

California Adult Education Digital Learning Guidance

Chapter 3: Foundations of Adult Education and Digital Learning

Think about:

- How do adult learning theories differ from K–12 education, and what are their key principles?

Adult Learning Theories – Adult learning theories differ from K–12 education by emphasizing collaboration between educators and learners, self-directed learning, and the use of prior experiences. Andragogy focuses on autonomous learners and a process-based approach. Experiential learning emphasizes four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Heutagogy places the learner at the center of the learning process, emphasizing autonomy and self-reflection. Self-directed learning varies based on individual preferences. Transformative learning aims to broaden perspectives and challenge assumptions through dialogue, reflection, and inclusive learning environments.

Research-Based Practices in Digital Learning – Research-based practices in digital learning highlight the importance of quality learning design rather than specific delivery methods for learner outcomes. Benefits of digital learning for learners include convenience, flexibility, self-confidence, and academic and digital literacy skills. Adult educators can differentiate instruction, facilitate personalized learning, monitor progress, and provide feedback using digital tools. Recommendations for digital learning include aligning technology use with curriculum goals, and facilitating flexible, authentic, and self-directed learning.

Standards in Adult Education – The ISTE Educator Standards promote technology integration in a learner-centered approach, emphasizing continuous learning, leadership, digital citizenship, collaboration, design, facilitation, and data analysis. The National Standards for Quality Online Learning include standards for online teaching, programs, and courses, addressing various aspects such as instruction, assessment, accessibility, and program evaluation.

Classroom Educators & Support Staff – In California, the requirements for teaching adult education vary depending on the institution. Adult educators in K–12 school districts need to be credentialed by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, while those in community colleges are not required to have a credential but usually need relevant academic degrees. Support staff in adult education programs include counselors, digital navigators, instructional aides, transition specialists, clerical and office staff, custodial and maintenance staff, data and accountability specialists, and testing coordinators.

Digital Learning and Professional Development – Effective professional development for adult educators should be long-term, collaborative, and personalized, with opportunities for reflection and self-study. Adult educators also need training in technology integration and effective methods of instructing, motivating, and supporting students. Communities of practice and professional learning communities are valuable for educators to investigate questions, stay informed, sharpen skills, gather resources, and improve practice collaboratively.

For consideration:

- What are the benefits of digital learning for adult learners, and how can educators effectively utilize digital tools in instruction?
- What are the essential components of effective professional development for adult educators, and how can communities of practice contribute to their growth and improvement?