



Tips for Working with Adult Learners

Adult learning experiences should enhance personal growth and make it easier for adults to adapt to internal and external changes in their lives. The need for digital literacy is a major change for many adults who have no prior experience using a computer or the Internet, so it is important to keep in mind the following when working with adult computer beginners.

A positive experience with learning computer skills . . .

- Promotes skill-development and a positive self-concept;
- Helps alleviate fears, prejudice, and illusions about the learning experience as a whole;
- Encourages creativity and helps the individual move toward personal goals;
- Increases the likelihood of continued computer use and learning.

When working with adult learners to build computer/Internet skills, keep in mind . . .

- Adult students come to you with a wealth of knowledge and years of life experiences; they expect to be treated as adults.
- Adults come with established beliefs, opinions, and values. Respect their opinions and never dismiss their views.
- Adults are often skeptical about acquiring new skills and may not accept them until they have tried them.
- Adults need to be self-directed—engage them in their learning process.
- Adults have needs that are concrete and immediate. They may be impatient to see how new knowledge or skills can be applied to their current situation or problem.
- Adults have variations in learning styles, so take this into account when deciding on the instructional approach that will work best. Do they need to read instructions? Do they learn best from pictures or videos? Do they need to observe you, and then imitate?
- Adults need variety that sparks interest and active learning—a change of pace and a sense of humor can go a long way.