzing each source we triangulated the data to ensure accuracy and enhance the comprehensiveness of our findings.

Upon completion of the initial project activities focused on goal setting and action plan development, program teams moved from broader aspirations of digital skills integration to more concrete actions. Each team set one or more goals, with a majority (76.7%, or 23 of 30 goals) completing them within the targeted timeframe. The remaining goals are still in progress as teams continue implementing longer-term strategies. Key factors affecting completion rates included extended timelines needed for curriculum design, internet connectivity and tech supplier issues, staff turnover, limited staff availability, and student attrition.

Program teams reported a substantial improvement in their capacity to implement a key digital literacy practice (an average increase of .95 points on a 3-point scale on a digital needs assessment). In some cases, programs indicated that by the end of the project they were utilizing a practice not previously used, while in

others, a practice that had been narrowly implemented was expanded and used more systematically across the program.

Program teams achieved many milestones related to curriculum and instruction, assessment, staff capacity, and the use of digital devices and tools, including but not limited to the following:

- improved consistency and comprehensiveness of digital skills integration across curricula
- increased data-informed programming and curricula
- advanced the use of digital skills assessments to track student needs and skills
- created stationary and mobile computer labs
- generated procedures for using or lending devices
- expanded professional development and training
- developed strategies for working with tech suppliers
- strengthened employer partnerships

Several features of the Boston DigLit project design supported the success of participating programs. The Boston DigLit approach prioritized systems change, with a technical assistance design that provided a systematic and iterative approach to digital skills integration, encouraged a customizable and systematic approach to goal setting, and embedded strategies for sustainability throughout the project. Program teams also mentioned peer learning and learning about new, durable resources as key components of their success.

Based on the findings presented in this report, we recommend replicating and scaling a systematic, customizable, and sustainable approach to digital skills and technology integration. In addition, future technical assistance efforts should address the common challenges raised across key practice areas and integrate Generative AI readiness into digital capacity building to support programs in responding to evolving technological advancements.

Boston DigLit program teams experienced success in reaching their goals. They expanded their capacity to design curriculum and instruction, deliver assessments, utilize devices and tools, and provide learning opportunities for staff. Through coaching, peer learning, practical resources, and flexible funding, programs strengthened their capacity to integrate technology in ways that can be sustained and expanded over time.

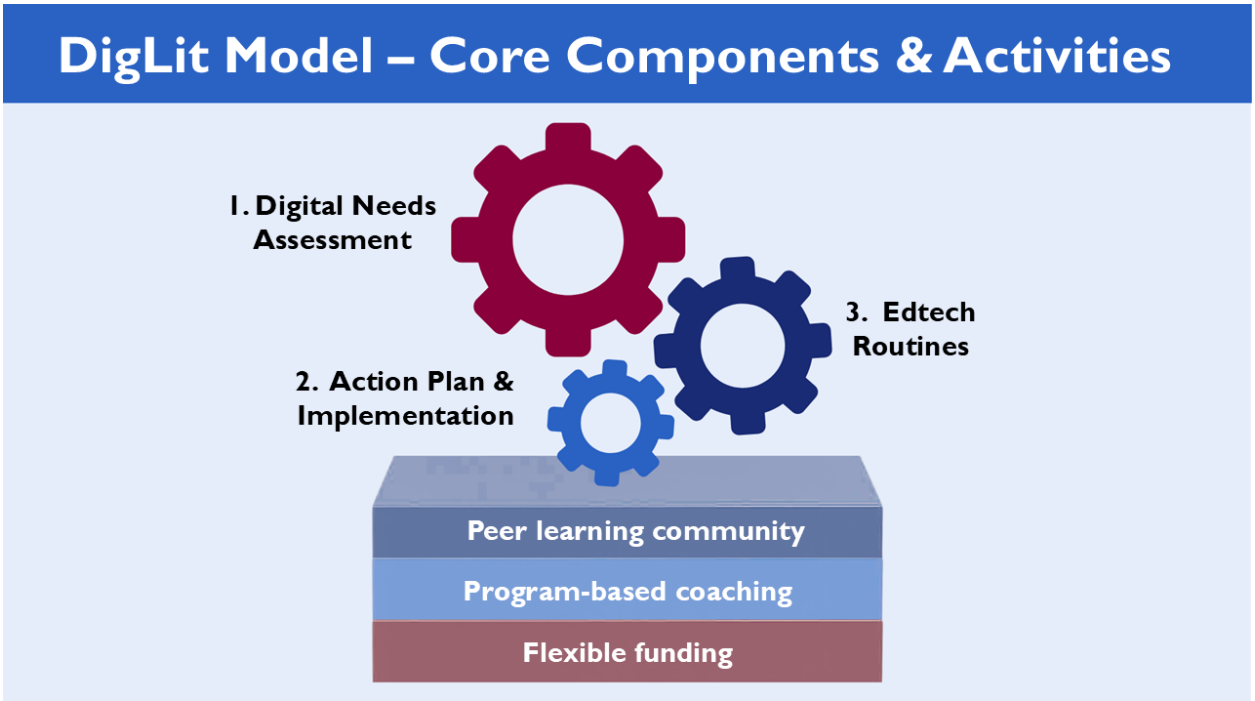
3. Technical Assistance Approach



A World Education DigLit coach facilitates a discussion with program teams during a peer learning event.

Our approach to technical assistance and professional development is based on research showing that practitioner change comes about when learning is active, collaborative, sustained, job-embedded, and data-driven. Grounded in this perspective, World Education guided twenty occupational skills training program teams through a multi-stage process bolstered by coaching and peer learning events, provided by World Education, and flexible funding provided by the City of Boston. A visual overview of the DigLit model and its core components can be found **here**.

Figure 1. DigLit Model Core Components & Activities



3.1 Strengths-Based Coaching

Each participating program was assigned a World Education coach to support their team's progress toward successfully completing all project activities. The staff who served as coaches are locally and nationally respected adult education and workforce development innovators, technology and digital literacy integration specialists, and professional development trainers.

Our strengths-based coaching approach is an essential element of this initiative. At its core is the understanding that one size doesn't fit all. Coaches recognize that each program comes with unique strengths and assets to be optimized and built upon, as well as its own set of challenges, constraints, and competing demands. The coaches facilitated a process for identifying strengths and gaps and engaged program team leads in collaborative problem-solving, targeted goal setting, and action steps to address them.

Coaches' primary objectives were to prompt programs to reflect, learn, explore, and develop new or enhanced digital literacy and technology integration strategies. Coaches served as a thought partner and resource and helped program staff sustain momentum, accountability, and commitment to the project activities, timeline, and goals.

3.2 Key Activities

World Education developed the tools and process that coaches used to guide participating programs, flexibly following the timeline below.

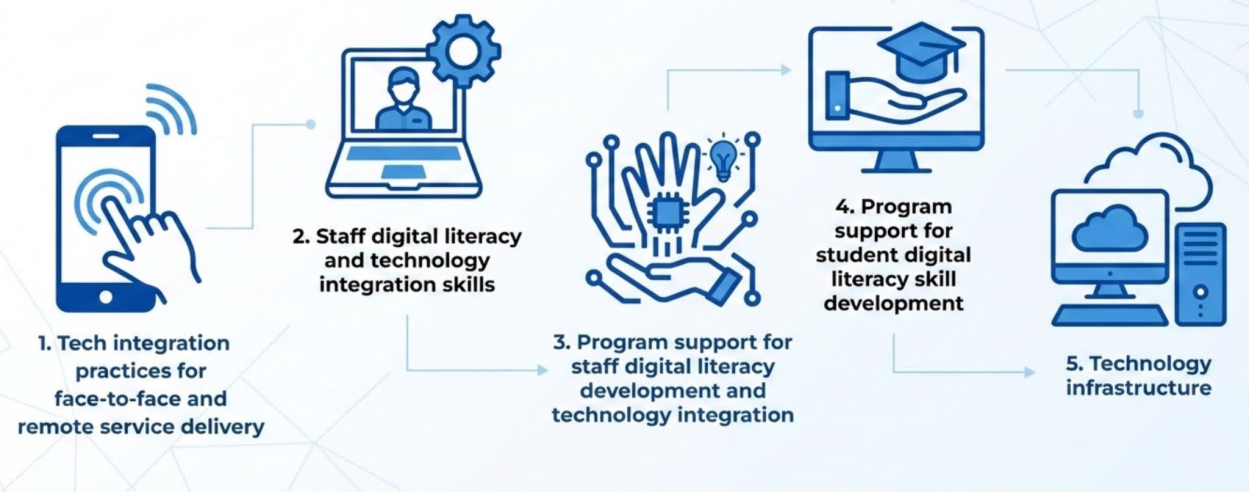
Figure 2. Timeline of Key Activities



3.3 Digital Needs Assessment

The Digital Needs Assessment tool (DNA), developed by World Education, outlines key elements and effective program practices for integrating technology and building staff and participants' digital skills. The DNA was designed for occupational skills training program teams to discuss, identify, reflect on, and assess program strengths, gaps, and needs for increasing their program capacity. The DNA is organized into five sections:

1. Technology integration practices (for face-to-face and remote service delivery)
2. Staff digital literacy and technology integration skills
3. Program practices that support staff digital literacy and technology integration
4. Program practices that support participants' digital literacy skill development
5. Technology infrastructure needs



As program teams worked through the DNA, coaches provided additional guidance, practical examples, and probed teams to flesh out their responses with details about their current practices and needs.

3.4 Digital Literacy Action Plans (action plans)

Informed by the results of the DNA, and using a template provided by World Education, each program was required to establish one goal that aligned with its priorities, program design, and available resources and that could be achieved within the duration of the project. Some programs chose to set two goals. Through multiple rounds of review, feedback, and clarifying questions, coaches helped each program translate the results of their needs assessment into ambitious but realistic and measurable goals. They also helped programs think through and outline a set of detailed action steps they would need to complete to implement the plan and achieve the goals. The resulting action plans provided a roadmap for implementation, ensuring that coaching, technical assistance, professional development, and the use of the flexible funding awarded to programs were aligned to each program's goals and needs.

3.5. Edtech Routines (ETRs)

The final activity that programs undertook to support their goals for integrating technology and building digital skills was to learn how to develop and pilot a structured, evidence-based edtech routine. An edtech routine (ETR) is a replicable, sustainable, evidence-based digital activity that can be used regularly to teach targeted skills across a variety of contexts and content areas.

Over the course of two learning community events in September and October 2025, World Education introduced programs to the concept of edtech routines and the EdTech Routine Library and provided a template and instructions for participants to develop their own routine.

Since the programs participating in this cohort provide occupational skills and job readiness, they were asked to develop an ETR that reinforces one or more specific Employability Skills, in addition to identifying specific digital skills from the BRIDGES Digital Resilience Framework.

Again, coaches supported programs in developing and refining their ETR, which were added to the EdTech Routine Library that World Education developed during the first Boston DigLit cohort. The Library enables

programs to draw from and build on the collective expertise and contributions of their peers within the network. Instructors and coaches can use and modify the existing routines, ultimately building their confidence to integrate technology and digital skills into instruction and coaching, without having to start from scratch.



DigLit program team members participating in small group discussions during the Celebrating Successes and Looking into the Future peer learning event.

3.6 Community of Practice and Peer Learning

World Education facilitated peer learning events to showcase resources and approaches to support programs in developing and implementing their action plans and Ed Tech Routines. All the events were designed to foster a culture of peer learning and information exchange through structured small group activities and discussions on topics suggested by the participants. This facilitated process provided a deeper understanding of the programs individually and strengthened the collective knowledge base. Representatives from every program attended the majority of peer learning events. The following are brief descriptions of the content and format of each event.

- **Building BRIDGES to Digital Resilience (online)** introduced the BRIDGES framework as a tool to define meaningful, context-specific digital skills goals. Programs engaged in guided reflection on their current practices and identified priority areas for growth.

- **Building BRIDGES to Digital Resilience: Developing Digital Skills (online)** built on the previous event and focused on translating digital skills goals into instructional and programmatic strategies. Participants explored examples of digital skills integration and began outlining approaches aligned with their Action Plans.

- **Cohort-Based Coaching (online)** provided an opportunity for programs working with the same coach to learn about each other's goals and action plans and share progress, challenges, and emerging strategies.

- **Introduction to EdTech Routines to Support Action Plan Implementation (in-person)** was a half-day event focused on strengthening connections across programs and deepening implementation work. We introduced ETRs as a practical strategy for integration to scaffold later training on their development and implementation.
  .
- **Developing EdTech Routines (online)** was a follow-up to the introductory session and focused on practical strategies for connecting digital tools to program goals and strengthening ETR development. Participants reviewed and evaluated tech tools, then worked in breakout groups to design or refine routines relevant to their programs.

- **Celebrating Success and Looking to the Future (in-person)** was the culminating half-day event focused on reflection, sharing, and looking ahead. Programs shared ETRs developed through their work, reflected on successes and challenges, and discussed topics of their choice in structured breakout groups. The event closed with an activity where participants shared their vision for the future to consider how to sustain and build on their work.

4. Evaluation Approach

The evaluation aimed to understand what program teams had accomplished during the project and what factors shaped these outcomes. The evaluation focused on two guiding questions:

1. What did programs accomplish regarding key digital literacy and technology integration practices?
    a. What factors shaped their achievement of the relevant outcomes?
    b. To what extent did programs achieve relevant outcomes for key practices?
2. How did participants report their program's capacity for digital literacy and technology integration practices, in the specific areas they chose to address in their action plans, at the end of the project, as compared to the onset?

Four major data sources informed the analysis: digital needs assessments, action plans, goal progression analysis, and exit interviews. After analyzing each source, we triangulated the data to ensure accuracy and enhance the comprehensiveness of our findings. The following section describes the data collection and analysis process for each source and details the process of triangulation.

4.1 Exit Interviews

The exit interviews were a main source of qualitative data for this evaluation and were implemented at the end of the project to collect programs' reflections, perspectives and experiences during the project. The coaches and evaluator created a semi-guided interview protocol that standardized the questions that coaches asked each program[1]. The interviews covered status updates on action plans and goals and elicited details about teams' experiences during the project, including factors that supported or hindered their progress. Each coach conducted an exit interview with each of their teams. The interviews were recorded with permission.

The evaluator conducted a qualitative analysis of the 19 exit interview transcripts.[2] This process included an initial round of coding each interview for concepts such as outcomes, challenges, and supports. Then, the more frequent or salient codes were added to a codebook and reviewed. These revised codes were combined to create categories and eventually to identify key outcomes and themes highlighted in this report. For example, initial codes that referenced programmatic outcomes included "increased remote or online classes" or "customized learning opportunities." These and other codes were combined to create the outcome listed as

[1] Patton, Michael Quinn. 2015. *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*. Fourth edition. SAGE Publications, Inc.
[2] Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2006. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2): 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

"providers expanded the quality and quantity of program offerings." Wherever possible, participants' words are highlighted in theme and outcome descriptions to provide a more detailed image of the findings.

4.2 Digital Needs Assessment

The digital needs assessments served as another main source of data for this evaluation. Teams completed the full digital needs assessment at the start of the project and were asked to re-rank items upon project completion during the exit interviews. Teams re-ranked their capacity to complete 2-3 digital needs assessment items that were most relevant to their stated goals. Teams were asked why they reported their post-project rankings, particularly as compared to their ranking at the start of the project. This comparison data of self-reported capacity on digital needs assessment items was analyzed by key practice area (see Table 1 under 5. Overview of Goal Attainment) to measure any change in capacity to complete different aspects of digital skills integration.

4.3 Action Plans

Serving as project roadmaps, the teams completed action plans to outline their goals and corresponding action steps. Prior to the exit interview, programs were asked to complete action plan status updates using a template provided by World Education. These updates were utilized to determine overall goal completion and confirm exit interview discussion of in-progress or completed action steps. The action plans were a key source of information as they provided a written record of teams' achievements over the course of the project.

4.4 Goal Progression Analysis

Goals were tracked from the initial application through the final iteration of the action plan goal for each program. The team compared the goals to examine how they changed over time for each program and then synthesized these findings to determine trends across the cohort. This analysis also included relevant statements from the initial OWD survey and needs assessments.

4.5 Triangulation Across Sources

Findings from the exit interviews, digital needs assessments, goal progression analysis, and action plans were triangulated to ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data. The action plans were utilized to confirm the status of action steps and goals as discussed in exit interviews. The digital needs assessment items were compared to the outcomes that surfaced from the exit interviews. In many cases, there was overlap between the digital needs assessment items and the outcomes that participants shared in exit interviews. However, program teams also discussed additional outcomes in the exit interviews that were not described in the digital needs assessments. These outcomes are included in the results.

5. Overview of Goal Attainment

The following sections highlight key insights from the evaluation of the Boston Digital Literacy Initiative over the period between January 2025 and March 2026. First, we describe insights related to overall goal

completion. Then, we explore those related to key areas of achievement for the program teams, including assessment, curriculum and instruction, devices and tools, staff capacity, and program design.

The World Education team (coaches and evaluator) collaborated to identify the key practices that inform this analysis. Based on the previously identified themes from the initial analysis of program goals and completion of the action plans and exit interviews, the coaches generated a list of four key practice areas: assessment, curriculum and instruction, devices and tools, and staff capacity. Table 1 defines each of the key practice areas. The practice areas are utilized throughout the analysis to organize achievements.

Table 1. Key Practice Areas

Key Practice Area	**Definition**
Assessment	This key practice area includes digital skills assessments that are employed systematically, offered at intake, onboarding, or in an instructional setting.
Curriculum and Instruction	This key practice area refers to the integration of digital skills into job-readiness instruction, career coaching, and/or occupational skills training.
Devices and Tools	This key practice area consists of devices, tools, and software management procedures and purchases.
Staff Capacity	This key practice area includes ongoing professional development opportunities and other staff capacity building efforts as related to digital skills integration.

5.1 Refining Goals Over Time

Prior to starting the project, program teams had important and relevant aspirations, such as improving digital literacy, addressing student needs, and improving digital access. Yet, these goals were often overly general and undefined, making them difficult to operationalize or too broad to be reasonably accomplished or measured through the project. During the time in between development of the initial application goals and the action plan drafts, program teams completed the needs assessment and received support from coaches to draft their action plan.

Several teams initially aimed to increase digital literacy but had not yet specified how to achieve that growth or which key practice area that they would focus on. Other teams were interested in obtaining new devices or tools, but their initial concepts did not yet embed the devices into their organization's larger strategy. As is evidenced throughout this report, those who focused on increasing access to devices ultimately planned for how those devices could be most effectively used and for what purpose. By the time the action plans were finalized, these goals were specific and measurable, addressing the key practice areas of digital skills integration and establishing how the program team would operationalize their broader goal within the timeline of the project.

Through this goal setting and action plan process, program teams moved from broad aspirations of digital skills integration to determining more concrete actions. It is important to note that by the time programs had established their action plan goals, they had gained greater awareness of the elements of key practice areas

through work on the DNA. This enabled them to better define their scope, enhance the measurability of their goal, and collaborate with their coach to refine their goal. As noted throughout the report, programs adapted their goals over the course of the project as circumstances changed. The completion of these feasible and relevant goals is discussed in the subsequent sections.

5.2 Goals by Practice Area

Programs varied in the types of goals they set and the key practice areas they focused on. All program teams received support from their coaches to create measurable and achievable goals for the project. All program teams set at least one goal, with the majority (11 of the 19 programs) going beyond this initial requirement to set two. Sample goals for each key practice area include the following:

- **Curriculum and Instruction**: Develop and implement a digital skills curriculum for young adults that supports workplace readiness and is integrated into existing programming by June 2026.
- **Assessment**: Provide one-on-one digital readiness assessments and structured onboarding for all incoming participants to ensure they are equipped to successfully engage in both in-person and online components of the training program, including access to devices when needed and, as program resources allow, by December 2025.
- **Tools and Devices**: Establish and launch a fully operational computer lab, equipped with adequate hardware and reliable internet, by the end of FY26, so that students attending our training in FY 26 are able to benefit from the integration of digital literacy skills into our curriculum.
- **Staff Capacity**: Prioritize staff training to support digital literacy needs of participants, including prioritizing targeted, flexible professional development to strengthen staff capacity to teach and support digital literacy, using micro-PDs and self-paced learning during FY 26 as funding permits and encourage teachers to use part of planning time for self-development/self-guided training.

For each goal, programs completed a set of discrete action steps. For example, for the sample curriculum and instruction goal listed above, the team established the following nine action steps as described in Figure 3. During the exit interviews, teams discussed the completion of each step and addressed any changes or issues they encountered.

Figure 3. Sample Action Steps

1. Identify core workplace digital skills young adults need (based on tools needed to be successful at the organization this summer (i.e. Slack, Gusto, Canva, Google Slides).
2. Map these skills to 3 modules (i.e. Slack, Gusto, Canva, Google Slides) and design scope and sequence (5 per semester).
3. Develop Pre- and post-surveys to measure confidence and skill-gains for the 3 pilot modules.
4. Train staff on how to implement and utilize the modules.

5. Pilot 3 digital skill sessions with summer cohort of young adults and collect feedback.
6. Facilitate staff and student feedback surveys on piloted modules (focused on experience and implementation).
7. Revise curriculum scope + sequence based on summer learnings from survey data.
8. Implement 5 new or revised modules in the fall semester.
9. Gather data from surveys and review results for implementation in the subsequent semester.

The distribution of goals across key practice areas suggests that programs recognized that addressing digital literacy requires not only providing devices or technology tools, but also delivering digital skills instruction to ensure their effective use. As indicated in Table 2, half of all goals focused on curriculum and instruction, reflecting a priority of embedding digital skills into teaching and learning. Goals related to tools and devices accounted for 27% of all goals, underscoring that infrastructure and access remained important enabling conditions. As evidenced by the variety of goals across the key practice areas, programs recognized that effective digital instruction depends equally on sound instructional practices, and having the appropriate hardware, software, and technology resources in place.

Table 2. Goals by Key Practice Area

Key Practice Area	Number of Goals Set	Percentage of Total Goals
Curriculum and Instruction	15	50%
Tools and Devices	8	27%
Assessment	4	13%
Staff Capacity	3	10%
Total	30	

5.3 Goal Completion

Programs achieved a majority of the goals that they set out to accomplish during this project. As highlighted in Figure 4, of the 30 goals that programs set, 23 were completed, or 76.7% of all goals. The findings suggest that the majority of planned activities were completed during the grant period, while the remaining activities positioned programs for continued growth and improvement beyond the end of the project, June 2026. In Figure 4 below, "In Progress" indicates that the goal was still in progress as of June 2026. Program teams with in-progress goals were actively working on or implementing longer-term strategies that extended beyond the project period. This reflects the reality that strengthening digital literacy and technology integration is an ongoing process rather than a one-time effort. Several initiatives, such as curriculum development, staff training, technology procurement, and changes to instructional models, require sustained implementation over time.

Figure 4. Goal Completion Rate Across all 30 Goals

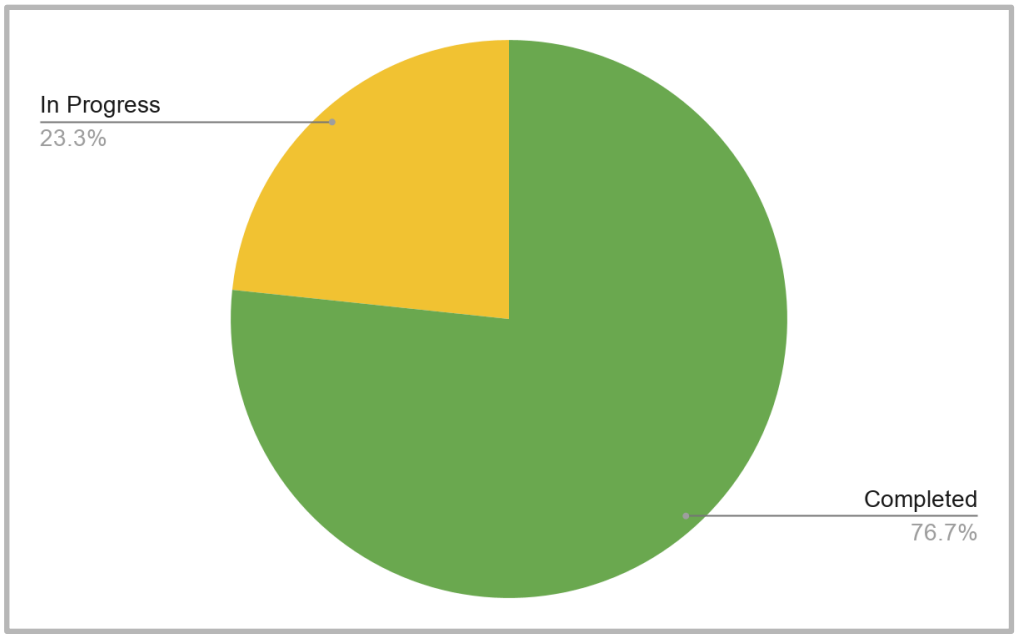
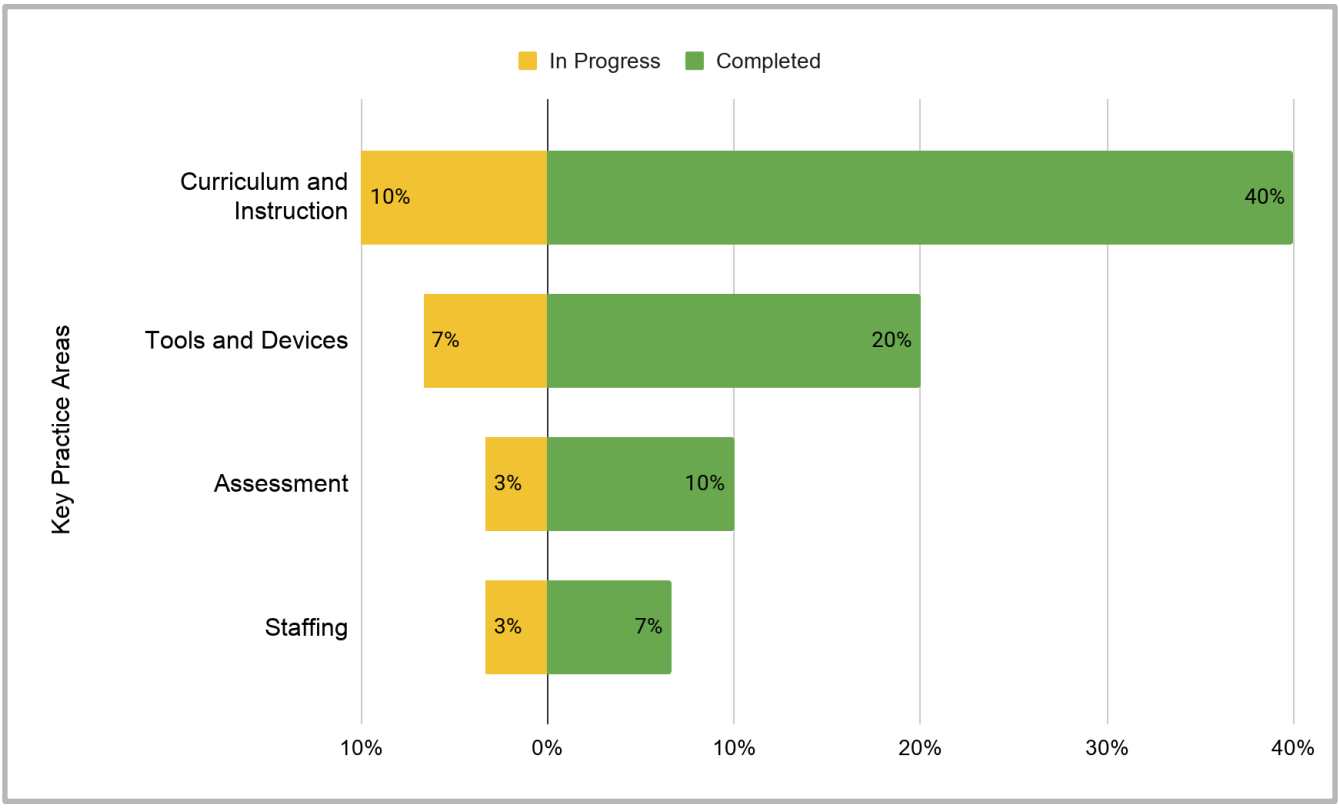


Figure 5 shows the goal completion rate grouped by key practice area. As indicated by the chart, the majority of goals have been completed, though, the percentage of goals that remain in progress differs by practice area. Due to the small number of assessment and staff capacity goals (n=4 and 3, respectively), the difference between the percentage of completed and in- progress goals is much smaller compared to other practice areas. For goals related to tools and devices, the completed goals more than double the percentage of in-progress goals (2 in-progress goals or 7% of all goals, compared to 6 completed goals or 20%). Finally, for the most common category of curriculum and instruction-related goals, 12 goals were completed, or 40% of all goals, with only 3 goals, or 10%, remaining in progress.

Overall, the factors that affected goal completion included longer timelines needed for curriculum design, issues with internet connectivity and tech suppliers, staff turnover and lack of available staff time, and learner factors such as attrition. Of the seven in-progress goals, four teams cited staff capacity constraints, such as limited time or the need for additional training, as a reason for needing additional time to complete their goals. This included one organization that had to divert resources to navigate the logistical aftermath of an office fire. Four of the seven in-progress goals were also modified during the project, often in response to new information about technology, such as a change in cost or connectivity capabilities. In one instance a program team adjusted their goal as a result of a change in the program's approach: upon learning about students' interest and need for self-directed learning opportunities, the team pivoted from creating a curriculum to creating an asynchronous website resource. Finally, while student attrition hindered another team's ability to fully achieve their overall goal, they succeed in accomplishing other aspects of it. The specific drivers behind in-progress goals and the factors that supported successful goal completion are described in further detail in the subsequent sections.

Figure 5. Goal Completion by Practice Area



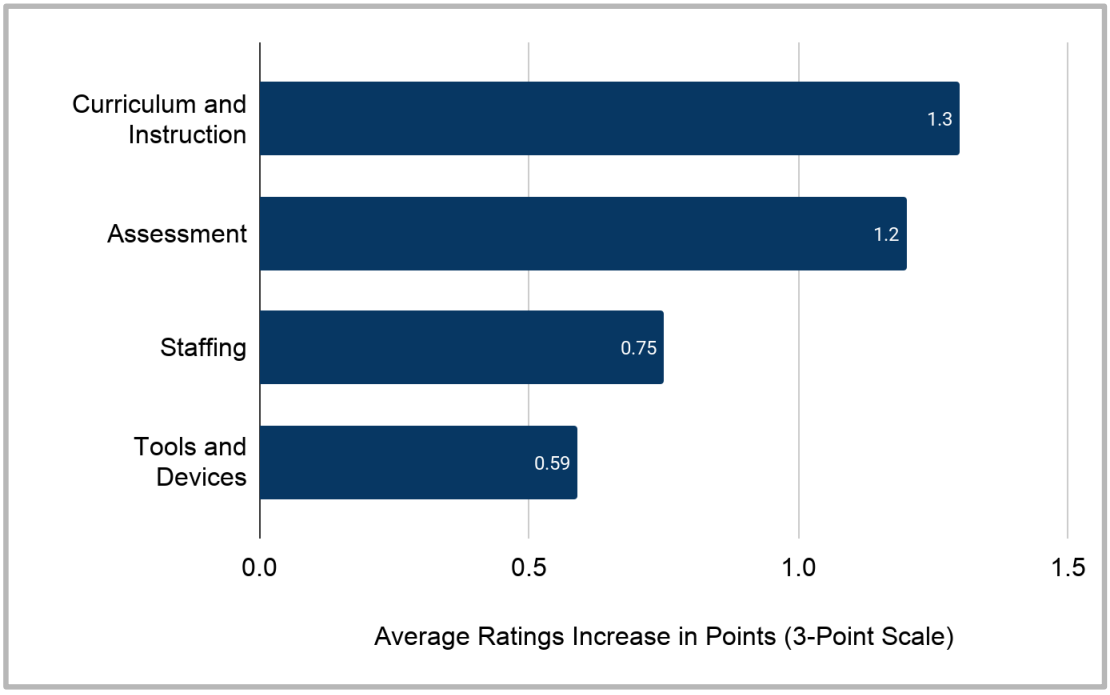
5.4 Goal-Aligned Digital Needs Assessment Results

The program teams completed a digital needs assessment at the beginning of the project in order to identify, reflect on, and assess program strengths, gaps, and needs for increasing capacity, and inform action plans to implement these practices and ensure long-term sustainability. The DNA utilized a three-point scale for each item ranking: (1) practiced by very few or none, (2) practiced but no program-wide approach, and (3) established program-wide practice. For example, if a program's goal was related to expanding their remote or hybrid course offerings, then they would self-report on the following item: *We currently offer some of our program activities remotely and/or hybrid (combination of in-person and online).* During the exit interviews, coaches and program teams selected 3-5 DNA items that informed the focus of their action plans. They were reminded of their initial self-reported ranking in those items and asked to re-rank their capability based on their accomplishments during the project. For instance, a program may have selected "2" because they had offered a remote or hybrid class in the past and only by one teacher but were interested in expanding or formalizing their hybrid or remote offerings as part of their goal for this project. If they had accomplished this goal and had established a program-wide practice of hybrid or remote offerings, then they would select a "3." This would be marked as an increase in self-reported rankings by 1 point.

Overall, participants reported increased ratings by nearly one full point (0.95 points). In other words, program teams reported a substantial improvement in their capacity to implement a key practice, either improving

from not utilizing a practice at all to implementing a practice, or from implementing a practice in one area of their programming to implementing a practice systematically across their programming. Figure 6 highlights the average increase in self-reported rankings by key practice area. Participants reported slightly higher increases for curriculum and instruction and assessment items (1.3 points and 1.2 points, respectively) than they did for items related to devices and tools or staff capacity (.75 points and .59 points, respectively).

Figure 6. Digital Needs Assessment Average Self-Reported Rankings Increase by Key Practice Area



6. Outcomes by Key Practice Area

6.1 Curriculum and Instruction Outcomes

Program teams were highly successful in integrating digital skills into their occupational skills training, and instructional and/or coaching curricula, and in the process, equipped themselves to expand the integration of digital skills into additional program offerings. As highlighted in the previous section, teams noted a large increase in their capacity for DNA items that pertained to curriculum and instruction, especially in embedding digital skills into their occupational skills training programs. More specifically, programs reported several outcomes related to curriculum and instruction, such as expansion of their program offerings, improved consistency of digital skills integration, and creation of data-informed programming and curricula. In addition, programs reported that participants showed greater interest in building their digital skills, in addition to other outcomes such as higher course completion rates and certification attainment. The key outcomes related to digital skills integration for curriculum and instruction are included below.

Expanded quality and quantity of program offerings. Examples include creating or expanding program offerings, such as developing a resume-writing workshop, producing more customizable learning

opportunities, and increasing the number of remote or hybrid offerings. One team expressed the novelty of creating a remote class for this project: "*[our organization] had never offered a completely online course before, so it was very much a new thing to get off the ground*." Other teams emphasized that the change in program offerings was related to quality, not just quantity. Several teams reported creating more customizable or individualized learning opportunities for students based on the new curriculum that they had developed through this project.

Embedded edtech routines across program offerings. Several program teams noted the importance of embedding their edtech routines in order to enhance instruction. For one program, the edtech routine was the missing piece that allowed them to formalize their digital skills integration for a workforce certification. They shared, *"The EdTech Routine was the last piece, the specific thing that changed the whole results at the end. I think it was kind of pioneering*." In fact, they planned to share their work with colleagues so that they could leverage the same strategies.

Improved consistency and comprehensiveness of digital skills integration across curricula. Many programs reported that prior to this project, digital skill integration was more informal and inconsistent, and not systematic. Through this project, they more consistently integrate digital skills into their training curriculum. As discussed in subsequent sections, many program teams expressed an interest in continuing to expand digital skills integration into more of their instructional programs after the project ends.

Increased data-informed programming and curricula. Programs surveyed students, partnered with employers to develop curricula, implemented edtech routines, and aligned their workforce curricula to evidence-based digital skills frameworks to yield more data-informed curricula.

One team discussed how they utilize student feedback to inform their program design:

> We now have a survey that we're utilizing with young adults, and so we now have at least some data to help inform our programming. As we make new programming or change our current programming, we're able to utilize data ... which I think is going to be really helpful.

It is clear from this example and others that programs implemented new or expanded options for leveraging student feedback into their program design. Others focused on alignment with evidence-based digital skills frameworks such as the BRIDGES framework, or on utilizing ETRs to collect student input: "*we are now getting data as part of our edtech routine… we're getting data on how each day went, and if the learning objectives were met…."*

In addition to routinely gathering input from students to better understand their interests and needs, programs also partnered with employers to design their curricula. One program team described this process of collaborating with employers to ensure that they are teaching valued skills that can lead to employment opportunities for their students:

> We've been having conversations with employers on what jobs still exist at your company? What are the requirements of the job? What are the skill sets needed for the job, so we can build some of that into our curriculum and train people so that when they apply, their resume matches what you're looking for.

In this way, the collaboration with employers serves not only to generate a more informed curriculum design but also to grow connections with employers to support students upon course completion. Another program team discussed how they initially began their curriculum "leading with soft skills," but through coaching, shifted to contextualize those soft skills to digital skills for the curriculum design.

6.2 Assessment Outcomes

Programs frequently implemented digital skills assessments to learn about students' digital skills, including which skills students already possessed, needed to develop, and were most interested in building. Similar to outcomes related to curriculum and instruction, the digital needs assessment revealed that programs improved their capacity to assess digital skills, with a high average increase in ratings of 1.3 points on a three-point scale. In particular, programs increased their use of digital skills assessments to track students' digital skills development, especially at the initial intake and course start, and aligned these assessments with frameworks or other key resources. Key outcomes related to digital skills assessment are further discussed below.

Increased use of digital skills assessments to track student needs and skills. In many cases, programs generated their own self-assessments for students based on the relevant skills or devices needed for their specific job-readiness or occupational-training program. For example, one team gave a pre-survey to "*check on their level of comfort on different skills, like opening up an email, like job searching, like creating a job board profile.*" As a result of the pre-survey, the team was able to adapt the curriculum to meet the immediate needs of the participants. The combination of their curriculum design and the results of this pre-survey informed the instructional time allocated to teaching different digital skills.

In addition, many programs purchased licenses for Northstar Digital Literacy assessments or increased their usage of Northstar Digital Literacy to assess students' digital skills both at intake and the start of coursework. For example, as one program team reported:

> I have been intentional about implementing into my one-on-ones with clients, especially new enrollments. When a new client comes in, and if they say I want to do this particular role, and it's a very administrative-heavy role, then I ask how do you feel about computer skills? How do you feel about the usual tasks that are done in an administrative role? And people always say, yeah, I can do that, yeah, I can use Microsoft. So then now I'll refer to that [Northstar] Internet Basics assessment, and then I'll say, hey, do this and let me know what you scored.

In this case, the assessment served as a diagnostic so that the program and the student had a better understanding of their digital skills related to their chosen occupation. This same program continued to explain that they used the results of the assessments and embedded the needed digital skills into follow-up meetings.

Aligned digital skills assessments with frameworks. Teams discussed aligning their assessments with the BRIDGES Digital Resilience Toolkit. As one team state*d, "we took the quizzes and reviews and surveys in general as a way to understand our students each class, and how to create the lesson plan for the next class."* In other words, the assessments from the BRIDGES toolkit served as a way for the educators to track real-time progress and adjust based on student needs.

Constructed a more comprehensive picture of digital access. In addition to assessing digital skills, several programs introduced surveys at intake or the beginning of courses to gather more information about students' access to devices. Through a survey, the program developed a more nuanced understanding of students' access to digital devices, claiming that for many students, "*the point of access wasn't always ideal.*" Prior to their survey, the program team only knew that students had access to digital devices, but through the survey, they learned that students were reliant on their phones, or had unreliable internet connection at home. By implementing formal processes for assessing digital access, programs were able to make informed decisions about how to address the needs more effectively.

6.3 Devices and Tools Outcomes

This category refers to the purchase of devices and tools and procedures for managing those devices or tools. Programs reported success in building computer labs and creating spaces for students to use digital devices, establishing procedures for using or lending devices, and cultivating partnerships to acquire or maintain devices. While devices and tools were the second most frequent goal practice area, programs hit roadblocks related to internet connectivity at their sites and sustaining partnerships with tech suppliers. The following section highlights key outcomes related to device purchase and management.

Creation of stationary and mobile computer labs. Many programs leveraged this grant to set up dedicated, physical spaces where students could access digital devices such as laptops, computers, or even virtual reality (VR) equipment. For example, one program added a computer lab to their career and alumni engagement center. They ordered desktop computers and provided access to devices for all current and former students to engage in workforce preparation and even take certification exams such as the ServSafe Food Handler exam.

Enhanced use of other digital tools through device investments. Programs described the difference between having outdated and unreliable equipment and new and updated devices that they procured through this grant:

> I've noticed from past cycles without these devices, the first week is sometimes difficult, because they're navigating this new laptop, and the prior laptops didn't have strong batteries. Maybe some of the mice [or] mouse pads didn't work. It was a little sticky, so it wasn't the best impression [of the program]. And it made it tough for the trainees to get into the workflow. I've noticed with these new devices this week, the trainees seem more empowered to follow directions. And I think that's because these computers are fast, smooth, and they've got the battery. They're bright, they're shiny. So I think they're empowered with that tech, the way it looks, and then we've got our clear direction, so I'm getting a sense that the first week, first few days, are more efficient. We're on a faster pace. We're able to complete more in the day.

In this case, not only did the device purchases provide increased access for their trainees but also impacted their participation.

In addition, a few program teams discussed how device purchases ultimately supported their use of Northstar as well, even if they already had access to Northstar prior to the grant: *"We've had more buy-in [from students] with the Northstar assessment, because these computers are running smooth and fast."* The access to

improved devices had an expanded reach, also increasing students' access to other resources that the programs already had such as self-assessment tools.

Generated procedures for using or lending devices. Many programs purchased devices that students could use independently at their centers or take home for their use, such as hotspots or laptops. Moreover, program teams managed those devices through lending or use procedures. Programs described how the creation of lending libraries, and policies and procedures offered the program a sense of legitimacy. It also enables them to keep records on the needs and usage of devices, which are important data for seeking financial or in-kind resources and making purchasing decisions about future technology needs.

6.4 Staff Capacity Outcomes

Programs aspired to increase staff capacity through efforts such as professional development or training opportunities on digital skills integration. Overall, programs self-reported a nearly one point improvement (.95 points on the three-point scale) in capacity in this category, indicating that there was a substantial increase in the implementation of systematic practices related to professional development and training. Key achievements related to staff capacity are highlighted below.

Increased professional learning opportunities for staff. Through the in-house professional development or training provided, instructors and administrators improved their digital skills and ability to teach digital skills, including on topics such as email management skills and using platforms or applications like Slack, Poll Everywhere, or Northstar. In some cases, programs took advantage of this grant to launch more systematic training opportunities. For example, one program team described how an initial series of trainings has turned into an effort to expand and more systematically build in this type of training for staff:

> So we did our survey of staff. We conducted training for them. And we've also done, within our training team, a specialized kind of training around Poll Everywhere... What we're working on now is how do we keep this top of mind, and not just have it be a one-off training, because that's something we're just also working on more broadly as an organization, of how do trainings kind of get integrated into people's day-to-day. So working on a plan on that, which is somewhat outside of the action plan.

In these and other cases, the professional development goals had been reached, but programs aspired to continue their efforts to build learning opportunities related to digital skills.

Enhanced organizational capacity of program teams. Many teams also discussed the project participation itself as an effective form of professional development. For example, when asked what supported their efforts, one team shared the following:

> I'm personally learning a little bit more [about] how to try and think through creating these syllabus… It's increasing institutional knowledge that's making it easy. And also taking advantage of, including what we are learning into other programs, incorporating what we are learning into other programming that we do... across all sites, not only our site in Boston.

In this case, the effects of one team member's professional development has an impact at several program sites.

Improved onboarding for staff. One program team discussed how they improved their onboarding for staff to include not only which tools the students are familiar with, but also how they can make an engaging session by integrating relevant digital skills. This team described the onboarding as answering these questions: *"all students use Slack. How can you, as an instructor, use it well and more effectively as a teaching tool?"*

Formalized processes for gathering staff feedback. Program teams applied this grant to their techniques for gathering feedback from teachers about digital skills integration, most often in the form of surveys. They use the results of the survey to determine topics for in-house formal or informal professional development and staff have appreciated the opportunities to learn and fill their own digital skill gaps.

Improved strategies for working with suppliers. Programs established new relationships with technology suppliers and developed strategies for identifying the appropriate supplier. For example, one program needed to identify possible tech suppliers and took the necessary steps to do so during the project:

> We laid out the action [steps] so researching and contact[ing] device suppliers, establishing supply relationships, setting up new procedures internally, and then actually placing orders and receiving devices, and making sure that we've got a system for continuous improvement.

Even more than identifying the best fit for a tech supplier, this program also aimed to cultivate a sustainable approach to supplying devices for their students.

Strengthened employer partnerships. In addition to identifying new suppliers, several program teams discussed their newly acquired strategies for building relationships with employers. For example, one program discussed how their efforts to work with employers in order to inform curriculum had supported their own growth. Through this work, they were better prepared to engage in discussions about digital skills with industry partners. They described improving their ability to ask employers the right questions to learn what skills should be integrated into future ETRs.

These partnership development skills supported program teams' success and also prepared teams to sustain their efforts in the years to come. Through this project, some programs developed their skills to more critically consider what organizations and industry employers they need to engage and how to undertake that process.

> I think we've also grown that muscle over the course of this last year to do more of that internal analysis and sort of meta-thinking around our programs to make sure that, not only are we consulting with people, are we consulting with the right people? Are we consulting with enough different people? Are there people that aren't part of the conversation that needed to be part of the conversation? And I think that's been pretty core to the work, is realizing that we were letting other people mediate those relationships in a way that ultimately leads to a weaker program than when you build that capacity internally.

During the timeframe of this grant, the program developed a more systematic approach to roles and responsibilities for partnerships.

6.5 Learner Outcomes

Although the scope of the DigLit initiative and this evaluation did not include directly tracking or measuring outcomes of learners enrolled in the occupational skills training programs, we captured these results indirectly through conversations from program staff. Key findings are included below.

Increased interest and capacity for advancing digital skills. Programs reported observing that learners showed improved self-confidence, had higher rates of course completion, and attained certification that they attribute to the increase in digital skills integration. In some cases, this increased capacity was mirrored by more interest in building advanced skills. For instance, one program described students' eagerness to try new tech tools: "*So now they are asking for higher skills, for better skills… They are even asking for Canva now … and now that they are getting more skills, they want to learn more. They know, they realize they need more skills just because the digital world is so vast*."

Learners were not only acquiring new digital skills, but also showing interest in continuing to grow their digital skills. Another program discussed how the digital skills integration established a basic level across the class, so now the whole group would be able to move to more advanced skills instead of filling in gaps:

> I feel like it [formalizing the digital skills integration and using the edtech routine] made a huge difference, because now I see the people that is in [the class], and I'm talking to the teacher, and that was one of the goals, to bring up their digital skills. Now all of them are on a very similar level, and she doesn't have to be going back to very basic things when she's in a class that is supposed to have people with very good level of digital skills. That means that they will be much better prepared for career training.

Students encouraged each other to build digital skills. In several cases, programs pointed out the importance of cohort support among students when tackling new digital skills. Students provided encouragement to pass Northstar assessments or brought a playful competitive spirit to completing tasks in order to support their learning experience.

7. Challenges to Program Success

Curriculum and assessment development required more time than anticipated. Despite their success in curriculum and instruction and assessment, some programs found that they needed more time to build their curriculum or deploy their assessments than their original timeline included. For curriculum and instruction, this delay was in part due to collaborating with employers to inform the curriculum design. Regarding needs assessments, one program discussed the challenge of getting buy-in among staff to ensure that the necessary data was collected, noting that inconsistent data collection or reporting would compromise the assessment's utility. Other teams reported the need to extend timelines due to staff turnover or staff capacity, though many were still able to complete most or all of their action steps. For many programs, curriculum or assessment design represents just one of many competing priorities taken on by existing staff.

Connectivity and procurement challenges limited progress. Internet connectivity was often an issue for programs that aimed to purchase devices and build a physical space, such as a computer lab. As evidenced by

the modest score increase in the post-digital needs assessment (0.59 point increase as compared to an increase of 1.3 points for curriculum and instruction, for example), internet connectivity issues and partnerships with low-cost technology programs had a significant impact on programs' capacity to reach these goals, resulting in one program team's goal remaining in progress.

Solutions for solving limited internet connectivity ranged from minor adjustments, such as purchasing network extenders, to more extensive changes such as pivoting on original plans. For example, because of the prohibitive cost of structural upgrades, one program was unable to improve upon the reliability of the internet connection when multiple students were online simultaneously, and instead had to find other ways to engage with devices:

> The challenge was just that the tech space that we plan[ned] to use, ended up not being as ready for us in terms of internet connection … But nonetheless, we were still able to thrive and change and pivot to some participants using their own devices, as well as me presenting on a large screen to the group as well, so that everybody were able to actually do the digital skills exercises.

In these cases, programs were often able to continue supporting digital skills, but needed to modify their approach due to a lack of reliable internet connection. For one program team, a fire in their building disrupted their timeline and ability to establish a dedicated technology space.

In addition to issues with internet connectivity, programs faced challenges in working with partners and suppliers to secure and maintain devices. In particular, the closing of one organization, Tech Goes Home, had a substantial impact on programs' action plans. In 2024 alone, Tech Goes Home distributed over 5700 digital devices across Massachusetts,[3] and several program teams had planned to receive devices from them. Ultimately, programs found new partners or new solutions to acquire devices. In one case, the program team explained how their participation in this project made them much more prepared to handle device purchases despite the closing of Tech Goes Home:

> And I think one other thing that I want to … highlight in terms of the upsides of being involved in this process is that we would have been completely unprepared if we had not been working on this for the past year when tech goes home officially shut their doors. Whereas in this circumstance, because we had the ability to sort of follow up when we saw those first hiccups last January, we were able to respond quickly and essentially our ESOL classes were able to continue as scheduled without disruption, and learners were able to get devices without disruption.

Despite the negative impact of Tech Goes Home closing, this program felt prepared to pivot and maintain its momentum With DigLit funding, the program was able to dedicate staff time to create device management and lending policies that ultimately equipped them to overcome this obstacle. Overall, program teams experienced delays in their action plan timelines related to procuring improved internet connectivity and identifying alternative sources of low-cost devices. However, they leveraged their staff time and existing resources to find solutions and continue to advance their goals.

[3] *Tech Goes Home Impact Report 2024*. https://47ab9e76-c79f-45c8-8473-ff7df2a7cd56.filesusr.com/ugd/e10215_f6d278f94782469fb84c6ca4102cab46.pdf.

Part-time staffing and turnover affected progress. Staff turnover or lack of availability challenged or delayed progress on action plans related to staff development. Programs cited difficulties finding time for part-time instructors to participate in professional development, staff turnover, and changes with volunteers as reasons for progress delays.

One program, while describing this challenge, noted that they are in a better position now to continue: "*We've definitely had some shifting staff and staff roles, and [we are] really asking a lot of our current staff, so it was hard to kind of even think about this at times, right? And I think now we're at this place where the work, the desires, the capacity, the readiness is all there, and we need to make programmatic space."* Others were able to complete their intended plans but shared concerns for the sustainability of the work because so many staff are part-time and it's hard to invest in staff training and institutionalize program capacity when there is a lot of turnover.

Overall, program teams noted the impact of staff changes on progress toward their goals, especially related to staff capacity. That said, many teams also indicated that these challenges (e.g., staff turnover, finding time with part-time staff) are often ever-present realities in their work, and as a result, they problem-solved and adapted their action plans accordingly.

Learner variability and attrition affected participation. Despite the positive response from participants, program teams noted that the ever-present challenges of attrition and skill variability affected their ability to reach initial target numbers for participation. As one program team observed, *"I think that was really the biggest challenge is the different levels of literacy amongst our students."* Other teams relayed concerns about attrition affecting their rates of participation. While these hurdles are commonplace across the adult education and occupational skills training landscape, this attrition and student skill variability directly impacted some teams' ability to meet the targets that they set for themselves.

Additionally, several programs highlighted the compounding challenges that many learners face when building digital literacy, in terms of both mastering basic skills and the ability to effectively communicate and describe their digital skills needs: "*they're just not sure how to navigate, how to express those [digital skills], just because they haven't really been in environments where they've been using certain language to know I can do XYZ even if I haven't had this job experience."* This team envisioned VR as one way to support students in recognizing their digital skills, stating that "*VR will not only expose them to different professions, but will also maybe give them a sense of agency around the skill sets they do bring to the table*."

Although participants faced challenges in building digital skills, which may have had an impact on participation rates or other program team goals, they also improved their digital skills in a variety of ways, encouraged each other to participate, and in some cases, prepared to continue their journey with more advanced skills.

8. Factors that Supported Program Success



Two cohort members collaborate during a community learning event.

Across interviews, programs identified key elements of the DigLit model and the technical assistance approach to building systemic digital capacity as critical to their progress, and discussed how these activities promoted organizational learning and change.

Program teams often described their learnings in this project as connected to developing a cohesive approach to digital skills integration and promoting an adaptable and systematic approach to goal setting. Specifically, the technical assistance design:

Provided a systematic and iterative approach to digital skills integration. As a result of their participation in the project, several teams referred to how this project had changed their approach to digital skills integration, coming from a somewhat fragmented method to one that is more systematic and cohesive. As one program explained, "*going through this process really helped me think about the digital literacy skill gap from a really high level in a way that let me really think about how those things could be linked together to inform deliberate program design choices*." In this way, program teams not only met their original goals, but developed a more cohesive approach to how they aim to continue integrating digital skills in the future.

> "*Going through this process really helped me think about the digital literacy skill gap from a really high level in a way that let me really think about how those things could be linked together to inform deliberate program design choices*."

Encouraged a customizable and systematic approach to goal setting. For example, one program team discussed how their coach helped them to consider the appropriate steps for achieving their larger goal: *"we wanted to have a computer lab, so you were helpful in breaking down the steps that we would need to take in order for that computer lab to exist and be successful*." Other teams reported that regular check-ins with their coaches and set times for internal planning provided accountability on their end, helping them make progress amidst many competing responsibilities. Another team stated that this project changed how they will prepare for future changes as well, saying that "*this project, [and] the action plan, empowered us to think differently*

> " *This project, [and] the action plan, empowered us to think differently about how we approach online learning…this action plan enabled us to think about that critically. Is it possible? What would the steps be? How do we get there?*"

about how we approach online learning…this action plan enabled us to think about that critically. Is it possible? What would the steps be? How do we get there?"

Supported peer learning. Several programs spoke to the importance of peer learning and support across the cohort. One program noted the value of convening with the other teams: *"the community of practice was really a big part of this grant and I'd like to think about how to continue that because it was helpful to hear from other programs."* Others echoed these sentiments, sharing that the in-person meeting showcased teams' enthusiasm for the work and supported their own progress. Some programs even suggested additional meetings for the cohort to engage further.

9. Factors that Supported Program Sustainability

The DigLit required activities described throughout this report were designed to foster a systematic and sustained approach to digital skills and technology integration. The following section highlights key outcomes related to sustainability, some of which have been illustrated in previous sections and others which are newly mentioned in the subsequent paragraphs. For example, program teams:

Leveraged achievements to apply for or secure additional funding. Program teams discussed how they had leveraged their achievements from this grant to apply for or secure additional funding. For example, one team had purchased virtual reality (VR) equipment through this grant and had already applied for additional funding to continue utilizing the VR platform.

Developed a comprehensive awareness of the digital skills needed for the workforce. Through the incorporation of more formalized digital skills assessments and data-informed programming or curricula, programs constructed a more in-depth understanding of digital skills needs for their participants. Programs leveraged tools such as Northstar Digital Literacy assessments, connected with employers to understand which digital skills were needed, and surveyed and assessed students to understand which skills they already possessed and which skills they were still interested in learning.

Expanded the organization's involvement in digital skills integration. Several teams mentioned that through the advice of coaches, they involved additional program team members in their digital skills integration. When asked what advice they would have for others who wished to participate in a project like Boston DigLit, teams listed this step as critical for others who wish to integrate digital skills into their program design.

Developed partnerships expanded to expand digital skills integration. As highlighted throughout this report, program teams developed new partnerships to build more data-informed curricula and established relationships with different tech suppliers to secure new devices.

Established durable processes and resources. Given the high rate of staff turnover, planning for transitions is a matter of when, not if. One program team discussed how this project helped them to prepare for the work to continue even in the event of inevitable staff changes: "*This is why I'm so confident about this maintaining within [our organization], despite any kind of staff changes or whatever is that it's such a readily available thing to integrate into the programming, that now that we've built it, we can use it anywhere*."

Responded to new digital trends like generative AI. Being ready to support digital skills integration as tech constantly evolves requires the appropriate equipment, skills, and capacity to take on the integration of new digital skills. Several program teams mentioned that they plan to adapt their current approach to digital skills training to respond to the need for skills with generative AI. One program team explained that the devices they secured during this grant equipped them to integrate generative AI into their work because their previous equipment did not have enough power to do so.

Finally, many program teams explicitly mentioned the value of receiving resources from their coaches and from the project. One program team reported that they *"appreciate just the breadth of resources that were made available to us to kind of lean on and kind of sort through, as we figure out how we move forward with our own plan."* Others referenced the usefulness of specific resources such as the BRIDGES Digital Resilience Toolkit and the EdTech Routine Library.

10. Recommendations

Programs made substantial progress toward achieving their goals for building program and staff capacity to integrate digital skills and technology. Furthermore, they expressed appreciation for the DigLit approach, noting that the coaching and project activities were effectively designed to support systems change tailored to each program's unique interests, needs, and strengths. Based on the successes achieved and the challenges encountered along the way, the following section outlines key recommendations for future programming.

1. **Replicate and scale the systematic, customized, and sustainable approach to build digital skills and technology integration.** The following components are essential for replicating and scaling this approach to digital skills and technology integration: supporting iterative digital skills integration, using customizable goal setting, employing a cohort-based model, integrating sustainability, and providing flexible funding.
    a. ***Support iterative digital skills integration****:* Having successfully integrated digital skills into initial target areas like curriculum or assessment, programs are now poised to scale these practices across all training offerings. Throughout this evolution, coaches served as critical thought partners, helping programs routinely iterate on their goals, carry out their action plans, and tailor professional development and resource sharing to support implementation.

    b. ***Use customizable goal setting***: The goal progression analysis underscored that starting with a needs assessment is foundational to setting a well-informed goal that addresses root problems. However, this process requires dedicated technical assistance and sufficient time. Rather than treating goals as static, this customizable approach ensures goals remain adaptable, allowing programs to pivot as their circumstances change. Ultimately, this reflective process helps programs ground their targets in reality, balancing ambitious milestones with the operational conditions they navigate daily.

    c. ***Employ a cohort-based model:*** Programs frequently mention the value of learning from and sharing with their peers, especially during in-person professional development events. Future technical assistance efforts should consider a cohort-based model, and incorporate ongoing touch points among peers.

d. ***Integrate sustainability throughout the project*:** Future technical assistance efforts may benefit from promoting the sustainable approach to digital skills integration that program teams employed for this project. As highlighted in the previous section, programs leveraged achievements to apply for or secure additional funding, developed a comprehensive awareness of the digital skills needed for the workforce, expanded the organization's involvement in digital skills integration, grew partnerships to expand digital skills integration, established durable processes and resources, and responded to new digital trends like generative AI.

e. ***Provide flexible funding*** to support program staff participation in intensive, long term capacity building activities and to effectively implement action plan goals.

2. In addition to replicating and scaling the key features of the DigLit model and approach, future technical assistance efforts should **address common challenges for digital skills and technology integration raised across key practice areas.**

a. ***Provide additional support and time for curriculum and assessment development.*** When it comes to designing curriculum and instruction, or developing assessments, given the many roles and responsibilities that program teams typically take on, it is important to set realistic timelines for curriculum and assessment development. In future technical assistance efforts, it may be helpful to support programs in enhancing their capacity to draw on data sources to inform the curricula (e.g., collaborating with employers, surveying students), and building internal processes for implementing more formal assessments**.**

b. ***Invest in and promote Open Educational Resources (OER) and practitioner-led resource repositories.*** Future technical assistance efforts should continue to support the collaborative creation of open educational resources. Repositories, shared resources and instructional materials developed by practitioners, such as the EdTech Routine Library, Skillblox, and BRIDGES Digital Resilience Toolkit, can reduce duplication of efforts, limit the burden on individual instructors, preserve institutional knowledge, and lessen the impact of staff turnover. By treating educators as contributors rather than consumers of resources, cities and technical assistance providers can strengthen capacity across the ecosystem while creating sustainable tools that benefit current and future staff.

c. ***Expand the focus on shared technology infrastructure and partnerships.*** Digital skills integration requires not only experience with teaching and learning, but also with device management. Several programs had to pivot when a tech supplier was no longer able to deliver devices, building relationships with new tech suppliers or taking on additional responsibilities in securing and managing devices. Rather than expecting individual programs to independently manage procurement and device access, cities can coordinate partnerships with refurbishers, suppliers, libraries, and digital inclusion organizations to create more sustainable and equitable access to technology. Some ideas include: establishing partnerships with device refurbishers and digital inclusion organizations to create more affordable and sustainable device pipelines, supporting shared procurement strategies or purchasing "cooperatives" so smaller organizations can benefit from economies of scale, and connecting device access with digital navigation services, ensuring learners receive support in using devices effectively.

d. ***Plan for staff turnover and offer ongoing professional learning.*** Staff turnover and lack of available staff time for professional development or training were common challenges and should be planned for proactively in future efforts. Future technical assistance efforts should continue to support ongoing professional development and staff training with the goal of developing proactive strategies to sustain progress in the face of staff turnover. These strategies would include developing and institutionalizing digital skill instructional curriculum and edtech routines and digital skills and technology assessment and onboarding orientation for all new staff. Some program teams distinguish between onboarding practices for new staff and ongoing support for instructors. Encouraging both practices (onboarding and ongoing PD) would be beneficial for all programs.

e. ***Integrate Generative AI readiness into digital capacity building.*** Future technical assistance efforts should incorporate AI readiness into needs assessments, action plans, EdTech routines, and staff professional development. Massachusetts has already created new opportunities through initiatives such as the Massachusetts AI Hub, which provides free Google AI and career certificate training to residents. Rather than focusing on individual tools alone, programs should emphasize digital resilience, critical thinking, and the ability to adapt to emerging technologies. Given that lower-income workers often receive fewer employer-sponsored training opportunities and are disproportionately affected by digital skill gaps, adult education and workforce programs have an important role to play in ensuring that AI expands opportunity to all Boston residents rather than deepening inequities.

11. Conclusion

Boston DigLit programs successfully achieved their goals of integrating digital skills and technology across goals related to curriculum design, instruction, assessment delivery, digital tool utilization, and staff capacity building. Supported by a systematic yet customizable technical assistance framework, program teams established a foundation for digital skills integration—improving current programming while planning for continuous growth. Ultimately, by focusing on systems change, peer learning, practical resources, and flexible funding, the DigLit Initiative empowered programs to integrate digital skills and technology in a way that can be sustained and scaled over time.