

LINCS 2017 Online Tools & Resource Evaluation Micro Group

By David Rosen

LINCS is a free online adult basic skills professional development system. Among other services, it offers several discussion groups called Communities of Practice. One of these, Technology and Learning, is the host for a new Micro Group. The Online Tools & Resource Evaluation Micro Group has begun this month — but you can still join if you act now -- and continues through July, 2017. It is based on a similar Micro Group offered last year that developed an extensive list of online tools and resources, and in which participants produced evaluations of some of these, using an easy, online tool that was developed by the group. [You can view a summary of this exciting work here.](#)

This year each participant, primarily adult basic education (including ESOL/ESL, basic skills, ASE, and Transition) teachers with classes at any level, will choose at at least three tools or resources, try them out with a group of students, and evaluate them. Participants will also be expected to discuss their experience using the tools or resources and their thoughts about how they could best be used. Participants are welcome to add to the list of tools and resources, but that this isn't a requirement. This is not a course, but rather a collaborative group project in which participants will try out and evaluate software that will ultimately be written up for other adult education teachers who are LINCS members, and perhaps also disseminated to other adult basic skills teachers.

Some benefits of joining the project might be: fun, learning more about some online tools and resources, trying out tools and resources with your students, actively thinking about how the tools or resources could be effectively used with adult learners, and hearing other teachers' ideas about that too. Teachers who have professional development plans might add the activities of this group to their plans for this year, as this will certainly be a great way to learn how to evaluate and integrate online tools and resources.

Ed Latham is the moderator for this group. In addition to being an adult educator, technology guru, library volunteer, and game aficionado he is a passionate educator who always looks to create learning options. Members of this new Micro Group will discover new learning opportunities to share in the classroom.

Registering for the LINCS Community

- To create a new account, go to the LINCS Community: <https://community.lincs.ed.gov/> and select "Log In / Register" at the top of the page (on the far right in the blue menu ribbon). Then select "Register for a new account".
- Complete the "Create an Account" screen (passwords need at least one number, at least one capital letter, and at least one special character). Check the box indicating that you agree to the Terms and Conditions, then click "Submit" at the bottom. An automated email will be sent to the email address you entered, with a link to verify that you're the same person. Be sure to check your Spam / Junk Mail box if you don't see it! Until you've clicked the link in that email, your account doesn't exist. Once your email has been verified, you should get a "verification successful" email message.
- A LINCS staff member reviews every new account request to prevent spammers or anyone else untrustworthy from accessing the Community pages, so before you can use this account it'll need to be approved. If the account is created during business hours, this will usually happen within an hour or two; but it should never take more than two days. They will email you once your account's been approved.
- From then on, you can always login from the LINCS Community page (<https://community.lincs.ed.gov/>). Once again, select "Log In / Register" at the top of the page. Enter your email address and password, and click "Log In."
- Enter a User Name that you'd like others to see in your LINCS Community activities, then select the Send button to save your changes.

Joining a Group

- Once you are logged in, click the "Join Groups" button, or "Groups" tab in the blue horizontal navigation bar. You will be directed to a list of groups you can join. Chose the one(s) that interest you and, for each, select "join" to become a member. You may want to start with only one or two groups, and add others later if you wish. In any case, be sure to join the Technology and Learning group and the [2017 Online Tools & Resource Evaluation Micro Group](#)
- When you choose a group (or Micro Group), you will be redirected to that group's home page. On the right, you have the option to set your Email Subscription.
- For each group you join, select "Immediate" from the drop down menu. You can always change this to another setting later, to "12-hour digest" or "24-hour digest". Then you will get LINCS email less frequently, and with batched messages.
- Click Submit. Each time someone posts a message, you will receive it in your email.