Effective Practices for Onboarding Learners to Digital Resources

1. Provide multiple modalities for introducing the learning resource:
- Give the learners access to a text-based document with instructions on how to access the learning resources. Give step-by-step instructions; add screenshots; keep it as simple as possible.
- Provide a short (1-4 min) how-to video as an orientation for using each learning resource.
    - **When creating a video or planning a live demonstration, including the following**:
        - Demonstrate how to access the resource. Are there certain web browsers they should use?
        - Demonstrate how to log-in and how to get support if they forget username or password
        - Explain how the site is organized and where the learner should start
        - Demonstrate how to open resources and return to previous resources and main menu
        - Introduce 1-2 features at a time. For example: upload a document and reply to a question
- Plan a live demonstration where you give a 'tour' of the resource. ** Practice with family members or colleagues in advance to gain confidence and comfort in onboarding students to online and digital resources.
    - **Live Demos:** Arrive early! When starting a new virtual session, arrive early and check your own technology – audio, video. Be sure you know how to do basic troubleshooting with learners. Invite learners to join the session early and do a tech check with each learner by asking them to test their audio and video.

2. Onboard learners to resources using the same type of device the learner is using.
When accessing resources from a smartphone or tablet, features and functions might be located in a different part of the screen than on a computer. If learners are using their phone, screen share your mobile phone so you can walk them through the process as they do it on their own phone.

- If you are working with a group, have another person available for troubleshooting tech issues.
- If a learner is having a problem with the technology, spend 5-10 minutes troubleshooting if you're working with a larger group. Then give the group a task and work with the person individually. If needed, schedule a separate session with the learner who is having difficulty to get them caught up.
- **Screen share your phone screen:** You can demonstrate on your phone by doing a screen share from your phone. For example, you can join the meeting via Zoom, Google Meet, etc. and share the screen from your mobile device. Click HERE to learn how.

3. Start with the basics. Don't make assumptions.
Sometimes we use terms and assume learners know what they mean. For example, "Open a browser" or "Open a new tab." You may need to start with computer and internet basics. Some resources available include:

- Northstar (NS) Digital Literacy Assessment Self-based interactive course for computer basics
- Northstar resources (with paid subscription) full curriculum for teaching that aligns with NS digital literacy standards
- Northstar offers a resource that aligns web-based learning resources to their digital literacy standards. These are short video lessons – many are taken from GCF Global.
- GCf Global: Offers video and text-based lessons for technology and digital literacy skills.
- Digital Learn: Offers video-based lessons for basic computer and internet skills.

4. Create a three-step process. As part of the onboarding process, follow a three-step routine of I do, We do, You do:

1. Demonstrate a particular function or feature. The learner observes while you explain.
2. Walk the learner through the same function/feature but this time the learner performs an action like downloading a document.
3. Give the learner the same task to do independently.

5. Introduce new features and functions after mastery. Do not introduce new features, resources or technology tools until the learner has mastered those previously introduced.

- Each time you meet the learner, review some of the features or functions of the resources including how to use Zoom, Meet, etc. Don't assume they'll remember everything from the last session.

6. Be available for technical support. Once you determine how you will communicate with the learner/s, set a schedule to check-in. This can be a text, email, phone call or you can message directly through the course in some cases. Always check-in after one day. If learners are having difficulty accessing the online learning resources, it is likely to be within 24 hours. Reach out to individuals or the whole group and ask if they need help. the options for checking in:

- Set a schedule of open hours (office hours) for tech help.
- Set a schedule, by appointment, for tech help.
- Check-in daily.

7. Curate resources in one place: As you introduce learners to resources, ensure they have one-stop shopping by listing the website and a short description in one place such as a document, learning platform or website. This might be Google Classroom, a learning management system like Canvas or Blackboard or a Google Document.