

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

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Facilitator's Training Handbook

Fall 2022

# Welcome

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Dear Facilitator,

The [Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy](#) in partnership with Digital Promise created [Promoting Digital Literacy for Adult Learners: A Resource Guide](#) for educators, tutors, and mentors who are working with adult learners in the context of digital literacy.

The Resource Guide is rooted in adult learning theory and offers practical approaches to building digital literacy skills with adult learners. The resource guide aims to:

- Provide a clear understanding of digital literacy, including a breakdown of several types of digital skills and digital literacy goals.
- Present research-based insights, best practices, and strategies for meeting unique learner needs, especially in digital literacy.
- Offer professional development to strengthen the confidence and capacity of instructors, tutors, and coaches in working with adult learners, especially in digital literacy.

Organized into five chapters along with additional resources and appendices, the resource guide provides a comprehensive framework for promoting digital literacy skills through the lens of the whole adult learner. Understanding the adult learner experience is critical to designing and implementing personalized and effective digital skills training. The resource guide offers ample strategies that build on the key concept of *learner variability*, the recognition that every learner has a unique set of strengths and challenges across a whole learner framework that are interconnected and vary according to context.

The purpose of this Facilitator's Handbook and accompanying slide deck is to support facilitators who are introducing the resource guide to educators, employers, mentors, and volunteers that work with adult learners. It provides recommendations for training others on how to use the resource guide, such as making the most of key features and facilitation tips and applying a whole learner framework.

Thank you for your commitment to promoting digital skills. We welcome any feedback you have on the materials to continue to support practitioners.

Kindly,

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy and Digital Promise

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# Overview

The [Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy](#) and Digital Promise partnered to develop [Promoting Digital Literacy for Adult Learners: A Resource Guide](#) (subsequently referred to as “the resource guide”) for all those working directly or in small group instructional settings with adult learners. With contributions from experts across the adult learning field, the team set out to create a dynamic resource that would improve the quality, effectiveness, and comprehension of digital skills training in any learning context. The final product provides over 75 pages of research-based insights, best practices, key resources, as well as strategies for meeting unique learner needs, especially in digital skills learning and application. But the sheer amount of content may be a lot to initially process, particularly for instructors who are new to working with adult learners.

With that in mind, the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy and Digital Promise, teamed up to create a set of training materials to accompany the digital literacy resource guide, including this Facilitator’s Handbook and Slide Deck. These materials are designed to support facilitators who are *introducing* the resource guide to educators, tutors, and mentors who are working directly with adult learners on building digital literacy skills.

In this Handbook, the resource guide content is broken down into a set of 30 minute learning modules that are aligned to the five chapters of the resource guide (as shown below). Each learning module includes a chapter description, learning objectives, key terms, accompanying slides, and suggested talking points. Let’s get started!

 <b>5</b> Chapter 1 <b>Overview</b>	 <b>9</b> Chapter 2 <b>Understanding the Adult Learner Experience</b>	 <b>15</b> Chapter 3 <b>Defining Digital Literacy</b>	 <b>27</b> Chapter 4 <b>Preparing to Teach Digital Literacy</b>	 <b>33</b> Chapter 5 <b>Strategies for Building Digital Literacy for the Whole Learner</b>
 <b>54</b> <b>VI Additional Resources</b>	 <b>58</b> <b>VII Appendix Resources</b>			

# Getting Started

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Before training educators, tutors, and mentors who are working with adult learners on how to effectively use the resource guide, we recommend that you:

1. **Familiarize yourself with the resource guide.** Read it completely and get comfortable with the layout, purpose, and content.
2. **Understand the key concept: Whole Learner Approach.** Pay close attention to the underlying concept of adult learner variability and what it means to provide instruction with a Whole Learner Approach.
3. **Make clear your training objectives:** Think about your audience and identify training session objectives based on their needs, interests, experiences with adult learners, and digital literacy skills.

## Familiarize yourself with [The Resource Guide](#) and Training Materials

Trainers should be able to answer questions and refer participants to pertinent sections of the resource guide for further reading. In order to do this, it is recommended that trainers read the resource guide cover-to-cover and be very familiar with its organization and content prior to leading training. Trainers should also review and select slides based on the learning context, timeframe, and needs of the learners. For example, they may need to prepare for interactive activities in advance, such as creating a poll, survey, or new digital workspace via [Google Jamboard](#). Every slide includes instructions and/or key talking points for the facilitator to keep in mind.

## Understand Learner Variability and The Whole Learner Approach

Creating training programs that are built on understanding of the whole learner means that you consider not only content of the material being studied—in this case, ways to promote digital literacy with adult learners—but also factors of cognition (attention, working memory), social and emotional learning (create a sense of belonging), and individual background (education experience, living under adverse experiences or in poverty). It is important to learn about the educators, tutors, and mentors who are participating in this training in order to be able to make stronger connections to the content and support their learning and skills development. Continue to learn more about designing a training that reflects an understanding of the participants, their needs, their motivations, and their experiences.

As stated in Chapter 2 of the resource guide, building on individual life experiences is critical for deepening an adult learner's understanding. Make sure you customize your training to allow trainers to make connections to the content, other participants, and their own experiences. Allow time for discussion and reflection and consider opportunities for choice and self-directed learning

through activities, scenarios, and application opportunities. Your training design should reflect your understanding of learner variability and adapt presentation tools to meet each learner's holistic needs.

## Make Clear Your Training Objectives

What do you hope educators, tutors, and mentors who are working with adult learners take from this training? What should they understand about digital literacy? About working with adult learners? Take a moment to read the sample objectives below and be sure to adapt them depending on your *learning context*. It is critical to present training objectives at the start of your session to help orient participants and make clear the goal of the training. As noted on page 8 of the resource guide, learning contexts may include adult literacy programs, correctional and reentry programs, faith-based programs, work-based learning opportunities and more.

## Sample Training Objectives

As a result of this three hour training on effective ways to apply [Promoting Digital Literacy for Adult Learners: A Resource Guide](#), participants will be able to:

- Identify and discuss key concepts, such as learner variability, in their own words
- Increase confidence in identifying adult learner needs and goals related to digital literacy, and identifying research-based strategies to support them
- Navigate the resource guide as a resource to answer questions or find strategies for digital literacy challenges that arise either in real time or as in learner scenarios

Identify your overall training objectives. Below, take a few minutes to revise the objectives listed above and/or add session objectives based on learner needs.

**Work Area:**

By now you are more familiar with the resource guide, have a stronger understanding of the Whole Learner Approach, and may have even drafted some training objectives. You are ready to start planning your training to support others in using the resource guide to meet learner needs.

# Training Modules

The resource guide is organized into five chapters along with additional resources and appendices. To promote greater engagement and familiarity with the resource guide content, we have broken down each chapter into a series of modules for educators, tutors, and mentors who are working with adult learners.

The training is designed to be completed in 3-4 hours, with approximately 30-45 minutes per module. It can be completed in a virtual or in-person setting. Each training module includes a brief description, learning objectives, key terms or concepts, and suggested activities to apply new content. Several modules also provide optional activities that facilitators can include to support further learning. Facilitators may pace and/or adapt the content to address the varied needs of participants in the training, considering factors such as prior knowledge in digital literacy, experience teaching adult learners, and/or comfort with technology. Depending on the learning context, facilitators may choose to introduce select topics and resources, and encourage participants to explore other areas of the resource guide on their own time.

## Facilitator's Slide Deck

[Presentation slides](#)

[Presentation slides with notes](#)

## Suggested Training Structure

Learning Module <i>aligned to chapter content</i>	Estimated Time	Accompanying Slides
Welcome: Course Overview and Ice-Breaker	15 min	
Module 1: Guide Overview	30 min	
Module 2: Understanding the Adult Learner Experience	30 min	
5 minute break		
Module 3: What is Digital Literacy?	30 min	
Module 4: Preparing to Teach Digital Literacy	30 min	
5 minute break		
Module 5: Strategies for Building Digital Literacy for the Whole Learner	45 min	

First Session Planning	15 min	
Final Reflections and Thank you!	15 min	

## Welcome: Course Overview and Ice-Breaker

How you welcome training participants is an opportunity to model how they can welcome adult learners in their learning contexts. Take the first 10-15 minutes to create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment for training participants. Two key strategies can be used to support a sense of purpose and belonging, including: 1) providing [clear structure and presentation](#) and 2) identifying [cultural and life experiences](#). The goal is to help participants feel both motivated to learn and valued as individuals.

### Provide Clear Structure and Presentation

1. Whether you are in an in-person or virtual setting, make **Slide 1** visible as participants enter the room. Set the tone by playing some music or if in person, providing light refreshments. Be sure to edit the slides to include **your name, the name of the organization, and date of the training**.
2. Once all participants are present and ready to learn, introduce yourself and direct attention to the title of the session: *Promoting Digital Literacy for Adult Learners*.
3. Why are we here? Share a bit of background about the resource guide, its purpose, and why it was created by the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy and Digital Promise.
4. Present Session Objectives and Agenda. You can review the objectives provided or adapt the language in the slide to reflect the specific learning objectives for your learning context, as described above.

### Cultural and Life Experiences

1. Once you have provided a clear structure for the training, lead a short ice-breaker activity to get to know participants in the training, and get a sense of who they are as well as why they are joining this session.
2. Welcome participants! Whether you are in a virtual or in-person setting, take a few minutes to ask participants to share their name, personal pronouns, their role in supporting adult learners, and a brief description of their experience teaching digital literacy.
3. Determine what participants already know and/or are thinking about when it comes to digital skills. What digital skills do adult learners need?
  - Depending on the context and comfort with technology, you can discuss this question in pairs, as a whole group, or the best option, via [Mentimeter](#), an online presentation software that helps you create easy-to-build interactive Polls, Quizzes, and word clouds to support more participation and less stress! See **slide 7** to try it.



## Ice-breaker Activities

In the event that you have more time, you can add ice-breaker activities to get to know your students. Here are some examples:

### 1. Two Truths and a Lie (virtual or in person setting)

People who have been working together for a long time can discover little-known facts about each other, and groups meeting for the first time can get to know each other in a basic way. Ask one participant to say or write three statements about themselves: 2 true and 1 false. Ask the other participants to guess on which is untrue and why they think so. After the group decides which statement is false, the first person will reveal which are true and false. Move on until each person in the group has shared their statements.

### 2. Camera on/Camera off (virtual setting)

This can work well for people who may or may not know each other well, depending on the questions you ask. The presenter pre-selects 6-10 yes/no questions to ask the group. As the presenter asks the questions, participants turn their cameras on if their answer is “yes,” or turn it off if their answer is “no.” In this way, the presenter and participants alike can get a general sense of who is in the virtual room with questions, such as:

- Are you teaching or tutoring now?
- Do you speak a language other than English?
- Have you looked at your phone more than 5 times so far today?

## Module 1: Overview

Chapter 1 of the resource guide provides important context for the digital literacy resource guide, including why access to digital literacy skills training and connectivity is so critical for Americans today.

### Learning Objectives

- Participants will understand the purpose of the resource guide, and why digital skills and connectivity is so important to adult learners and workers
- Participants will set personal learning goals for improving their ability to meet the unique digital literacy needs of their learners

### Key Terms

- ☐ Digital literacy
- ☐ Digital skills
- ☐ Digital Resilience

## Slides with Sample Talking Points Numbers 10-20

### Interactive Content Review of Chapter 1

#### 1. Overview of Chapter 1

- a. Present the learning objectives.
- b. Review the challenge outlined on **Slide 11** that reminds participants about the purpose of the resource guide and why digital skills and connectivity are so important.
- c. Share a bit of background about the resource guide, its purpose, how it can be used to support adult learners.
- d. Remind participants to be aware of key features that are included throughout the resource guide, such as Linking Theory to Practice pop-outs and Quick Tips

#### 2. Explore adult learning contexts. Find out more about participants' learning context to get to know them and create opportunities for connection in the group. Take a few minutes and ask participants to turn and talk to a partner or share out in the whole group. If virtual, a simple "drop in the chat which context you're in" works too!

- a. **Discussion:** How would you describe your adult learning context? Ask participants to share the kind of learning context they will be working in with adult learners.

#### 3. Review Table of Contents. Drop a link to the full guide in the chat or provide a url for them to search. Instruct participants to open the resource guide on their devices and scroll through the Table of Contents.

- a. Discussion: What parts of the resource guide might align with your day-to-day work and why?

#### 4. Introduce key terms and definitions (digital literacy, digital resilience, digital skills). Review the key terms and definitions as a group or ask them to comment in the chat. Since we will explore digital literacy in more depth in Module 3, this activity focuses on digital resilience.

- a. Pose the question on **Slide 16**: In what ways are you digitally resilient? Give an example of yourself or someone in your life. This can be via chat or discussion, depending on learning context. Self-reflection allows participants to make more meaningful connections to the course materials. The next activity builds on this to explore participants' background and experience with digital skills.

### Make Connections: Course Material and Real-World Experiences

1. **Activity:** Create a list of all the activities they did yesterday that require digital skills. What surprised you?  
**Build on digital skills:** To model opportunities to build digital literacy skills, create a [mentimeter](#) and invite participants to co-generate a word cloud to show all of the digital skills that participants recognize.