



STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING NORTHSTAR AT YOUR SITES



Supervisors and Members, discuss the strategies below to make sure that you are able to hit and even surpass your Northstar goals for the year!

1) What matters for CTEP is passing the assessment, not Certification per se

Some sites have talked about the difficulty in proctoring the assessment within a large group, or in an open lab while others are in the room, or simply that non-job seeking learners may not see the value in the “certification” aspect of Northstar. A different way of talking with these community members could be “we’ve been working on Microsoft Word the last few times we’ve met, let’s take this exercise or do this activity to see what you have learned and what have left to focus on.” For some, especially those who are not job seekers, if you don’t use the language of certification or even test, they may be less intimidated and more interested. As long as you are confident that they didn’t cheat, you can count the score as a post-test on your CTEP reporting sheet even if they are not receiving a certificate.

If your learners do not get certification, please use the specific agency page URL to take the test (e.g. <http://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/agency/yoursite>), and not the public URL <http://digitalliteracyassessment.org/>. That way, their results will still be saved in your agency account even if they don’t receive certification. If they take the assessment through the public site alone there will be no lasting record of their score. Please contact CTEP staff if you do not know your site specific URL and we can find out for you.

2) Pre-tests are optional, and there is no minimum time for instruction before something can count as a post-test

Most learners within CTEP sites are not taking Pre-tests because they have no or very little knowledge of the Northstar topic they are learning. In this case, their pre-test score is effectively zero, and you can simply administer the post-test. Remember, there needs to be some instruction in order for something to count as a post score, but there is no minimum amount of time. Even 10 minutes of assistance could help someone pass an assessment who previously could not!

3) Finding new Pools of Learners

Consider additional populations (youth, intermediate speaking, or advanced speaking, open lab) at your site. Is there a different department of your agency that you could collaborate with or Northstar instruction? Remember, there is no minimum time for instruction before an assessment score can be counted as a post-score. The assessment itself could even be administered by another staff or volunteer in a different class. As long as the CTEP member was involved in the instruction of the Northstar skill to any degree, the member can count the result on their spreadsheet.

4) Adding Typing Certification!

This could be a huge way to get extra certifications at your site. One basic computer skill incredibly important for job seekers (as well as think taking the online GED) is typing. Northstar does not offer its own typing test because there are already plenty of other online assessments that measure accuracy and speed. They don't need to recreate the wheel. Instead, Northstar has endorsed the following assessments below, and you can count general typing or 10 key (numeric key pad) typing as an assessment passed on your CTEP tracking sheet.

More specifically, if you have a learner get 30 words per minute (wpm) or higher and an accuracy of 85% or higher, add their score as 100 in the basic skills column on your Google Spreadsheet.

Northstar developers have endorsed the following tests for certification in general or 10 key typing. To be clear, they will not be certified by Northstar, but instead by one of the sites below.

Software like Mavis Beacon is fine. Also, see

<http://www.typingweb.com/tutor/>

<http://games.sense-lang.org/>

<http://play.typeracer.com/>

<http://www.10keytutor.com/>

If there is another test at your site that you use, let us know, and we may add it to the list!

6) Have your volunteers and staff take the assessments

Many CTEP members working with managing volunteers and other staff that are involved in your programming would benefit from taking Northstar assessments. If staff or volunteers take and pass the assessments, you can also count these as post-scores on your tracking sheet. Whether you actually certify them or not depends on their interest.

7) Adding Northstar into your Civic Engagement projects

Many of your projects involve teaching basics skills. Consider adding Northstar, and you can count these on your tracking sheets!

8) You can recount individuals who passed Northstar in a former program year

If you are working with someone who passed a Northstar test with a former CTEP member, you can count them again during this program year.