Dynamic Ways to Support the Whole Learner: Promoting Digital Literacy for Adult Learners

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Session Plan

1. Learn about our digital literacy resources

2. Explore the Resource Guide

3. Engage in activities from the training materials

4. Learn about the usability study

5. Discussion

Icebreaker

Stand up/Raise hand

Start with sitting down or with your hand down

You will hear multiple questions. If you want to answer "yes" to a question, stand up or raise your hand. If you answer, "no," sit down or lower your hand.
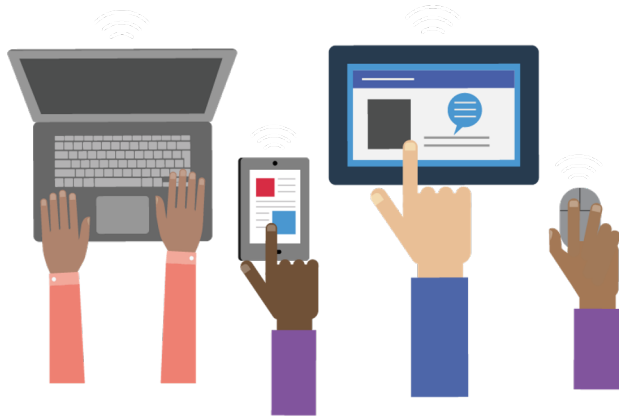
Why Are We Here?

Digital skills, tools, and technologies are fundamental for social mobility.

But few learners have the information, services, and support needed to achieve it.

The Challenge

To earn a living and navigate public and social systems, adults across all ages, races, genders, major industries, and most occupations need to continuously develop and apply **digital skills**.

But **equity** in the rapidly changing economy remains a challenge, especially for individuals with a high school diploma or less.

What digital literacy skills do adult learners need?

> *Technology is always changing, so I really need these skills. I used to call and ask my kids all the time to help me use the computer, but now I'm independent! If you don't know how to fill out an online application, you need someone to help you, but now I feel like I'm the boss of the computer.*
>
> *– Northstar Digital Literacy Adult Learner*

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Let's Explore

Promoting Digital Literacy for Adult Learners: A Resource Guide

April 2022

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Key Features

- **Pause and Reflect**: question prompts to focus reading and reflection

- **Quick Tips**: practical activities, ideas, and resources that practitioners can apply right away

- **Linking Theory to Practice**: specific ideas and resources for putting the theoretical ideas of the resource guide into action

- **Field Examples**: real-life illustrations of ideas to help readers get a clearer picture of how digital literacy looks when implemented.

- **Resources**: additional sources of information with links to external resources

Training Materials

Overall Training Objectives

1. Discuss key concepts for teaching digital literacy, such as learner variability, in your own words.

2. Increase confidence and ability to identify adult learners' digital literacy needs and goals.

3. Navigate the resource guide as a resource to answer questions or find strategies for digital literacy challenges that arise either in real time or in learner scenarios.

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Making the Most of
Promoting Digital Literacy for Adult Learners: A Resource Guide

Facilitator's Training Handbook

Fall 2022

Module 1: Overview

Understand the purpose of the resource guide and why digital skills and connectivity is so important to adult learners and workers.

Set personal learning goals for improving their ability to meet the unique digital literacy needs of their learners.
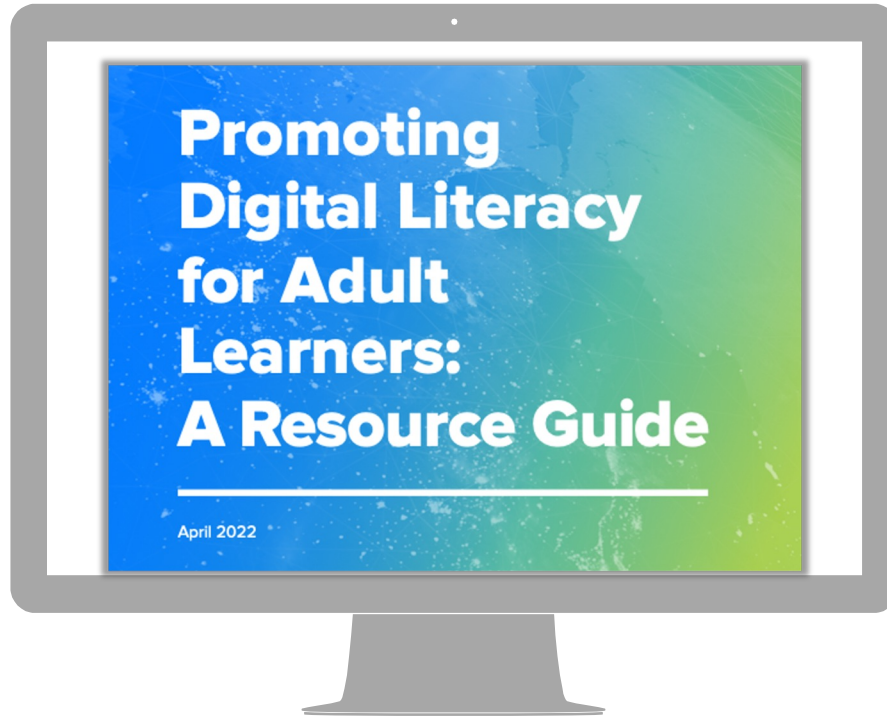

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Chapter 1

Overview

How to Use the Resource Guide

Promoting Digital Literacy for Adult Learners: A Resource Guide

April 2022

- Framework for working with adult learners in the context of digital literacy

- Supplemental support to a digital literacy curriculum

- Professional development materials support a "train the trainer" framework and technical assistance

Key Terms: Digital Literacy and Digital Resilience

→ **What is Digital Literacy?**

The ability and knowledge needed to access and operate internet-connected devices, to successfully use commonly available software, and to navigate and utilize online resources in order to effectively communicate and complete social and work-related tasks in a virtual space.

— Literacy Minnesota ⬀

→ **What is Digital Resilience?**

The awareness, skills, agility, and confidence to be empowered users of new technologies and adapt to changing digital skill demands.

— Digital Resilience in the American Workforce ⬀

In what ways are you digitally resilient?

Digital resilience is the **awareness**, **skills**, **agility**, and **confidence** to be empowered users of new technologies and adapt to changing digital skill demands.
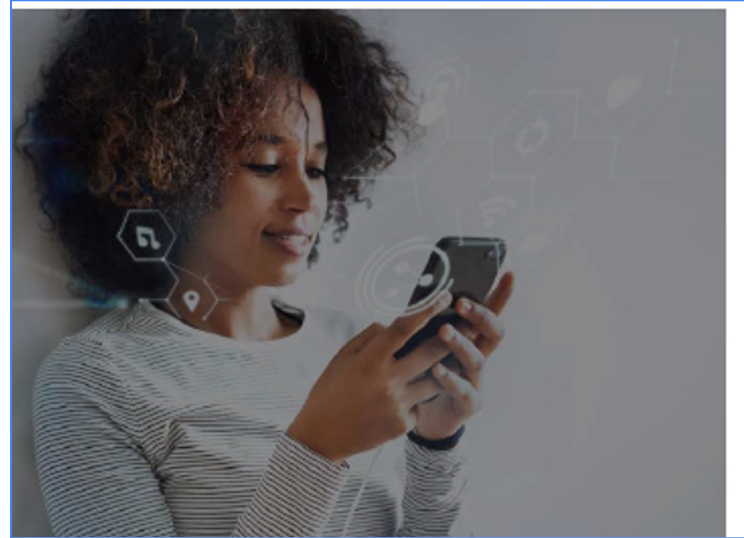
List 10 things you did today that require digital skills

> "Digital skills include a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information"
>
> – *UNESCO*

Module 2: Understanding the Adult Learner Experience

Participants will be able to understand the concept and value of digital equity, and how it connects to digital literacy development.

Participants will develop an understanding of learner variability and reflect on their own learner variability.

Participants will identify and discuss key concepts related to a whole learner approach within their own context.

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Chapter 2

Understanding the Adult Learner Experience

Digital Literacy Needs at Work

Nearly **one out of three** Americans currently struggles to perform their job effectively due to limited digital problem solving skills.

With no end in sight for the rapid changes in work ahead, we are all at one point or another—whether we're 18, 25, 45, or 65—going to have to rethink our path in life.

We will come to a juncture at which we'll have to upskill or retool ourselves through more education in order to keep up with the changing needs of our economy.

– Michelle Weise, Long Life Learning
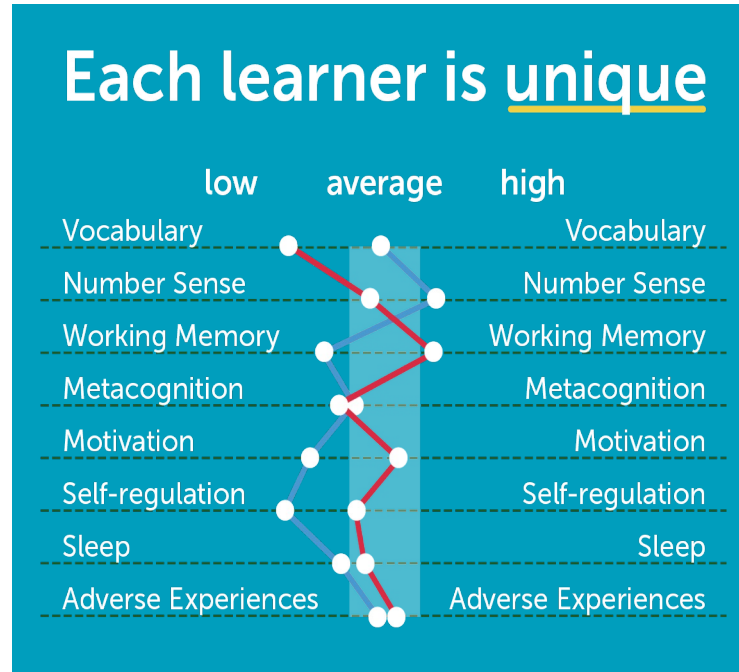
What is digital equity?

What is digital equity?

→ **Digital equity** is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy. Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

— National Digital Inclusion Alliance ↗

What is learner variability?

Learner variability is the recognition that each individual has a unique set of strengths and challenges across a whole learner framework that are interconnected and vary according to context.

Each learner is <u>unique</u>

	low	average	high	
Vocabulary				Vocabulary
Number Sense				Number Sense
Working Memory				Working Memory
Metacognition				Metacognition
Motivation				Motivation
Self-regulation				Self-regulation
Sleep				Sleep
Adverse Experiences				Adverse Experiences

Factors That Impact Adult Learning

Consider the multiple factors that impact adult learning.

Here they are grouped by **adult literacies**, **cognition**, **social and emotional learning**, and **learner background**.
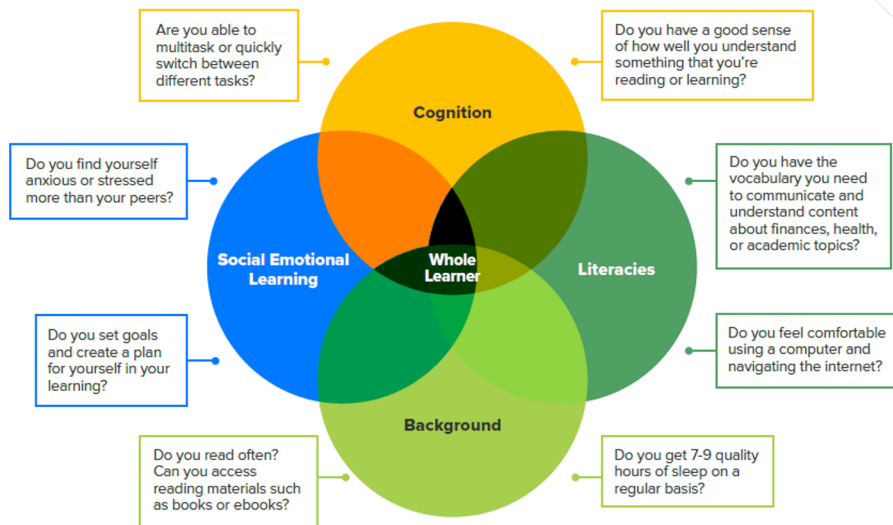

Adult Learner

Hover over the factors below to see their connections to each other. Then click to learn how each affects adult learner outcomes and to explore relevant strategies.

FACTORS

Adult Literacies	Cognition	Social and Emotional Learning	Learner Background
Background Knowledge	Attention	Emotion	Adverse Experiences
Composition	Auditory Processing	Learner Mindset	Hearing
Digital Literacy	Cognitive Flexibility	Motivation	Literacy Environment
Disciplinary Literacy	Inhibition	Self-regulation	Physical Well-being
Foundational Reading Skills	Long-term Memory	Social Awareness & Relationship Skills	Primary Language
Numeracy	Metacognition	Stereotype Threat	Safety
Oral Communication Skills	Reasoning		Sleep
Problem Solving	Short-term Memory		Social Supports
	Speed of Processing		Socioeconomic Status
	Visual Processing		Vision
	Working Memory		

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What is your learner variability?

Reflect on yourself as a learner. What are your strengths? What are your challenges?

Identify a recent success or challenge you had as a learner.

Are you able to multitask or quickly switch between different tasks?

Do you have a good sense of how well you understand something that you're reading or learning?

Do you find yourself anxious or stressed more than your peers?

Do you have the vocabulary you need to communicate and understand content about finances, health, or academic topics?

Do you set goals and create a plan for yourself in your learning?

Do you feel comfortable using a computer and navigating the internet?

Do you read often? Can you access reading materials such as books or ebooks?

Do you get 7-9 quality hours of sleep on a regular basis?

Cognition

Social Emotional Learning

Whole Learner

Literacies

Background

The science of adult learning: Understanding the whole learner (Tare, Cacicio, & Shell, 2020)

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Design for Learner Variability

Focus on the whole learner

- Consider personal motivations, content knowledge, cognitive traits, prior schooling experiences, and linguistic and cultural resources.

- Help participants make meaningful connections by providing different options for sharing their experiences and giving opportunities to reflect on their learning as it relates to their own goals.

Module 3:
Defining Digital Literacy

Establish a common definition of digital literacy and identify what it looks like in practice.

Explore the different whole learner factors that can impact digital literacy using the content and key features of the resource guide.

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Chapter 3

Defining Digital Literacy

Define digital literacy. What does it look like in practice?

Turn to pages 16-17 to see a list of the things that a person with digital literacy skills can do.

The ability and knowledge needed to **access** and **operate** internet-connected devices, to successfully **use** commonly available software, and to **navigate** and **utilize** online resources in order to effectively **communicate** and complete social and work-related **tasks** in a virtual space.

- barbarabush.org
- Select Literacy Resources
- Select Digital Literacy Resources

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Pre-Assessing Digital Literacy Skills

See page 62. Use the questions to pre-assess your own digital literacy within each competency.

How can this help you plan your sessions with learners?

A person who is digitally literate can:	Questions to ask yourself and learners	Self-Assess
Understand graphic design and navigate interfaces (photovisual literacy)	*Can you use different mouse clicks to perform tasks on a device? e.g., right-click, left-click, and double click* *Can you scroll up and down a page to find information?* *Can you find and use common website features? e.g., play buttons, hyperlinks*	☐ Yes, I can easily complete all of these tasks. ☐ No, I still need practice to complete some of these tasks.
Create multimedia works (reproduction literacy)	*Can you take a screenshot on a smartphone or other device and edit the picture by adding a caption or other text?* *Can you add photos from the internet to a PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation, citing sources?*	☐ Yes, I can easily complete all of these tasks. ☐ No, I still need practice to complete some of these tasks.
Navigate the internet to find what they need (branching skills)	*Can you easily find answers to questions using the internet? e.g., business hours for a bank, directions, recipes* *Can you schedule appointments online? e.g., doctor appointments, dentist appointments* *Can you easily find news online?*	Yes, I can easily complete all of these tasks. No, I still need practice to complete some of these tasks.
Process large amounts of information at once (real-time thinking skills and working memory)	*Can you remember and follow multiple steps to complete a task on a device? e.g., navigate to Google Docs to open a file and/ or create a new document, open Microsoft Word and find a template to draft a resume* *If you aren't sure how to do something on a device, can you usually figure out how to do it on your own? e.g., watching a video online, researching how to do something, trying different ways*	☐ Yes, I can easily complete all of these tasks. ☐ No, I still need practice to complete some of these tasks.
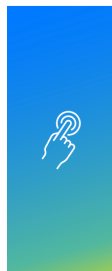
LINKING THEORY TO PRACTICE ⬈ | 2

Pre-assessing learners' digital literacy is an important first step in planning for instruction. Consider using the **Pre-assessing Digital Literacy Skills tool** to reflect on your own digital literacy within each competency, and interview learners to get a sense of the skills categories they will need the most support in. We are all lifelong digital literacy learners.

Whole Learner Factors That Impact Digital Literacy

Four Categories

- Foundational Skills (18-19)

- Thinking and Processing (19-21)

- Feelings and Relating (22-23)

- Personal History and Experience (24-26)

Gallery Walk

15-Minute Activity

1. Choose one aspect of digital literacy to read about more closely (foundational skills; thinking and processing; feelings and relating; personal history and experience).

2. Take five minutes to read this section of the resource guide quietly on your own.

3. Use sticky notes to chart key points, resources, and how you would apply this in a learning context. Place your sticky notes on the chart paper for your topic.

4. Circulate to view all posters. We will discuss whole group!

Module 4:
Preparing to Teach Digital Literacy

Generate a plan for getting to know your students, such as a set of questions to ask in an intake survey, pre-assessment or 1-to-1 conversation.

Review key considerations for supporting adult learners.

Practice focusing on practical outcomes.

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Chapter 4

Preparing to Teach Digital Literacy

Key Considerations for Supporting Adult Learners

- Focus on practical outcomes.

- Access to devices and the internet isn't universal.

- Explore mobile-friendly and offline lessons.

- Flexible pacing works best.

- You're learning as you instruct.

- Let problems lead the way.
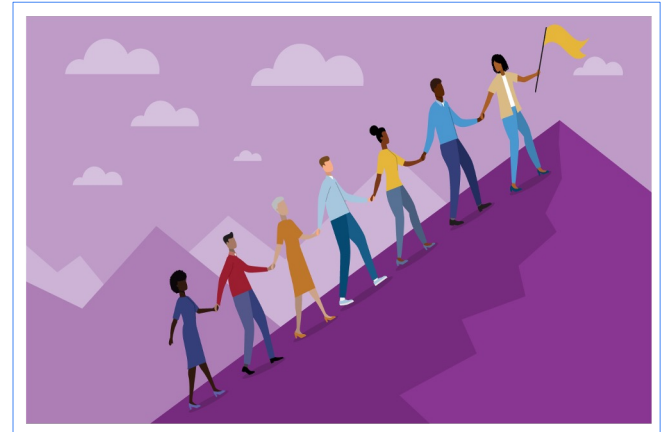
Module 5:
Strategies for Building Digital Literacy for the Whole Learner

Review research-based strategies to support the whole learner.

Identify and select strategies to support digital literacy skills for adult learners based on sample learner profiles.

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Chapter 5

Strategies for Building Digital Literacy for the Whole Learner

There Is No 'Right Way' to Teach Digital Literacy

There are a variety of ways to connect with adult learners and provide support on the topics and skills that matter most.

Researchers have identified 6 key sets of strategies that can support adult learners in meeting their digital literacy goals.
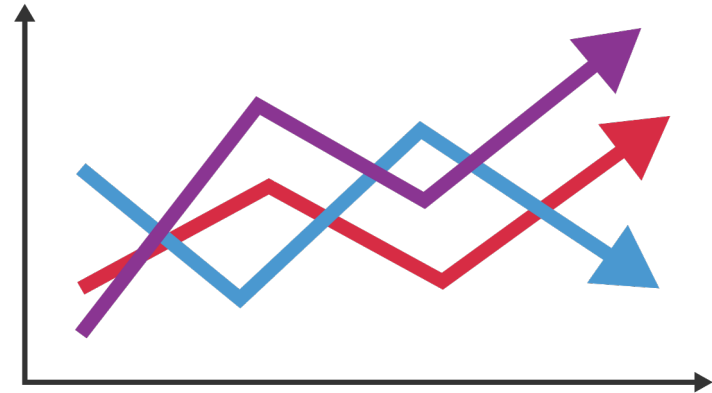
Research-Based Strategies to Support Adult Learners

- Promote Instructors' Mindset Toward Equity (34-36)

- Support Learner Mindset (37-38)

- Support Reflection on Learning (39-41)

- Explicit Instruction on Digital Skills (42-44)

- Promote Active Learning (45-47)

- Encourage Collaboration Among Learners (48-51)

Select Strategies to Support Adult Learners

Activity Using Example Learner Profiles

Learner Profile 1

Rosa
Age 22

Motivated English Learner who struggles with attention

Learner Profile 2

Jan
Age 75

Struggling to use technology for everyday life

Learner Profile 3

Ubah
Age 42

Recent arrival with emergent literacy who wants to support children's learning

Select Strategies for Rosa

Whole Group Activity

1. Read the learner profile for Rosa.

2. Note or highlight what stands out to you about this learner. What should you keep in mind to help you select the best strategies?

3. Select 1-2 strategies to support their learning.

Here is the full list of strategies for quick reference.

Building empathy 🔗	**Covering the basics of using a computer** 🔗
Developing your cultural awareness 🔗	**Conducting an internet search** 🔗
Creating a sense of belonging 🔗	**Enhancing online reading skills** 🔗
Using a strengths-based approach 🔗	**Evaluating web-based sources** 🔗
Fostering a growth mindset 🔗	**Creating experiential learning opportunities** 🔗
Incorporating authentic audiences and purposes 🔗	**Assigning multimedia projects** 🔗
Setting and monitoring goals 🔗	**Engaging in a community of practice** 🔗
Engaging in purposeful reflection 🔗	**Serving as a mentor or coach** 🔗

Learner Profile 1: Rosa, Advanced English Learner

Rosa is a 22-year-old advanced English Learner who is working to complete her high school equivalency diploma in English. She has been in the U.S. since she was 16 years old and aspires to work as a nurse. Rosa's speaking and listening in English is very advanced, but she still seems to struggle with reading comprehension. She has disclosed that she was diagnosed with ADHD in high school but did not receive many services apart from English as a Second Language classes. She often seems distracted in class and needs things to be repeated. She often offers to model basic skills you've demonstrated but has frequently missed the explanations and struggles to demonstrate them. She is a very eager and motivated learner and often encourages her classmates but sometimes expresses a lack of confidence. She is very skilled in using her Smartphone but is intimidated by laptop applications.

What stood out to you about Rosa's story?

Rosa is a 22-year-old advanced English Learner who is working to complete her high school equivalency diploma in English. She has been in the U.S. since she was 16 years old and aspires to work as a nurse. Rosa's speaking and listening in English is very advanced, but she still seems to struggle with reading comprehension. She has disclosed that she was diagnosed with ADHD in high school but did not receive many services apart from English as a Second Language classes. She often seems distracted in class and needs things to be repeated. She often offers to model basic skills you've demonstrated but has frequently missed the explanations and struggles to demonstrate them. She is a very eager and motivated learner and often encourages her classmates but sometimes expresses a lack of confidence. She is very skilled in using her Smartphone but is intimidated by laptop applications.

Potential Strategies to Support Rosa

Reference the resource guide for strategies or share new ones.

- **Cultivate empathy through "empathy interviews"** (page 34): Set up one-on-one meetings with Rosa to learn more about her life and experiences. Try to gain a deeper understanding of what motivates her and how you might support her in focusing on the skills she needs to meet her goals.

- **Build basic computer skills** (page 43): Assign practice lessons and activities from Northstar to Rosa to help her build skills so she can be more successful in class demonstrations.

- **Create a community of practice** (page 48): Create small groups of learners to always work together to help each other and share struggles to help boost her confidence and tap into her encouraging approach to others.

- Learn about **accessibility** strategies for the classroom on the PANDA website (page 21).

Select Strategies for Another Learner

Pair-Share Activity

1. Select another learner profile or identify a learner from your learning context.

2. Note or highlight what stands out to you about this learner. What should you keep in mind to help you select the best strategies?

3. Select 1-2 strategies to support their learning.

Here is the full list of strategies for quick reference.

Building empathy ⬀

Developing your cultural awareness ⬀

Creating a sense of belonging ⬀

Using a strengths-based approach ⬀

Fostering a growth mindset ⬀

Incorporating authentic audiences and purposes ⬀

Setting and monitoring goals ⬀

Engaging in purposeful reflection ⬀

Covering the basics of using a computer ⬀

Conducting an internet search ⬀

Enhancing online reading skills ⬀

Evaluating web-based sources ⬀

Creating experiential learning opportunities ⬀

Assigning multimedia projects ⬀

Engaging in a community of practice ⬀

Serving as a mentor or coach ⬀

Learner Profile 2: Jan, Senior Citizen

Jan is 75 years old and a reluctant, but frequent user of technology. Since the pandemic, she learned to use Zoom to connect with friends as well as attend church services and her women's religious group. She knows how to do some basic online banking—such as check her balance or pay a bill—through her mobile phone, and texts with friends and family. Jan wants to be able to more easily access health records and manage online appointments, but becomes frustrated when when anything changes on the platform and frequently forgets her usernames and passwords. Her confidence and digital resilience are low, and her family members are concerned she may fall victim to a phishing scam.

Learner Profile 3: Busy Immigrant Parent, Ubah

Ubah is visiting her local library with her three young children. She wants to find books, resources, and activities to help them with their school work and further develop her daughter Yasmin's keen interest in bugs and animals. She asks the librarian for help with how to support with online learning. After an initial conversation, the librarian discovers Ubah is a refugee from Somalia who recently arrived in the U.S. with emerging digital skills. The librarian struggles to understand Ubah's accent and her English vocabulary is relatively limited but can see that Ubah has strong foundational reading skills and seems to be a quick learner. She is eager to help Ubah and support her family.

How would you describe your adult learning context?

Learning contexts can include:

- Adult literacy, secondary, and high school equivalency programs

- Adult charter schools

- Career service and workforce training programs

- Citizenship preparation

- Continuing education programs

- Correctional and reentry programs

- English language instruction and career-based **English language training** ↗

- Enrichment and interest-based learning

- Faith-based programs

- Family literacy programs

- Higher education institutions

- Library education

- Online pathway exploration and/or **skills training** ↗ platforms

- Veterans services

- Work based-learning and apprenticeship programs

Usability Study

Each training presents an exponential opportunity for impact. For example, three people participated in the "train the trainer" session in one district. They are anticipated to train an additional 50-70 people, ultimately impacting an estimated 200 learners.

Train the Trainer:

Adult Charter School (1)
Adult Literacy Site (2)
Tutoring Program (1)

Full Trainings:

State Tutoring Program (1)
State Adult Education (2)
Adult Literacy Site (1)
Corporate Volunteer
Mentoring Program (1)

Technical Support

Participant Surveys

Evaluation

Usability Site Engagement: Literacy New York

"*Promoting Digital Literacy for Adult Learners: A Resource Guide*, and the corresponding *Digital Literacy Tutor Training*, support Literacy New York's efforts to build strong digital literacy instruction that will enhance the services available to adults in communities across New York State. The training breaks down the elements needed for good digital literacy instruction and offers an accessible tool to prepare digital literacy tutors. We appreciate all of the work that went into creating these resources for tutors and teachers of adults."

– Kathy Houghton, Literacy New York

Usability Site Engagement: The Family Place, D.C.
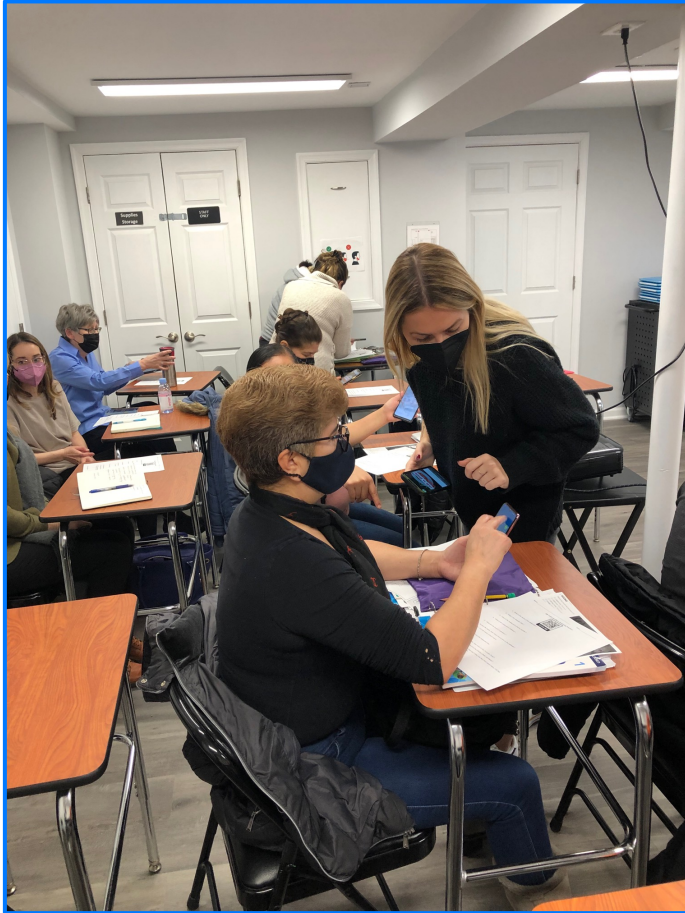
"When I started my role as the Digital Literacy Instructor, I relied on using our school's Chromebooks because I felt it would be easier to teach students when they all have the same device. However, after reading the guide I realized it is more beneficial to create lessons that also incorporate students' phones because that's the type of device they are most often using. These phone-based lessons take a strengths-based approach because students already have familiarity with and knowledge of their phones, but they are developing their digital literacy skills in new ways." – Carlye Stevens, The Family Place

Session Agenda

Learning module topics aligned to chapter content

Welcome: Overview and Ice-Breaker

Module 1: Overview

Module 2: Understanding the Adult Learner Experience

Module 3: What is Digital Literacy?

Module 4: Preparing to Teach Digital Literacy

Module 5: Strategies for Building Digital Literacy for the Whole Learner

Session Planning

Questions

Session Planning

Components of an Effective Session

- Session Preparation

- Warm-up and Review

- Assessment

- Goal-Setting

- New Skills

- Independent Practice

- Wrap-up

On a scale of Prince, what is your understanding of our digital literacy materials?

The Adult Literacy and Learning Impact Network (ALL IN) was formed in 2022.

ALL IN is a collective impact initiative, composed of national thought leaders from the adult literacy field and beyond, that is charged with carrying out the goals of the National Action Plan for Adult Literacy.

SCAN ME

Investing in Multiple Literacies for Individual and Collective Empowerment

Sarah Cacicio, Pamela Cote, and Ken Bigger

June 2023

ALL IN
The Adult Literacy &
Learning Impact Network

Explore the Bookshelf

A curated collection of digital books for adults, children, and families

Variety of reading levels and texts
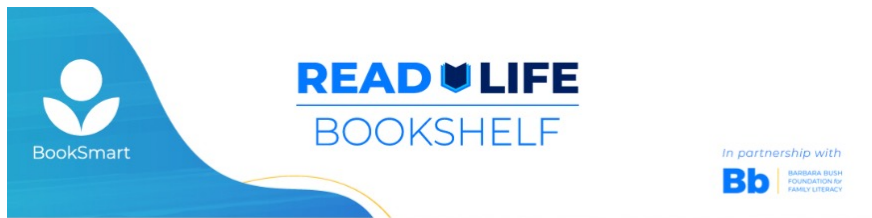
High interest and relevant to an adult's life

Guided activities and instructor resource guides

Bilingual (English and Spanish) books and resources

Anytime, anywhere access across all platforms (computers, tablets, and smartphones)

A FREE library in your pocket!

New books and materials each month

Worldreader
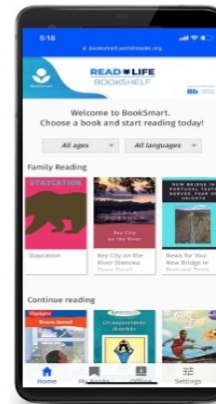
Thank you for your energy and participation!

For additional questions or support with promoting
digital literacy for adult learners,
please reach out to:

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