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LEARNER JOURNEY MAP

DIAGNOSIS & PLANNING

VET design

1. AT A GLANCE

Tool name	*Learner Journey Map Template*
Activity Type	*Group*
Purpose	*Diagnosis / Planning*
Challenge	*From Enrolment to Completion (Engaging and retaining adult learners through to certification)*
When to use it	*Empathise / Define stages of the Design Thinking process*
Time to complete	*1 Hour (60 Minutes)*
Materials Needed	*Canvas matrix worksheet, multi-colored sticky notes, fine-tip markers*

2. DESCRIPTION

The Learner Journey Map Template is a standardized user-experience (UX) diagnostic tool specifically adapted for the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. Adult vocational tracks face exceptionally high early attrition, with common patterns showing highly motivated learners dropping out entirely by week three of a program. This tool enables design teams to move past abstract data points and map out the human experience behind student attrition.

The tool establishes a structured, visual two-axis grid. The horizontal x-axis captures the sequential timeline of the learner's experience split into five major lifecycles: Awareness, Enrolment, Week 1, Mid-course, and Completion. The vertical y-axis traces the internal and operational layers of that experience: what the learner explicitly does, what they feel (including emotional highs and hidden pain points), and what they fundamentally need to avoid dropping out. By mapping these intersecting coordinates, educators can diagnose invisible institutional friction points and intentionally plan targeted engagement loops and peer-support networks.

2.1 WHEN TO USE IT

This tool should be deployed early in the Design Circle lifespan during the Empathise and Define phases. It is used during diagnosis to synthesize qualitative observations from past cohorts and during planning to design structural interventions before launching a new educational track.

Pins and tape can be used to mount this as a live, collaborative wall canvas in a workshop setting, or it can be shared via digital whiteboard tools like Miro or Mural for distance-based design groups.



- **Map the Reality, Not the Ideal:** Ensure participants fill out the canvas columns based on what adult learners actually encounter, including complex bureaucratic obstacles, confusing communication channels, and real family/work pressures, rather than mapping an idealized institutional workflow.
- **Color-Code the Emotional Fluctuations:** Use distinct sticky-note colors to represent positive experiences versus friction points. A cluster of high-friction colors in the "Week 1" or "Mid-course" zone immediately highlights systemic drop-off hot spots.
- **Focus heavily on Transition Gaps:** Pay close attention to the structural handoffs between stages, such as the gap between official Enrolment and the first day of class. These gaps are often where adult learners facing practical constraints or low sense of belonging quietly slide into attrition.

3. STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1

Establish Grid Canvas & Target Cohort Focus

Mount the large Journey Map template on a wall or open it within an online whiteboard canvas. Clearly define the specific adult VET learner cohort or persona your group is targeting (e.g., part-time adult re-skilling students, vocational learners with heavy work obligations, or underrepresented adult demographics)

2

Map Learner Actions Across the Timeline

Instruct the design team to use a single color of sticky notes to map out the explicit, chronological actions the learner must complete across the 5 x-axis columns. Document every task from seeing the initial advertisement (Awareness) and completing paperwork (Enrolment), to logging into the software environment (Week 1), submitting initial assignments (Mid-course), and completing final evaluations (Completion).

3

Layer Emotional Pain Points & User Needs

Shift the team down to the vertical y-axis lines. Using a contrasting sticky-note color, log what the adult learner is thinking and feeling at each step, making sure to call out hidden anxieties, confusion, drops in motivation, or threats to their sense of belonging. Directly beneath those emotional markers, add sticky notes defining what the learner explicitly needs from the institution to stay secure and engaged during that phase.

4

Identify Intervention & Planning Milestones

Review the entire mapped canvas to pinpoint where emotional lows and unmet user needs converge. Use dot-stickers to mark the highest-risk drop-off vectors on the board. Transition the session into a planning frame by brainstorming and documenting specific institutional interventions—such as automated peer-support loops, revamped onboarding check-ins, or modular milestone adjustments—directly beneath the prioritized risk areas.

4. THE TEMPLATE /CANVAS

Learner Lifecycle Stages (X-Axis)	1. Awareness	2. Enrolment	3. Week 1
What the Learner DOES *(Concrete tasks, procedural steps, and operational requirements)*			
Learner FEELS *(Emotional tracking: motivations, hidden anxieties, confusion, or drops in*			
What the Learner NEEDS *(Crucial support pillars, absolute clarifications, and institutional guidance)*			
Institutional PLANNING *(Designed engagement loops, active peer-support networks, and milestones)*			

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