DESIGNING ELEARNING COURSES FOR ADULT LEARNERS:
THE COMPLETE GUIDE

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1 The Basics Of Creating Engaging And Inspiring Adult Learning Courses

An increasing number of Gen X and Baby Boomers are reaping the rewards of online learning. But how can you cater to this more mature crowd? In this article, I'll share the benefits and basics of developing adult learning courses that engage and inspire your audience.

How To Create Engaging And Inspiring Adult Learning Courses: 8 Points To Consider

Creating adult learning courses gives more mature learners the opportunity to expand their skills and build vital knowledge. Even if they are short on time and hesitant to hop on board the IT bandwagon. eLearning allows them to unlock new opportunities at their own pace and access online training resources whenever it's most convenient.

Here are 8 tips to help you develop successful eLearning courses for adult learners that are motivational and memorable.

1 Research Your Audience

Not knowing your audience could have disastrous consequences. Thus, it's wise to do some research before you start the development process. Valuable information can be gained from numerous sources, including interviews, online surveys and focus group testing. In fact, you may want to utilize numerous analysis methods to delve into the background and experience of your adult learners. When researching your target audience, make sure you have a good understanding of expectations. You must address the needs, goals, and preferences of your adult learning audience in order to offer them real value.

2 Jot Down Your Objectives

Once you have clarified who your target audience is, you need to define the purpose of the eLearning course. A good starting point is to write down your goals and objectives. Is it your goal to provide your online learners with practical skills? Do you want to provide task-based training? Or do you wish to provide advanced learning to professionals with prior experience? Once you have your goals and objectives narrowed down, and the target audience you are addressing to, you can make decisions about the eLearning content to be included, as well as the format.

3 **Research The Requirements**

You have to ensure that your eLearning course meets your organizational requirements and prerequisites. For example, you want to deliver an adult learning course that leads to an online training certificate. Thus, you must research the online training certification requirements beforehand. That includes the subject matter, skill requirements, related tasks, and even compliance standards. You can also ask for input from prospective *adult learners* and possibly other online instructors in the same field.

4 **Select The Right eLearning Authoring Tool**

The right *eLearning authoring tool* can help make or break your adult learning course a success. Before you select an eLearning authoring tool, evaluate your eLearning team and compare their skills to the available options. If you have a team with minimal programming experience for example, it is best to choose an eLearning authoring tool with more basic functions and pre-made *eLearning templates*. If your eLearning team is a little more skilled, you can opt for a more advanced, feature-rich eLearning authoring tool.

5 **Make The Most Of Cloud-Based Online Training Resources**

Having the ability to exchange information is a crucial part of the eLearning experience. Thus, a *cloud-based Learning Management System* could be ideal for your adult learning course. You don't even need in-depth knowledge about cloud systems. As there are numerous user-friendly options that allow you to design, develop, and deploy your eLearning course with ease. Of course, the cloud program you choose should match your needs and those of your audience. A simple and straightforward User Interface, for example, is best for adult learners who are new to the world of tech tools.

6 **Tap Into The Power Of Multimedia**

Multimedia can be used to keep your audience engaged and entertained simultaneously. Naturally, the multimedia sources you use must tie into the subject matter. During the creation of your eLearning course, take time to browse the internet for relevant links, articles, and images. You could even search for a video sharing online platform, such as YouTube. The use of multimedia also makes your eLearning course look more polished and professional. Not to mention, enhances *knowledge retention* and recall for your adult learners. Rapid eLearning authoring tools are yet another source of rich multimedia due to the fact that they usually have built-in eLearning templates, images, audio, and layouts.

7 Keep It Simple

When there is so much multimedia available on the internet, it is too easy to consume too much of it. An overabundance of images and *graphics in your eLearning course* may cause confusion or cognitive overload, which diminishes the value of your eLearning course design. Be wary of chaotic design elements when you do the final edits and opt for a simplified layout. You can also submit the eLearning course to a focus group for evaluation. Afterwards, you're able to do some fine tuning and avoid common errors, such as lengthy blocks of texts and cluttered presentations.

8 Encourage Active Learning

One of the most powerful ways to engage and inspire your adult learners is to incorporate *real world activities*. Encourage your adult learners to conduct online interviews with experienced professionals in the field, or include scenarios and simulations to facilitate real world application. You can also keep your adult learners engaged by giving them continuous updates on social media and other online platforms. The key is to keep them actively involved in the learning process. Another option is to create group collaborative assignments that center on realistic problems or situations. For example, creating an online tip sheet to help their peers improve task performance.

Adult learning courses give adult learners the information and online training resources they need to achieve the learning objectives. Best of all, they have the power to train whenever it fits into their busy schedule. This helps to enhance their motivation and keep them focused on the desired outcome, instead of letting other obligations get in the way of their personal and professional development. Design memorable eLearning courses that cater to the individual needs of adult learners and make the most of the eLearning authoring tools.

2 8 Tips To Create eLearning Courses For Adult Learners

Do you know what your adult learners need to achieve their goals and tackle everyday challenges? In this article, I'll share 8 tips to create eLearning courses for adult learners and more mature audiences.

How To Create eLearning Courses For Adult Learners

Adult learners are pressed for time. They're dealing with work obligations, personal commitments, and everyday stresses that vie for their attention. As a result, they need immediate access to information that caters to their personal goals and objectives. Furthermore, adult learners are looking for practical online training resources that help them overcome obstacles and fulfill their potential.

Here are 8 tips to create eLearning courses for adult learners.

1 Create A Detailed eLearning Course Outline

Before adult learner join an eLearning course, they typically read the eLearning course outline or summary. The eLearning course outline should describe what your eLearning course can offer a participant. It should include an overview of the topics, and a detailed description of *learning objectives* and tasks the online learner must perform, as well as which online training certificate an online participant can obtain from the eLearning course. To ensure an eLearning course outline is clear for your adult learners, it is advisable to clearly identify the benchmarks of your eLearning course. You should also include how you will evaluate online learners' assignments, and how they will progress through the eLearning content you provide.

2 Mention Your Qualifications

Adult learners want to be sure that you are qualified to provide an eLearning course. They may even search for any relevant information on your website or review other sites before they enroll. For this reason, you should be fully transparent about your online instructors and staff. Mention their professional qualifications and the associations they belong to. For example, if you are providing an eLearning course that pertains to a college or a university, be sure to display this clearly on your website. It's also wise to include accreditations, certifications, or any other noteworthy awards that your organization has received.

3 Get Your Resources Straight

Adult learners will need quick access to the eLearning course material. They don't have time to sift through an entire eLearning course catalog to find relevant information. It's a good idea to provide your adult learners with an overview of their personalized resources. This may consist of texts, multimedia, and *real world activities* that are based on their individual needs. To keep your adult learners engaged you can also provide them with links for further study. For example, references to another eLearning course you offer, or free online training resources provided by a noted college or university.

4 Clarify Grading Criteria

eLearning content can be evaluated in different ways. It's important to explain to prospective eLearning course participants how their online assignments and assessments will be graded and when. For example, they will receive a progress report every month., or upon completion of each pre-determined milestone. During the eLearning course, you should also keep your adult learners engaged by giving them appropriate *eLearning feedback* on their coursework. In addition, be clear about the skills, knowledge, and tasks you are focusing on. Online learners, for instance, must be able to perform each step of the process during the simulation to receive a passing grade.

5 Define The Scope Of The eLearning Course

Certain eLearning courses can take a couple of days, while others can take several months. Therefore, it is essential to give your adult learners a clear overview of the duration of the eLearning course. In addition to an overall course duration, you must also include the time commitment required from each online learner. For example, how long does an adult learner need to study to pass this eLearning course? Or how many hours does an online learner have to spend on coursework during an average week? By including such information, the adult learner can determine whether or not an eLearning course is suitable for their schedules.

6 Give Adult Learners A Feedback Outlet

Some adult learners prefer to read about the experiences from past eLearning course participants before they commit to an eLearning course. This is where a *forum* comes in handy. Adult learners can discuss and exchange information about the eLearning course, as well as offer insight. You can also place some reviews or testimonials from former eLearning course participants on your website. If you are creating an eLearning course for the first time, provide a discussion platform where current online learners can discuss the eLearning course. This will serve as a valuable reference tool for future eLearning programs you provide.

7 Highlight eLearning Course Policies

No matter what kind of eLearning course you are offering, there are always rules to which online learners must abide. This should cover regulations regarding course payments to codes of conduct for online learners when interacting with their peers. To avoid problems or confusion during your eLearning course, make sure that you have all your eLearning course policies clearly in place. And don't forget to post them in a prominent spot on your website, social media pages, and forums. It's also wise to solicit input from your online learners regarding the eLearning course policies. They'll appreciate the fact that you value and respect their opinions. Thus, they are more likely to follow the rules and create a more positive eLearning environment for everyone involved.

8 Assess Their Skills

Skills are the currency of modern life. For this reason, you should assess your adult learners' skills to see where they stand and where they need to improve. Invite them to participate in simulations, branching scenarios, and *serious games* that put their skill sets to the test. Then, highlight their strengths and gaps so that they can utilize relevant online training resources. For example, online training tutorials or demos that showcase favorable behaviors which they can mimic in the real world.

Adult learners want to know what they can expect from an eLearning course, but also what they can get out of it. That's why it's essential to outline your eLearning course in detail on your website, social media sites, and eLearning platform. Let online learners know the benefits they can receive if they are willing to get involved and stay active in the eLearning community.
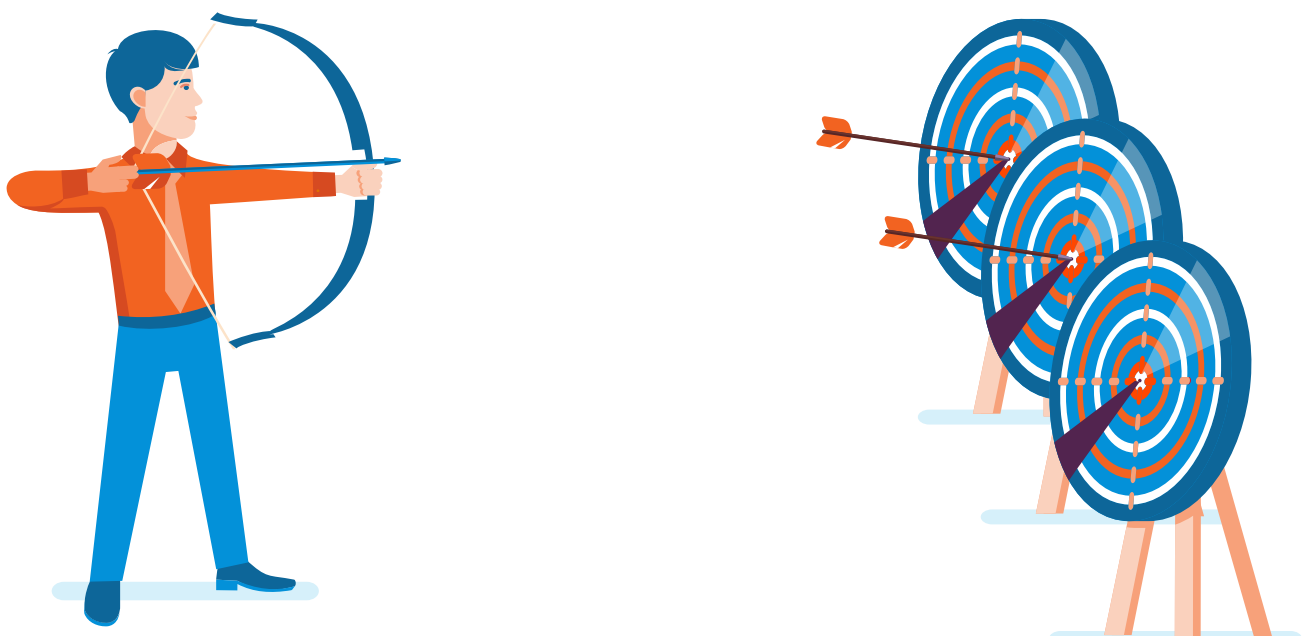
3 | 10 Adult Learning Facts And Stats That eLearning Pros Need To Know

Are you looking for ways to keep your adult learners engaged during your eLearning course? In this article, I'll share 10 adult learning facts and stats that every eLearning professional should know.

Adult Learning Facts And Stats For eLearning Professionals

In order to create meaningful eLearning experiences, you have to know how to approach your adult audience from an Instructional Design standpoint. How do you they assimilate knowledge? What are their key motivators? How can you create the most effective eLearning environment based on their needs?

Here are 10 adult learning principles that are backed by *adult learning* facts and stats.

1 Adult Learners Relate To Life Experiences

When you create an eLearning course, you do not only incorporate theory. Even though theories and models are essential to provide your adult learners with valuable information, incorporating some of your own life experiences makes the eLearning experience more powerful. So, if you are currently creating online training material for your eLearning course, be sure to look for places where you can tap into relatable anecdotes, examples, and stories.

2 Instruction Vs Autonomy

Based on a report released by the Center on Education and the Workforce of Georgetown University, 70% of college students work while enrolled [1]. If we add up the number of employees who attend online training programs, we may assume that creating an eLearning course for *adult learners* also means we must consider the time constraints of our audience. A good eLearning course should minimize instruction provided by the online instructor, but maximize autonomy for the online learner. In this manner, they can study the online training materials when they have room in their schedules.

3 Different Backgrounds Call For Diversity Of Online Training Content

If you are providing an advanced eLearning course, it is likely you will have people with completely different academic and professional backgrounds among your adult learner population. Since you need to deal with such a diverse range of knowledge base, you will need to diversify the online training materials you offer too. Starting with the basics and offering additional online training resources for adult learners who want to explore the topic further would be a good practice. In addition, make sure your adult learners know you are available if they experience any problems with the eLearning content you are providing.

4 Engage Your Adult Learners On Social Media Platforms

To keep self-guided adult learners engaged, provide plenty of social learning opportunities so that they can participate in *online discussions* and share their thoughts. Based on findings released by Smart Insight, there are now more than 2,789 billion active social media users [2]. Therefore, it is important to incorporate many social media platforms into your eLearning course. For example, create a Facebook group and post relevant links that relate to the subject matter. You should also introduce your adult learners to professional social media platforms such as LinkedIn, and encourage them start their own eLearning blog or online discussion.

5 Identify Obstacles

Adult learners are dealing with a variety of everyday challenges and stressors, from busy schedules and personal obligations to family emergencies. Identifying those obstacles in your eLearning course could be of tremendous value for your adult learners. Make an overview of possible obstacles that may distract adult learners from their goals. Then figure out ways to minimize their impact on the overall eLearning experience. You can also offer your adult learners online support resources, such as *microlearning online training libraries* and online discussions where they can catch up to speed.

6 Goal-Centered Learning Is Essential

Adult learners tend to focus on practical knowledge that allows them to achieve their goals. However, they must be able to see a direct correlation between the eLearning content and their personal or professional objectives. For this reason, it's wise to break long-term goals into manageable milestones and give adult learners the opportunity to track them via progress bars and checklists.

7 Adult Learners Prefer A Hands-On Approach

Even though the learning process takes place online for the most part, it is still necessary to give your adult >

7 Adult Learners Prefer A Hands-On Approach

(cont) learners experiences in the real world. According to the American Society for Training & Development, the retention rate for experiential knowledge is an impressive 75% [3]. As a result, adult learners need hands-on experience. For example, invite them to watch a video demo and apply what they've learned via an eLearning simulation.

8 Real-Life Application Of eLearning Activities

Adult learners must be able to put their knowledge into practice and apply their skills in a contextual manner. eLearning activities with real-life applications could include online interviews with professionals via social media, eLearning simulations, branching scenarios, and case studies. To ensure your eLearning activities will provide value to prospective adult learners, it's wise to put your ideas in front of a focus group, or use a poll. Based on the response of the focus group, you can make sure that your eLearning activities are geared toward your target audience.

9 Give Adult Learners Time To Absorb Information

Even if there is a tremendous amount of information to cover, it is important to give your adult learners enough time to process the information you provide. During this time, you could provide them with assignments and applications to help them process the information. It's also important to encourage your adult learners to reflect on the subject matter and see how it relates to real-world challenges or situations. This makes the eLearning experience more relevant and relatable.

10 Break Up Online Lessons

When there is a lot of information to cover, it is often very tempting to provide long online lessons. Unfortunately, there is proof that adult learners can only focus their attention for about 20 minutes [4]. Therefore, it is necessary to proceed to content chunking of the online training material with regular breaks, so as to ensure your adult learners can assimilate the information presented.

These principles can help you provide truly effective eLearning courses to your adult learners. Adult learners are looking for practical eLearning that gives them the tools they need to succeed without making them rearrange their busy schedules or put their personal obligations on the back burner.

References

10 Unforgettable Statistics about Human Memory

[1] Center on Education and the Workforce

[2] Global social media research summary 2017

[3] Your Case for Training: Adult Learning Retention Statistics

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4 8 Instructional Design Theories To Apply When Designing eLearning Courses For Adult Learners

Are you meeting the needs of your adult learners by using the correct Instructional Design processes? This article highlights the 8 most effective Instructional Design theories to apply when designing eLearning courses for adult learners.

Designing An eLearning Course For Adult Learners: 8 Instructional Design Theories To Apply

The Instructional Design theory you choose has the power to make or break your eLearning course. Therefore, it's essential to evaluate your subject matter, learning objectives, and online learners' needs before making your final decision.

Here are 8 *Instructional Design theories* that you may want to consider when designing your next eLearning course for adult learners.

1 Adult Learning Theory (K.P. Cross)

The *Adult Learning Theory* suggests that situational and personal characteristics are at the heart of adult learning experiences. Furthermore, adult learners tend to have greater intellectual abilities. However, their sensory-motor abilities may be diminished as they age. Thus, Instructional Designers must take these strengths and weaknesses into account when creating eLearning courses. The theory goes on to state that Instructional Designers should tap into the power of learners' past experiences and give more control to the learner. For example, allow them to choose their own online training activities.

2 Cooperative And Collaborative Learning Theory (Mark Arthur May & Leonard William Doob)

The *Cooperative and Collaborative Learning Theory* was based on the research of social theorists Allport, Watson, Shaw, and Mead. It stipulates that effective learning experiences involve two or more individuals who share a common goal or problem. This theory involves five core elements: collaborative skills, direct interaction, interdependence, personal accountability, and group interaction. As such, adult online learners have the opportunity to benefit from the experience and skills of their peers.

3 Discovery Learning Model (Jerome Bruner)

The five principles of the *Discovery Learning Model* are: problem solving, learning flexibility, building on pre-existing knowledge, analyzing and interpreting the subject matter, and timely feedback. This theory suggests that learners should be able to build on their personal experiences and seek out information on their own. They should also be encouraged to use their creativity and imagination to come up with alternative solutions or ideas. Some of the most notable benefits of the Discovery Learning Model is that it enhances knowledge retention and allows learners to go at their own pace.

4 Problem-Based Learning (Howard Burrows)

Adult learners are looking for information to help them solve practical problems. The *problem-based learning theory* suggests that learners build skills and knowledge through collaboration, personal reflection, and real-world challenges.

There are five key principles involved in this process:

1. Problems grab learners' attention and fuel their motivation.
2. Assessments help gauge learner progress and ensure that they fully comprehend the concepts.
3. Problems are used to convey the ideas and concepts involved.
4. Facilitators/instructors rely on problems to evaluate the process and provide meaningful, contextual lessons.
5. The problem acts as a catalyst, prompting learners to build essential skills in order to overcome the obstacle.

5 ARCS Model Of Motivation (John Keller)

The *ARCS Model of Motivation* involves four pillars: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. Hence, the acronym. The first step is grabbing learners' attention so that they engage with the content. The second is encouraging learners to meaningfully connect with the subject matter so that it becomes relevant. This is followed by empowering and motivating learners so that they feel confident in their own abilities. Lastly, learners feel a sense of satisfaction, knowing that they achieved their goal, which usually comes in the form of rewards, feedback, or real-world application.

6 Elaboration Theory (Charles Reigeluth)

Elaboration Theory hinges on the idea that learners should receive information through a more "scaffolded" approach. Meaning that they learn the basics first, then gradually ease into more complicated subject matters. First, learners receive a summary of the information, which offers a general overview of the topics and ideas.

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6 Elaboration Theory (Charles Reigeluth)

(cont) Then they are encouraged to examine the first stage of the process or a simplification of the problem at hand. This all culminates in the learner evaluating all of the steps/potential solutions, and then recapping the general overview.

7 Cognitive Flexibility Theory (Spiro, Feltovich, And Coulson)

Based on the *Cognitive Flexibility Theory*, adult learners must be able to absorb, organize, and manipulate the information they are learning. Furthermore, they have to fully understand the thought processes and learning behaviors involved. The primary principles of this theory are: knowledge is rooted in context, knowledge must be in its purest form, not oversimplified or diluted, learners play an active role in knowledge construction, and everything is connected. Meaning that all of the information learners receive is somehow related and ties into their existing mental schema.

8 Action Learning Model (Reginald Revans)

Adult learners are more motivated by real-world challenges that provide practical experience and skills. The *Action Learning Model* involves group-based problem solving that allows learners to exchange vital knowledge and skill sets. Learners must be willing participants who are ready to collaborate with their peers in order to come up with a solution. This is generally a long process that can take months. However, learners have the opportunity to build their own knowledge base and that of their peers in the process.

There are a variety of things to consider when designing an eLearning course for adult learners. For example, multimedia integration, eLearning course layout, and choosing eLearning activities that align with learning objectives. However, the Instructional Design theories above will ensure that you have a solid foundation upon which to build your eLearning course material. They can help you deliver eLearning content in a way that's easy to comprehend and retain by adult learners.

5 7 Tips To Engage And Motivate Busy Adult Learners

Are your adult learners pressed for time? Do they seem to lack the mental focus they need to fully engage? Read 7 tips to successfully keep busy adult learners motivated so you can guide them to success.

How To Engage And Motivate Busy Adult Learners

Most adult learners are hard-working individuals who want to broaden their horizons or solve everyday problems. This means that they may need a little help eliminating distractions in order to connect with eLearning content and achieve their objectives.

These 7 tips will help to keep your busy *adult learners* engaged and motivated, even if they always seem to be short on time or attention.

1 Allow Time For Information Processing

When you are dealing with *busy adult learners*, it is quite tempting to cram as much information as possible into a short period of time. However, this is counter-intuitive and may ruin the eLearning experience for everyone involved. As a general rule, for every ten minutes of online instructions, you should allow busy adult learners two minutes to assimilate the information before presenting the next eLearning module or activity.

2 Focus On Real-World Uses

The information you provide should always be relevant and real-world centered. Otherwise, it won't offer your busy adult learners any practical value. Be upfront about the real-world benefits and applications of your eLearning course. For example, how is your eLearning course going to contribute to their skill set? Is your eLearning course going to further their career? Why should they invest time into the eLearning experience in the first place? You need to give them a reason to stay motivated and focused. This also involves eLearning simulations, scenarios, and other interactive online training resources that center on practical application of knowledge. Show and tell them about the advantages of active participation.

3 Let Your Busy Adult Learners Explore

Giving your busy adult learners instructions is one thing, but allowing them to explore the eLearning content is another. To keep them engaged, allow them to explore some of the most interesting eLearning content on their own. Encourage them to seek out supplemental online training resources or come up with other viable solutions to the problem. Naturally, your adult learners will still need your guidance while exploring the eLearning content. For example, create an online companion guide that features helpful tips and tricks they can use during the online group collaboration project. When adult learners gather information autonomously they're more likely to become *lifelong learners* with a constant thirst for knowledge.

4 Consider The Background Of Your Adult Learners

Adult learners tend to have a wealth of life experience. As they say, with age comes wisdom. As such, you need to learn as much as possible about their backgrounds, experience levels, and personal goals. This allows you to create online training materials that are ideally suited for their needs, instead of taking a one-size-fits-all approach. If you are dealing with professionals, you may be able to benefit from adding some *real-world examples* in your eLearning course. For instance, some scenarios they might face in the workplace. If you are dealing with beginners, you could add some examples of how the eLearning course may contribute to a future job. Before you can determine the appropriate eLearning content for your busy adult learners, it's wise to delve into their educational history. Based on that information, you can make important decisions such as the implementation of technical jargon in your eLearning course.

5 Provide Constructive eLearning Feedback

One might think that drawing attention to incorrect learning behaviors or knowledge gaps would diminish motivation. After all, people usually prefer to focus on their strengths. However, providing *constructive eLearning feedback* is the key to move ahead. But it all hinges on the delivery. For example, praising all of your adult learners for a job well done isn't as effective as personalized eLearning feedback. Be clear about where their talents lie and what they need to work on. Adult learners appreciate honest and open eLearning feedback that helps them grow as individuals.

6 Consider LMS Platform Accessibility

Most busy adult learners simply don't have enough time to tackle their current work and family commitments. Therefore, they must have the ability to gain access to the *LMS platform* whenever they have the time to do so. Since the accessibility of your LMS platform is important, it is best to evaluate your options before you make a commitment. When you choose an LMS platform, ensure that it has all the essential features you need in order to optimize the eLearning experience. >

6 Consider LMS Platform Accessibility

(cont) This could include file uploads, instant messaging, online calendar, rating systems, quizzes, social media widgets and more. Naturally, you must also look for the extra functions you need to make your eLearning course successful.

7 Offer Rewards

I'm not referring to gift cards or monetary incentives. Instead, it's best to provide busy adult learners with *intrinsic* rewards to spark their motivation. For example, eLearning badges or points that allow them to display their accomplishments and work toward the "ultimate" goal, which may be something as simple as paid time-off or a printable certificate they can show off to their peers. This is yet another reason why audience research is so crucial. It gives you the background information you need to choose the best rewards for the job. For instance, *leaderboards* may be the ideal approach for adult learners who are more competitive.

Adult learning experiences must be rooted in real-world application, personal reflection, and intrinsic rewards. Adult learners are in search for practical knowledge and skills that help them in their everyday lives. That is the common motivator that you need to bear in mind. When all is said and done, the ability to move from theory to practice is what determines a successful eLearning course.

6 5 Key Elements Every eLearning Course Targeting Adult Learners Should Have

Do adults learn in the same way as their younger counterparts? Or do they need their own special approach to absorb the information? In this article, I'll share 5 key elements that every eLearning course targeting adult learners should have.

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5 Key Elements To Include In eLearning Courses For Adult Learners

The human brain adapts as we get older. It's physically larger, which means it can absorb and retain more information. It can also process more complex concepts than a younger mind. However, the adult mind isn't as malleable as the brain of a child. *Adult learners* have become biased by their life experiences, perspectives, opinions, and belief systems. Teaching an old dog new tricks' requires some very specific elements and techniques, including the effective use of language, context, structure and technology.

1 Accessible Technology

This may seem pretty straightforward, but it's an element that is very easy to overlook. Depending on who your online learners are, you need to factor in how they will access the online training resources. Will you supply them with laptops and tablets, or will you create an app they can download? Are they high-income earners with multiple devices or wage workers with limited technology? Are you teaching in a cosmopolitan area or a remote region that may not have constant electricity? Do they have regular access to the Internet? It's best to structure your eLearning course in such a way that adult learners can periodically download eLearning materials. You should also consider a *responsive design* tool that deploys multiplatform-friendly eLearning content.

2 Individual Motivation

Adult learners approach education with different points of view. They might be empty-nesters passing time, or retirees pursuing a life-long dream. They might be successful professionals who want to expand their skills and know-how, or disinterested team members filling out their mandatory training quota. A good way to motivate all these different demographics is to make eLearning fun. Incorporate a competitive element and include some playful *gamification* elements to retain their interest. Divide your eLearning course into modules with a mini-reward at the end of each section. >

2 Individual Motivation

(cont) This way adult learners are fueled by their sense of personal achievement.

3 Practical Application

Children go to school because they have to. They are taught that kids go to school and grown-ups go to work. That is the natural order of things. They usually aren't given the opportunity to explore the "why" behind educational pursuits. For adults, online training must have a practical purpose. They will often wonder if this is something they can use in their career, or apply in their daily lives. If they start the eLearning course and feel it has no direct function, they are very likely to *drop out*. The structure of eLearning courses for adult learners must therefore include consistent links to the day-to-day life of adult learners. As part of the eLearning content, include anecdotes and ways in which adult learners can use their newly acquired knowledge. Give practical examples of concrete situations of how your eLearning course may come into play outside the virtual classroom.

4 Networking Opportunities

Adults benefit greatly from the social connections they develop in work settings. By its very nature, eLearning is done on an individual level and doesn't engender interaction. However, if your eLearning course offers adult learners a chance to get acquainted, it will widen their business networks. eLearning courses that present an opportunity to consciously expand their social and business networks will keep them coming back. Learner retention is a big part of eLearning courses for adults, since the drop-out rate can be detrimental. Networking is a great way to ensure learner retention, as well as progression to more advanced eLearning courses. Here are a few ways to incorporate *social learning* into your eLearning course for adult learners:

a. Social Media Groups

Create closed social media groups where adult learners can offer tips, tricks, and insights. These are also great resource-sharing platforms, as adult learners are able to post links and self-generated eLearning content for the betterment of their peers.

b. Online Discussions

Post a weekly prompt or question, then invite adult learners to share their unique perspectives. You can also opt for blogging platforms, or even encourage your adult learners to start their own *online discussions*. It's best to create community guidelines so that the conversation stays on topic. >

c. Webinars

Host a monthly webinar that focuses on a single learning objective or topic. Send out evites in advance, along with an agenda that highlights the main discussion points and benefits. Adult learners are able to quickly determine if the event is right for them or if they should pass and wait for the next webinar that focuses on their goals or challenges.

5 Measurable Challenges

Some adults dropped out of school in their early years because they felt inadequate. Their circumstances may have left them feeling incapable of learning, and they carried this attitude into adulthood. Other adult learners are born academics with multiple degrees. Learning is something so easy for them that it may even become boring or tedious. The beauty of eLearning is that a single eLearning course can be tailored to individual learning levels. For more engaged or experienced adult learners, give them tougher morsels to chew. For under-confident adult learners, start them slow and build them up. Include simple metrics so that every adult learner can watch themselves move from one level to the next. Brighter adult learners stay interested, and weaker adult learners feel validated. Start with your basic eLearning material, then sub-section it into graded levels.

You must approach adults on their level. They need to feel respected, and they need to feel that you have something to offer them. Give your adult learners tools they can use and motivate them on a personal level. Contextualize online training materials in a practical way, create collaborative situations, and infuse trackable challenges into the eLearning course. Including these five elements will greatly boost the success of your eLearning course.
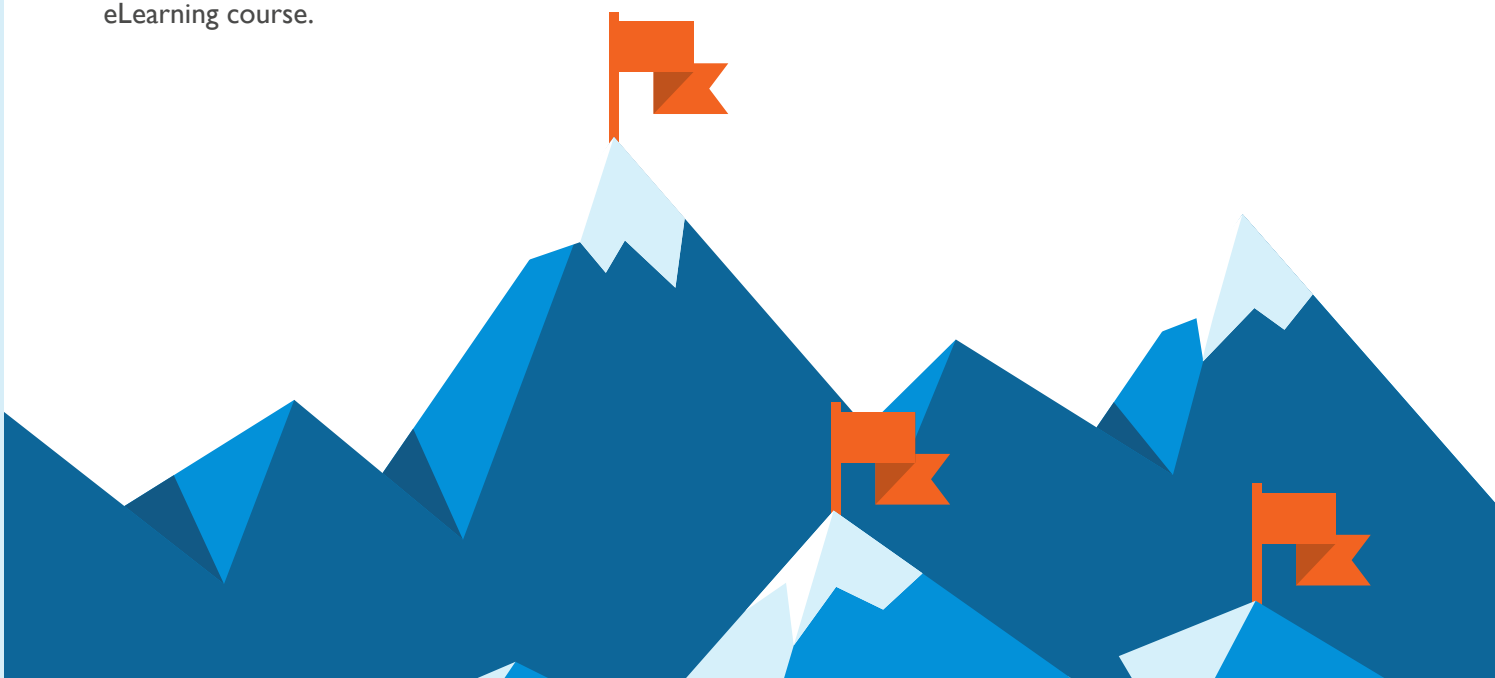
7 Adult Learner Characteristics: 7 Key Points To Consider

The rise of Millennials in the workplace has led to endless articles about the challenges of "adulting". It turns out many adults don't feel grown-up. So, what defines adult learners and how do they differ from younger audiences?

7 Adult Learner Characteristics To Consider

Millennials probably take a different approach to learning than adults from previous generations. That said, all *adult learners* share certain common characteristics. These adult learner characteristics influence the techniques of effective adult learning. In order to successfully teach adults new skills, it's important to identify their defining features.

eLearning professionals can use these 7 adult learner characteristics to develop useful curricula, eLearning courses, and teaching techniques.

1 They Set Their Own Study Schedules

Adult learners are responsible for their own lives. They recognize that failing can cost them a promotion, damage their social standing, or losing the cash invested in the eLearning course. One of the most important adult learner characteristics is that adult learners drive themselves and set their own study targets. Their eLearning courses need to be structured in a way that lets them assess their progress at individual levels.

2 They Need A Sense Of Purpose

When adults volunteer for advanced learning, the decision is entirely their own. As they decide on an eLearning course to study, they need to know exactly what they will get out of it. Will they receive formal certification that will open more work opportunities for them? Will they become better at communication, learn a new language, or acquire a new skill? Adults rarely move to training for the sake of training. They need a distinct 'why' to convince themselves to spend time on an eLearning course. Certain forms of adult learning fall under mandatory corporate structures. Online training course requirements might be specific but, in most cases, adult learners need an *extrinsic* reason to pick a particular online training course.

3 They Go Beyond Theory

Kids largely learn by rote. They memorize the alphabet, multiplication tables, elements of the periodic table, or important historical dates. Many adults complain that nothing they learned in school was useful. Most have never used algebra, Latin, or crafts in their adult careers. So when it comes to adult learning, it's not enough to acquire facts. They need to dig deeper and figure out how this new information fits into their existence. eLearning courses for *adult learners* must go beyond the ABCs of a subject matter and enmesh the online training material into daily life. The eLearning course must be relevant to them, otherwise they will drop it and find something more helpful.

4 They Learn By Doing

Adult learners have already run through the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic, and book knowledge in general. They are no longer interested in reading text and descriptions. Many adults just prefer free online training tutorials on *YouTube*. They want to see how someone does a particular thing, then they want to try it for themselves. This is partially a function of adventure and freedom. Adult learners need space to explore. They need the kind of eLearning courses that let them get their hands dirty.

5 They Combine Different Disciplines

In school, classes were divided into different subjects. Math, Science, Sports, Music. In real life, disciplines overlap. In a single workday, you can use geography to direct someone to an interview. You can sing a jingle to pass time in traffic, then text a client in a foreign language. You might use complex math to calculate your tip. Adult learning needs to be laid out in inter-disciplinary modules. It needs to bring together different forms of knowledge. This encourages adult learners to absorb knowledge through the lens of their individual life experience.

6 They Are Driven By Results

Adults can walk out of a virtual class or shut down their laptop at any time. They can, if they choose, drop out of an eLearning course in a few hours. What keeps them motivated to stay in an eLearning course? Results. If they can see that they are making progress or learning something useful, then they will stick with it. Be sure to put easily measured learning objectives in your eLearning course as a tool to retain your adult learners.

7 They Are Very, Very Busy

Another adult learner characteristic is that the average adult learner has a job, commuting time, hobbies, a family, personal ambition, and external interests. They have a lot of demands on their time and endless distractions to interfere with their focus. eLearning courses are a natural choice due to their flexibility. That said, the eLearning course needs to be *immersive* enough to compete with all the other distractions on the online learner's device. It needs to engage them enough to keep them from chatting, texting, or checking emails while in the eLearning course. This is key, since all these options are available and exist in the exact same physical and technological space as their eLearning course.

Adult learners today possess a unique set of differentiators from earlier generations. They study when and how they want to. They need to know why they need to take a particular eLearning course. They require deeper functional knowledge that they can get their hands into. They mesh different subjects and translate them into everyday use. They need clearly defined targets, and they need to get it all done in a limited amount of time. Keep all these adult learner characteristics in mind whenever you design an eLearning course for adult learners.

8   eLearning For Adult Learners: 6 Obstacles To Overcome

Adult learning is daunting for both adult learners and their online instructors. However, is it possible that the biggest challenge to adult education exists right inside the online learner's mind?

6 Obstacles To Overcome When Creating eLearning For Adult Learners

We haven't yet discovered how to read minds, so we don't know what adult learners are thinking. They are often too mired in doubt to express their problems. We can't fix what we're not aware of. A major step in making eLearning courses for adult learners accessible is to identify and resolve adult learning obstacles.

Let's explore 6 obstacles to overcome when creating eLearning for *adult learners*.

1   The Online Instructor Is In Charge

The conventional idea of school is that an instructor guides the process as an authoritarian figure. Adults see their teachers as peers and they may have a hard time taking orders from an equal. Therefore, self-guided eLearning courses are often the ideal approach. The adult learner needs room to make decisions. Interactive, autonomous approaches are far more effective than pedantic education.

2   Physical Limitations

As adults get older, their bodies may not be as cooperative as they were in the past. Ensure that font sizes and types are legible. Adults have also spent a large amount of time using the Internet for leisure. In addition, many people may have a hard time focusing on long prose. For this reason, eLearning courses need to use short bursts of text and plenty of diagrams. This ensures that adult learners absorb the relevant knowledge before their *attention span* gets compromised.

3   Memory Challenges

The older we get, the harder it is to remember things. This can be especially problematic when it comes to adult learning and it constitutes one of the biggest adult learning obstacles. Adults have no interest in reciting facts. They often *lack the capacity to remember* infinite details. This is why they learn best through demonstrations and a hands-on approach. The issue of memory can be resolved with some careful >

3 Memory Challenges

(cont) structuring of the eLearning course. Develop eLearning courses that have self-monitoring units. Adult learners can proceed at their own pace and review past eLearning modules with ease. The learning materials should be presented in simple, memorable packages. These include brief audio clips, mnemonic systems, flow charts, Venn diagrams, photographic examples and so on.

4 Teaching Tasks Instead Of Subjects

Younger learners assimilate information on a broad scale. Adult learners, on the other hand, aren't really interested in overviews. When an adult takes a particular eLearning course, they want to acquire a specific skill set and complete a particular task. An adult would be more interested in specifics. "How do I raise capital? How to do I seal a deal? What are some good negotiation skills? What business should I start?" eLearning courses for adult learners need to be more niche-oriented in order to hold their focus.

5 Too Mature To Learn

Some adults have a hard time resuming training. They have an in-built attitude that challenges their desire to learn. The advantage of eLearning courses is that they are very discreet. Adult learners can study in the privacy of their own homes or offices. They can also work at their own pace. They don't have to worry about competing with their online classmates.

6 Tech Know-How

Adult learners weren't raised with mobile devices, as is the case for younger generations. As such, they may not be as *tech-savvy* as their Gen-Y peers. That said, many adult learners realize the importance of tech tools. For example, how mobile devices can help them solve everyday challenges and provide moment-of-need knowledge. Adult learners who are resistant to change may need some extra encouragement, such as online training tutorials and guides that show them how to access and utilize the *Learning Management System*. Give them all the online training resources they need to make the most of your tech tools so that they feel comfortable and reassured. In addition, research your audience to identify problem areas and create personalized walkthroughs and demos.

Adult learning comes with a unique set of obstacles. In many ways, the older we get, the harder it is to learn. We are challenged by simple things like reading small lettering or remembering facts and figures. We are less theoretical and more task-oriented in our approach to life and ongoing training. Sometimes, we even feel too "old" to engage in eLearning courses. Each of these adult learning obstacles has a workable solution. >

6 Tech Know-How

(cont) With time and patience, we can find a way around them. We just have to give ourselves a chance.

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