

How Can We Support Adult Learner Success During Remote Learning?

By: Dr. Lorraine Godden, Carleton University and Dr. Sandy Youmans, Queen's University

In a recent survey, Adult & Continuing Education (A&CE) teachers and staff revealed how they shifted delivery of their courses to an online environment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in a number of successful innovations and promising practices. This document outlines six tips for supporting A&CE learners during remote learning.

01

Provide technology and mobile hotspots/wifi sticks.

Lack of technology can be a barrier for some students, both in terms of having a device for online learning and accessing the internet to undertake and submit assignments. Where possible, loaning devices to adult learners and providing them with internet enables them to continue their learning.

02

Designate staff to reach out and check in on students.

Assigning a caring adult to track attendance, academic progress and support any social or emotional needs is essential when working with adult learners in an online environment. Check-ins help learners feel supported and stay on track with their learning.

03

Develop an online course orientation that includes technology training.

Adult learners may not have the skills needed to fully participate an online environment. Providing them with a course orientation that includes technology training prepares them for success. Training could include how to use learning devices, online processes and procedures, and navigating the learning management system.

04

Provide virtual learning supports.

Adult learners require learning supports, like guidance and tutoring. During remote learning, virtual guidance services and tutoring are very valuable for adult learners.

05

Equip teachers with strategies for successful online learning.

The role of teachers in A&CE is invaluable. Teachers require online teaching strategies and technology training to foster adult learner engagement and success with remote learning.

06

Work with community partners to offer virtual wraparound services.

Adult learners benefit from wraparound services that support their well-being (e.g., mental health services, food, childcare). During remote learning, A&CE programs could work with community partners to offer virtual wraparound services, like virtual counselling and free or low cost food delivery programs.