

Baughner, G.A. (2011). A Brief look at online tutorial experiences of older students in Remedial College Mathematics. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 7(4), 475-479

This paper takes a phenomenological approach to review the use by older students of an online tutorial designed to help with specific areas of the maths course. The data was collected through questionnaires and interview and reaches the conclusion that tutorials should be broken down into easily understandable segments that are user friendly and easy to navigate with a suggestion that new programmes should be piloted before adoption.

The adults involved in this study were aged between 40 and 55 and the study was conducted using methods that allowed the adults involved express their thoughts. All of the survey questions were open ended and required an explanation. The data is triangulated through the use of interviews and the author confirms that the participants read and verified their statements. The discussion suggests that the learners involved did not suffer with computer anxiety but did have difficulty with navigating the program that was provided for them. In some cases students came up with work arounds to get them through particular aspects but in other cases they felt that the system could not deal with their specific problems.

As there are a significant number of older adult learners within the organisation, I had hoped that this study would provide some insight as to the experiences of older adult learners in an online environment albeit using an asynchronous module. I am unable to take any relevant experiences from reading this study. Baughner does not comment on whether younger students experienced similar issues with this module but rather quotes a study from another source that suggests older adult learners experience issues that do not generally occur with more traditional college aged students. The issues which occurred for these adults were around the design of the course. These were compounded by the fact that the adults were uncomfortable with the topic. The author suggests there is a need to segment the content and it should be user friendly and easy to navigate these are aspects that should apply to all content regardless of the learners age.