

# Acknowledgements

Through forced immersion in distance learning as a result of COVID-19, the field of adult basic skills education saw just how beneficial collaboration can be. As programs across the country raced to move online, IDEAL Consortium member states nimbly responded to shifting conditions and tapped into the skills, resources, and strategies they had in place, leveraging them and adapting them to shift all of their programming to distance learning format. This edition acknowledges the generous sharing of ideas, strategies, and lessons learned that has characterized both our Consortium and the field more broadly. As conveners of the IDEAL Consortium and providers of technical assistance to adult basic skills programs across the country, we have been in a unique position to watch, document, and amplify innovation. We have updated this edition in honor of your work and the need to make sure others know about it.

## Our History

IDEAL Consortium was founded as Project IDEAL in 2002 by Dr. Jere Johnston as a consortium of states interested in developing distance education programs to meet the needs of adults for whom classroom options were either not available or not a good fit. Under Dr. Johnston's leadership, collaborative research and program development facilitated by Project IDEAL demonstrated that distance education was a viable option for many adult learners. As a voice for member states, the Consortium has shaped distance education policy at the state and national levels and has provided professional

development expertise for practitioners nationwide.

The EdTech Center has hosted what we now call IDEAL Consortium since the fall of 2015. We engage in this work mindful of the foundation on which it rests—the collaborative leadership and expertise of Dr. Jere Johnson and the early members of Project IDEAL. Under Dr. Johnston’s stewardship, the Handbook evolved through several editions, each time incorporating the lessons learned in the years following each publication.

After the transition of the Consortium to World Education, the fifth edition, published in 2015, added substantial updates based on experiences in the field since 2008, particularly the expansion of blended learning programs and program changes required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The sixth edition (2018) provided key updates gathered over two years of watching the Handbook in use. This seventh edition includes updates deemed necessary after practitioners across the United States were faced with rapid scaling up of distance education during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Though it was a stressful transition, we note that it spurred innovation that has moved the needle on more equitable access to technology-rich instruction.



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Consortium, I. (2020). *IDEAL Distance Education and Blended Learning Handbook*. EdTech Books. Retrieved from [https://edtechbooks.org/ideal\\_dl\\_handbook](https://edtechbooks.org/ideal_dl_handbook)



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