

E-GUIDE 4:

Empowering Learners

***D-Upskill.50: Smart toolkit for
supporting adult workers and adults
educators in the educational digital
upskilling pathway***





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1. Accessibility & inclusion



Introduction

In this section, you will be able to assess the needs of your students both in terms of digital capabilities, such as the proper use of a computer or smartphone, have access to learning resources or connectivity issues; and also environmental, physical, or cognitive limitations, such as problems when reading texts on a screen.

Adult students have a higher incidence of digital lack of skills. Adult learners have distinct characteristics in comparison to traditional young students, they are different from other learners in terms of their responsibilities in their daily lives, which influence their educational experience.

The external challenges include the challenges stemming from work and domestic environments or from responsibilities of adult learners as independent from their personal characteristics.

Objectives

- To ensure that all students have access to the necessary digital tools and any virtual resource.
- To choose and implement digital educational strategies that address the learners' digital context, including competencies, approaches, misconceptions, and unappropriated use of technology.



- To use digital tools and methods, such as assistive technology, that are intended for students who require specialised assistance (such as students with physical or mental disabilities).
- To use design principles to make resources and digital environments more accessible for learners with special needs. In addition, if necessary, to provide alternate or compensatory tools or techniques.
- To control regularly and assess the effectiveness of the steps taken to promote accessibility, consider the results, and adjust tactics when it is considered.

Instructions

How to address learners' diverse learning needs

1. Captions Or Subtitles: Subtitles add value to the content. People who are slow to comprehend the audio or video interactions on the screen can follow the subtitles instead, to understand what is happening.



2. Design: The student can improve focus on the text by changing font size and style, text and line spacing and background colour. Be aware of possible disabilities that sometimes are difficult to notice through a screen, create a welcoming atmosphere so they feel comfortable to share their special educational arrangements.



Designing for users with low vision



Do...

use good colour contrasts and a readable font size



Don't...

use low colour contrasts and small font size



3. Instructions: Ambiguous, Or Lack Of, Clear On-Screen Instructions about how to use materials.

Anyone who has spent time on a course that has a poorly designed interface will accept the fact that it can be extremely irritating not to know where to click to progress to the next page/screen, or not to know what the next steps are for the learner to perform. Learning experience designers must focus on the user and learner experience and provide clear navigation instructions within the eLearning program.

“Blaming **PowerPoint** for boring elearning is like blaming **Word** for poor instructional design.

4. Language: Students may need to learn digital vocabulary first and also take into account that many resources are developed in English and it is really probable that they are not fluent in this language.
Text translators (often with an immersive reader functionality) can help non-native speakers or students with reading difficulties to understand content better.



How to motivate and include learners in lessons

1. Flexibility

Another characteristic of adult online learners is the need for flexibility. Employed adults have challenges concerning their jobs. Even if they have the ability to create the balance between work and education, they could not find the needed time to meet the course or program requirements when they were overloaded with their works.

Instructors should be mindful of the fact that online learners are preoccupied with other things going on in their lives, and, if a student is having some personal issues, they should be allowed to submit an assignment late rather than being unyielding and rigid.

One of the domestic challenges is concerned with technical problems such as disconnection problems and lack of broadband Internet speed experienced by adults in their study locations.



2. Presence and interaction

Developing relationships with students is an important part of student motivation. To this end, the first forum is dedicated to providing an opportunity for students to introduce themselves, sharing their goals and interests.

Synchronous interaction is another way to help facilitate this relationship. It's important for students to feel, at least during office hours, that they can actually find a human being behind the computer. It also seems to help teachers get to know students as individuals and respond to their needs.

Interaction among learners emerges as another interaction challenge. Studies show that interaction among adults or their engagement in the social learning groups is quite low, a feeling of isolation is reported as a challenge faced by adults.

Build community and integrate social media: Keep in mind that social media websites are a powerful tool for collaboration, commenting and sharing. You can facilitate group discussions and communities. People will quickly start exchanging knowledge, and will also have fun, social media is fun!



3. Feedback

Students need personalised feedback from the instructor. If we have instructors who are just grading or even using a rubric but not providing personalised feedback, students have little to take away from the course.

Likewise, it is motivating for students to know that their opinion contributes to the overall quality of the course, so be sure to notify students upfront that you'll ask for feedback at the end of the course.

Most adults are of the belief that their days of studying are behind them, so the key to making adult education appealing is to have the course material be as relevant and specific to the student's career and personal growth aspirations as possible.

When it comes to motivating adults to learn, individual preferences is something that just can't be ignored, as some students feel that they learn better through visual materials, like graphics and presentations, while others find that real-life workshops or videos keep them engaged for longer.

Gamification is all about making learning fun for adults by recognising small wins within student work, fostering competition, and introducing curiosity into the learning experience. Badges, points, leaderboards, certificates, and level-progression in an eLearning course could be the trick you need for motivating adults to learn.



Repository

List of useful platforms, tools and resources that can be used.

- Repository of Accessible Digital Tools: <https://includeonline.eu/>
- Disability Simulator: <https://www.funkify.org/>
- Creating an Inclusive Classroom with Microsoft Tools: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4cvuS6GKM8>
- Enhance IDM project introduction: <https://enhanceidm.eu/wordpress/>
- IDM Toolbox: <https://idmtoolbox.eu/>
- Immersive Reader: [OneNote – Learningtools](#)
- [Step-by-step instructions for making accessible documents](#)
- [Tools for accessibility check](#)
- [Text-to-Speech](#)
- [matesub – Create better subtitles, faster](#)
- User override (enables to edit a password, change the quiz begin or end, to adapt the time limit and to edit the number of attempts for one or more students): [Quiz settings – MoodleDocs](#)

Assessment

	YES	NO
I know which tools are best for my students.		
I know how to keep people engaged and motivated and avoid fatigue.		
I know how to assess people's limitations and how to work with limitations accordingly.		
I know how to assess people's limitations and how to work with limitations accordingly.		
I know how to help people with accessibility barriers.		
I know how to ensure that nobody is excluded.		



2. Differentiation & personalisation



Introduction

Digital technologies can help to assist classroom differentiation and individualized teaching by providing study exercises tailored to the degree of competence, preference and study requirements of the different students.

Individualization is the process of adapting training to the personal and specific needs of each student. All students have the identical learning objectives, but they can move through the

material at varying rates depending on their learning requirements. For instance, some students take longer to finish a topic, others may skip topics that cover material they already know, or go over topics again if they need more clarification.

As well, differentiated instruction refers to the way of teaching and guiding that is adjusted to the learning styles of various students, different methods of instruction are used depending on the preferences of the individual students or the typology of the group, for example, the same content would be taught differently to kids, teenagers or adults.

To differentiate education and personalise learning experiences, however, could be difficult in terms of distributing sufficient time and resources. Here is where technology can help: it offers limitless possibility to change course designs while reducing the amount of time needed to create and facilitate learning activities. In many parts of lesson planning, including content



production, delivery, grouping, assignment design, and evaluation, teachers can make use of a variety of teaching tools.

Four ways to make e-Learning more engaging



Objectives

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- To use design principles to make resources and digital environments more accessible for learners with special needs. In addition, if necessary, to provide alternate or compensatory tools or techniques.
- To control regularly and assess the effectiveness of the steps taken to promote accessibility, consider the results, and adjust tactics when it is considered.

Instructions



Teachers can differentiate at least four classroom elements based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile:

- **Content** – what the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information.

Examples of differentiating content at the elementary level include the following:

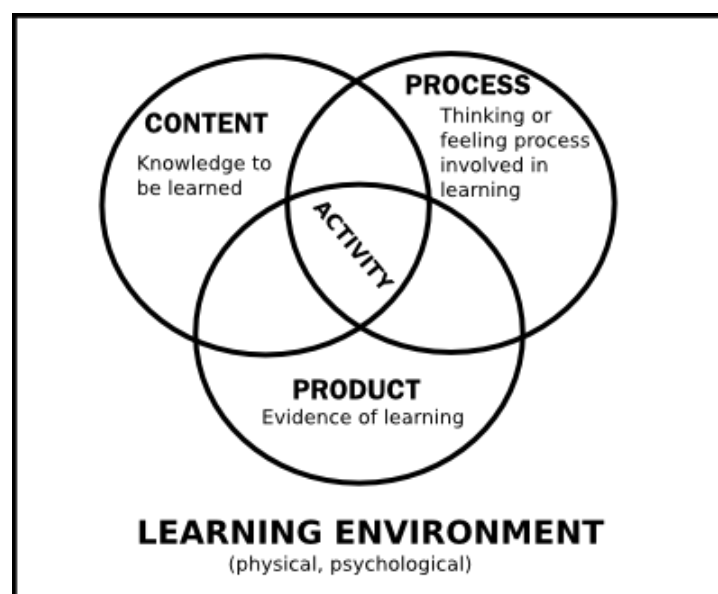
1. Using reading materials at varying readability levels;
2. Putting text materials on tape;
3. Using spelling or vocabulary lists at readiness levels of students;
4. Presenting ideas through both auditory and visual means;
5. Using reading buddies; and
6. Meeting with small groups to re-teach an idea or skill for struggling learners, or to extend the thinking or skills of advanced learners.

- **Process** – activities in which the student engages in order to make sense of or master the content.

Examples of differentiating the process or activities at the elementary level include the following:

1. Using tiered activities through which all learners work with the same important understandings and skills, but proceed with different levels of support, challenge, or complexity;

2. Providing interest centers that encourage students to explore subsets of the class topic of particular interest to them;
3. Developing personal agendas (task lists written by the teacher and containing both in-common work for the whole class and work that addresses individual needs of learners) to be completed either during specified agenda time or as students complete other work early;
4. Offering manipulatives or other hands-on supports for students who need them; and
5. Varying the length of time a student may take to complete a task in order to provide additional support for a struggling learner or to encourage an advanced learner to pursue a topic in greater depth.



- **Products** – culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a unit.

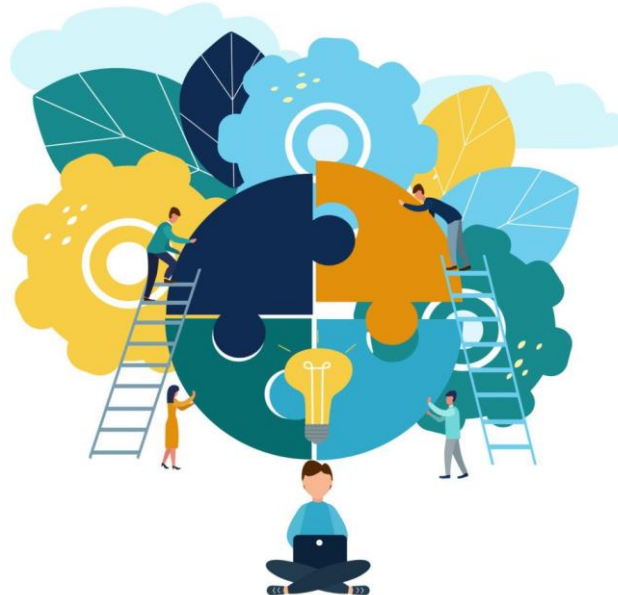
Examples of differentiating products at the elementary level include the following:

1. Giving students options of how to express required learning (e.g., create a puppet show, write a letter, or develop a mural with labels);
2. Using rubrics that match and extend students' varied skills levels;
3. Allowing students to work alone or in small groups on their products; and
4. Encouraging students to create their own product assignments as long as the assignments contain required elements.

- **Learning environment** – the way the classroom works and feels.

Examples of differentiating the learning environment at the elementary level include:

1. Making sure there are places in the room to work quietly and without distraction, as well as places that invite student collaboration;
2. Providing materials that reflect a variety of cultures and home settings;
3. Setting out clear guidelines for independent work that matches individual needs;
4. Developing routines that allow students to get help when teachers are busy with other students and cannot help them immediately; and
5. Helping students understand that some learners need to move around to learn, while others do better sitting quietly.





Repository

List of useful platforms, tools and resources that can be used.

- http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1692-17982019000100048: article on the personlisation of Moodle with the integration of most used web technologies in higher education
- <https://edulastic.com/blog/differentiated-instruction/>: 5 Ways to Create a Differentiated Instruction Environment with Edulastic
- <https://edulastic.com/blog/personalized-learning/>: 5 Ways to Create a Personalized Learning Environment with Edulastic
- Modular Learning: 8 Tips for Effective Online Teaching. Research-based Articles: <https://simplyeducate.me/2021/06/22/modular-learning/>
- [How to Differentiate Instruction in the Classroom](#): This article takes a look at the definition, origin, and implementation of differentiated instruction, offering specific methods and examples for classroom teachers.
- [Read Write Think Differentiating Instruction](#): Read Write Think has developed a comprehensive series of guides detailing strategies for differentiation in the classroom, from assessment to cooperative learning to the think-pair-share technique.
- [Best Free Formative Assessment Tools and Apps](#): Explore 14 of the best free sites and apps for helping teachers gauge their students' skill level in reading, math, science, or any subject.
- [Classtools.net](#): allows teachers to create games, quizzes, activities, and diagrams for creative differentiated learning.
- [Breaking News English](#): A free site that transforms current events into rich classroom lessons for learners of any ability.
- [Rewordify.com](#): free site that "rewordifies" by simplifying difficult text, from classic literature (Lewis Carroll, William Shakespeare, Harriet Beecher Stowe, e.g.) to historical documents and modern internet articles

Assessment

	YES	NO
I know the difference between personalisation and differentiation.		
I know the need and purpose of personalisation and differentiation.		
I know how to implement differentiated instructions and personalised learning.		
I know examples of differentiating content at the elementary level.		
I know examples of differentiating the process or activities at the elementary level.		
I know examples of differentiating products at the elementary level.		





I know examples of differentiating the learning environment at the elementary level.		
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References

Excerpted from: Tomlinson, C. A. (August, 2000). Differentiation of Instruction in the Elementary Grades. ERIC Digest. ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

