Fear to Fascination

Learner Confidence & Blended Instruction for Digital Literacy Acquisition
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Digital Inequality

- Lack of computer skills cited as barrier to adoption & use
- Vulnerable populations at highest risk
Fear

- Computer anxiety well established in literature
- Computer anxiety inversely related to computer experience

They were scared to turn it on. Afraid they were going to do something that was going to burn the place down by pressing a certain button. Or they were going to activate a nuclear bomb or something. That's the way it is. They're really scared. - Tutor
Research Questions

- How do vulnerable adults experience the digital literacy acquisition process?

- How do the self paced and tutor-facilitated features of this learning model support learners overcoming their fear of computers and developing a personal sense of self-efficacy and self-confidence?
Learning Model

Learner Web Online Platform

Community Tutors
Data & Methods

- Data collection from 6 geographic locations
- Participants drawn from 3-year BTOP project
  - Over 12,000 Learners, More than 500 Tutors
- Included learners from variety of settings
- In depth, semi-structured interviews:
  - Learners, tutors, key-stakeholders, learner case studies
- Lab observations
Data & Methods

- Analyses conducted using grounded theory
- Themes identified
  - Fear and anxiety toward computer
  - Growing sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy
Findings & Discussion

- Confidence & Self-efficacy
- Tutor/Learner Interaction
- Self paced, Online Learning
Confidence & Self-Efficacy

- Confidence: general feeling of being capable
- Self-efficacy: belief in one's digital literacy skills
Tutor/Learner Interaction

Tutors support the development of self-confidence and self-efficacy as they

- Become allies to learners
- Push learners towards independence
- Encouragement and nurturing support

I know she's been working with him for an extended period of time to even to feel comfortable and confident enough to come to my class...and that trust level has to build first with him. And some of them are like that. - Tutor

She'll help you go through it and make you see that you get it. You know what you're seeing. You know she's not telling you, she'll let me figure it out a little bit for myself. - Learner

But you know the tutor there, it makes you feel more comfortable than if I was there doing it on my own and I get stuck and I probably would get frustrated and give it up. Where with the tutor there it's like it's an encouragement. And that helps me to keep going forward. And to push myself. - Learner
Self-paced Online Learning

Self-paced, goal-oriented learning fostered self-efficacy by providing

- Flexibility for individual learning path
- Reduced anxiety
- Engagement

So I think since the program is something that is not timing you and it's not pressuring you and there's nothing you need to worry about and it's based on your pace and your knowledge, it basically depends on you. - Learner

And then by the time you need to hurry up and move on, you just gonna move when you think you ready. Well that's how I move... I don't move until I understand what I'm doin': And that's what I say too, that was the best part about it. - Learner

But once you continue those little games... sometimes if it is part of the learning... and it takes your fear. I don't know, all of a sudden, I realized that I was playing with the computer, I was doing things on the computer. - Learner
Fascination

With this learning model, Learners moved towards
• Confidence
• Self-efficacy
Impact & Learner Stories

Interviewer: ...what did you walk away with from that experience?

Learner: Confidence, I felt more confidence, and... part of society. It felt good.

Because for me, it is very important. Because from here I can find work, I can have any experience if I don’t know, I get on [the internet] and from there I will learn it. If I don't know where to go to a specific place or I have to go to a job and I don't know where it is, I go on the internet, I look on the map, I see where it is. - Learner

When you learn something that you thought was impossible, and when you learn that, of course it changes your life because it gives you confidence you can reach anything. Without confidence you don’t go not even to the corner. So the computer does help. Know the computer, get to know that. - Learner

She knows she’s making progress. She’s come and told me, “I feel so much different now, when I look at this computer.” I think she told you about how afraid she was when she first came. – Tutor
Questions or Comments?

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Reference: