

# BASIC TUTOR TRAINING

## *Digital Resources*

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## Digital Resources Communication

### Try Them Out

#### Tutor Training

Practice with applications described on this page that interest you. We will not be using them in training, but we will discuss benefits and limitations.



Do

## Email and Text Communication

### Email

This is not a comprehensive list, but will likely encompass the majority of communication software used by tutors and learners. Some, such as Outlook, are commercial products requiring purchase, while others are free but have upgradable options with expanded features for a fee.

- Google Gmail
- Hotmail
- Microsoft Outlook
- Mozilla Thunderbird
- Yahoo

### Text

There are myriad text options, including the built-in options with smart phones. In addition, most productivity suites tether some form of chat communication, such as the features with Google.

- Google chat
- WhatsApp

## Video Communication

### Functionality and Ease of Use

With respect to functionality, some platforms offer greater abilities. For example, Zoom allows either party to share what is on their screen and utilize a virtual white board. To achieve the same functions with WhatsApp you may need two devices, or have to point your camera at a piece of paper.

However, sometimes ease of use is inversely related to functionality. At Siena, we are always happy to help you find a balance between form and function! Make an appointment with Rod or Abdual to explore what various applications have to offer!

- Google Duo
- Skype
- WhatsApp
- Zoom



zoom



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## Digital Resources Productivity Software

### Take Your Pick!

#### Google Drive and Suite



#### Microsoft Office



#### Apache Open Office



#### Libre Office



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## Free and Paid Office Software

### Google Drive and Suite

A versatile, free alternative to Microsoft Office products (i.e., Excel, PowerPoint, and Word) that are accessible anywhere you have access to the Internet. In addition to the primary applications Google provides as an alternative to Microsoft products, a wide range of additional applications are available for such activities as creating and distributing forms and surveys.

- Access anywhere there is an Internet connection
- Does not need to be installed on a computer
- Ability to share and collaborate with others
- Free

### Microsoft Office

Although Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, and Word are paid software with free alternatives, these functionality-rich applications are the driver for many organizations and individuals.

- Perpetual and subscription (Office 365) options available
- Highly robust functionality and attractive interface
- Additional functions with an Internet connection

### Apache Open Office & Libre Office

Unlike the suite from Google, Apache Open Office and Libre Office are both able to be installed on a computer and function without access to the Internet. In my opinion, neither have the “minimalist” appearance of the Google suite, nor the crisp interface of the Microsoft suite. However, if you are not inclined to pay for either the subscription (Office 365 products) or perpetual licenses of Microsoft, and want to have fully functional software in the event of an Internet meltdown, these two alternatives are worth checking out. Personally, they are too similar to warrant further distinction here.

- Functional without an Internet connection
- Free

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## Digital Resources Extras

### Try Something New

#### NBME format?

We will not be taking time to practice with new apps during training, but we will take time to discuss apps:

- Which barriers can we overcome?
- What apps have you found useful?
- What are novel ways you've used them?
- What would you like to do?



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### Asking more than one question

#### Kahoot

Kahoot is one of many options for use with smart phones, tablets, and computers, to employ *retrieval practice* in an engaging format. Research supports the benefits of retrieval (i.e., the testing effect), where retrieval can range from informal questioning, flash cards, or even formal tests. Basically, retrieval practice is any instance where we have to recall information. Spacing out this practice is also more effective for long-term retention than massed practice (i.e., cramming).

Consider how a resource like Kahoot could be integrated into your sessions to promote retrieval practice. An added benefit to using web-based applications such as this enables you to “quiz” people without even being present. Your questions are displayed on their device, and their responses will appear on yours.

#### Text Scanner [OCR]

A free, supportive app that might be of use to your learner is Text Scanner. Using optical character recognition (OCR), Text Scanner is able to convert typed (and clearly printed) text to audio. While these functions are not unique, the level of automation with Text Scanner does stand out. In other cases, you might need to take a picture of the text before the application can perform OCR; with Text Scanner, simply point your camera at the text and it recognizes, transcribes, and then reads the text aloud.

Apps like Text Scanner are not intended to supplant continued education for our learners, however, such resources can be a critical support in their daily lives.

#### Duo Lingo

A free app that is accessible on smart phones, tablets, and computers, Duo Lingo is a structured support for learning another language. Consider how this could be relevant for your learner, or yourself!

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# Digital Resources Plain English

## More Ways to Enjoy Additional Features

Here are a few additional features that might be worth checking out if you decide to try The Times in Plain English

- [Hear This Page](#)
- [Translate This Page](#)
- [Tips for Teachers](#)

The screenshot shows the homepage of 'The Times in Plain English'. At the top, there are navigation links: HOME, ARTICLE INDEX, ABOUT US, CONTACT US. Below that, a secondary navigation bar lists categories: NEWS, MONEY & WORK, HEALTH & EDUCATION, IMMIGRATION, LAW, POLITICS, OF INTEREST, NEW YORK, WORLD, FEATURES. The main header includes 'Clear Writing Global Reading' and 'The Times in Plain English' with a sub-header 'Reporting from Great Newspapers for Today's Readers'. A search bar is present with a 'Go' button. A 'FREE SUBSCRIPTION' section has a 'Email Address' field and a 'Subscribe' button. A 'TOPICS' sidebar lists: CHECK OUTSIDE, ESSAY, FEATURES, HEALTH & EDUCATION, IMMIGRATION, LAW, MONEY & WORK, NEW YORK, NEWS, OF INTEREST, OPINION, POLITICS, Tips for Teachers, UPDATE, WORLD. The main content area features a 'HEALTH & EDUCATION' article titled 'Are You Addicted to Unhealthy Foods or Just Have to Have Them?' dated February 25, 2012. It includes an illustration of a person's head with a glowing brain and a small image of a burger. Below the illustration, it says 'Illustration by Richard S. Chace for The New York Times.' and 'Food scientists studied what Americans eat. They found that most of the calories people eat come from ultra-processed foods. Processed foods include large amounts of sugar.'

## Plain Language

### What's the Problem?

Without getting too deep into an area with which I have limited familiarity, English is what is termed an “opaque” or “deep” language. In contrast, languages such as Italian are “transparent” or “shallow.” This terminology refers to a language’s characteristics of spelling, and the spectrum describes the correspondence between the written and spoken forms of letters.

A language on the transparent end of the spectrum is, more or less, read as it is written. An opaque language, like English, will have many different ways a single letter is read aloud.

In addition to the complication of multiple utterance per letter, writers display, not infrequently, a proclivity toward ornate circumlocution so ardent that if compelled to choose between obfuscation or capitulation to concision, they would, undoubtedly, opt for the former. In other words, some writers complicate their writing at the expense of clarity.

### The Times in Plain English

<https://www.thetimesinplainenglish.com/>

A resource that is worth checking out is the *Times in Plain English*. It provides a readily accessible version of current events that can be used to make tutoring material relevant.

The *Times in Plain English* is **not**:

- Affiliated with *The New York Times (NYT)*
- Edited versions of *NYT* articles

According to their website, *The Time in Plain English* is:

- comprised of stories “freshly written” to reflect *NYT* articles;
- subjected to the Flesch-Kincaid readability scale in Word®;
- only available online; and
- free.

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## Digital Resources Research



U.S. Department of Education

Student Loans

Grants

**OCTAE**

Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education

**IES :: NCES** National Center for Education Statistics

**LINCS**

COMMUNITY, COURSES, AND  
RESOURCES FOR ADULT EDUCATION

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## Evidence-Based Resources

### Government Organizations

Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html>

An office of the US Department of Education, OCTAE oversees adult education at the federal level. However, in Michigan, adult education falls under two departments:

- Department of Labor and Economic Development (LEO)  
Specifically, the Workforce Development (WD) agency  
Related to non-profits like Siena (WIOA Title II)
- Department of Education  
Adult education through school districts (WIOA Titles I & III)

Both the federal and state websites contain useful information with regard to policies and practices that affect adult education.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

<https://nces.ed.gov/>

An extensive repository for both data and research summaries, the NCES has information concerning all levels of education. A useful source for national and international literacy surveys including:

- National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS, 1992)
- National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL, 2003)
- Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2021)

Literacy Information and Communication System(LINCS)

<https://lincs.ed.gov/>

Another service supported by the federal government, LINCS provides access to research reports, learning resources, and professional development material you might benefit from. After registering for a free account, you can enroll in a variety of self-paced modules that can inform tutoring practices. Most modules are between one and three hours in length. Example modules titles include:

- *Disabilities and Equitable Outcomes*
- *English Language Acquisition*
- *Teaching and Learning*
- *Workforce Preparation*

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## Digital Resources Research



## Evidence-Based Resources Non-Government Organizations

### Research Allies for Lifelong Learning

<http://researchallies.org/>

Dr. Margaret Patterson, founder of Research Allies, has an extensive publication record in adult education. Through collaboration with local and national organizations, as well as utilization of data from large-scale literacy surveys (e.g., PIAAC), Dr. Patterson has published on important topics such as barriers to participation in adult education and motivation in adult education learners. From their website:

“The mission of Research Allies for Lifelong Learning is applying research to support adult educators and learners.

Our vision is to ensure you as adult educators and learners across the USA can maximize your use of adult education research findings.”

### Open Door Collective (ODC)

<https://www.opendoorcollective.org/>

The Open Door Collective is a research and advocacy organization that is focused on reducing poverty and economic equality in the US, while simultaneously increasing civic engagement. The ODC sees increased skills (literacy, numeracy, technology, and work force) as the way toward the goal of reducing poverty. Thus, the collective is dedicated to pursuing ways to increase participation and success in adult education.

### Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

<https://www.oecd.org/>

The OECD developed the PIAAC and continues to assess countries across the globe. The PIAAC was conducted in 2012, 2014, and 2017; the next round is slated for 2021. In addition to collecting information, OECD produces research summaries and reports based on international findings. From their website:

“... (OECD) is an international organisation that works to build better policies for better lives. Our goal is to shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all. . . . Together with governments, policy makers and citizens, we work on establishing evidence-based international standards and finding solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges.”