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LEARNER JOURNEY MAPPING WORKSHOP

GROUP

VET design

1. AT A GLANCE

Activity title	*Learner Journey Mapping Workshop — Journey Mapping Classic UX Method*
Format	*Group (In-person activity)*
Duration	*2 Hours (120 Minutes)*
Group size	*6–10 participants*
Challenge	*From Enrolment to Completion (Engaging and retaining adult learners through to certification)*
Setting	*Physical workshop room featuring ample wall space or contiguous movable whiteboards.*
Method / framework	*Classic User Experience (UX) Journey Mapping adapted for Vocational Education and Training (VET)*

2. DESCRIPTION

The Learner Journey Mapping Workshop is a highly collaborative, hands-on professional development exercise designed for VET educators, program designers, and institutional managers. The session focuses directly on the systemic challenge of high adult learner dropout rates, specifically targeting the common phenomenon where students register with high motivation but disappear within the first three weeks of the track.
During the workshop, the group physically co-creates an expansive, multi-layered visual timeline across a wall, representing the holistic path of a typical adult learner. The timeline is divided into five core stages: Awareness, Enrolment, Week 1, Mid-course, and Completion. Instead of relying on rigid administrative assumptions, the group adopts a user-centered design-thinking approach to trace the learner's steps. By mapping the concrete operational reality against what the user experiences, feels, and needs on the vertical grid axis, the participants systematically isolate hidden drop-off triggers and structural pain points. The collective visual artifact serves as a diagnostic foundation, enabling the team to substitute reactive troubleshooting with intentional engagement loops and proactive early-intervention strategies.

2.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the conclusion of this facilitated group workshop, participating VET professionals will be able to:

- Construct a complete, contextualized learner journey map for an adult VET cohort split across five distinct lifecycle phases.
- Isolate specific emotional pain points and attrition risks that manifest during critical onboarding and mid-course windows.
- Apply human-centered design-thinking empathy concepts directly to diagnose institutional retention gaps.
- Produce documented, visual intervention blueprints to deploy targeted engagement loops and peer-support mechanisms back in their local organizations.



- Diversify the Mapping Ecosystem: Assemble a cross-functional group of participants that includes front-line educators, admissions staff, study coordinators, and even a student representative if possible. A multi-departmental perspective ensures that both administrative friction and classroom-level disengagement are fully mapped out.
- Rely on Data over Speculation: Instruct participants to base their sticky-note logs on genuine historical observations, student surveys, or past dropout pattern summaries rather than pure speculation or idealized paths.
- Focus Intensely on the Gaps: Pay special attention to the transition zones—such as the spaces between Enrolment and Week 1, or between Week 1 and Week 3. These structural gaps are where adult learners facing practical constraints or low sense of belonging are most likely to drop out quietly.

3. PREPERATION

Grid Setup: The facilitator prepares the physical workshop environment by hanging a large sheet of brown butcher paper across the main wall or joining multiple whiteboards together.

Axis Grid Formatting: Draw the primary horizontal x-axis and segment it into five distinct columns labeled: 1. Awareness, 2. Enrolment, 3. Week 1, 4. Mid-course, and 5. Completion. Next, map out the vertical y-axis by drawing distinct horizontal swimlanes labeled: What the learner DOES, What the learner FEELS (Highs/Lows), and What the learner NEEDS.

Data Distillation: Position a small reference table nearby with high-level data summaries regarding the previous cohort's attrition timelines and known practical obstacles to inform the mapping groups.

3.1 MATERIALS NEEDED

- [ ] Roll of large brown butcher paper or extensive contiguous whiteboard surfaces Multi-colored pads of sticky notes (at least three highly contrasting colors per mapping group)
- [ ] Fine-tip black flipchart markers for high-visibility writing
- [ ] Pack of small colored dot-stickers for heat-map voting on drop-off risks
- [ ] Visual copies or printouts of the standard Learner Journey Map Template guidelines
- [ ] Direct physical printouts of anonymous case summaries or dropout reason trend matrices to ground the exercise

4. STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Step	Time	What the facilitator does
1	*15 min.*	*Orientation and Goal Framing: The facilitator welcomes the 6–10 VET professionals and opens the workspace. They frame the parameters of Challenge 5, highlight institutional adult dropout data, and demonstrate how to use the x-axis and y-axis lines on the template canvas*
2	*25 min.*	*Mapping Actions (The "Does" Lane): Participants work collaboratively to populate the horizontal x-axis. Using a single designated color of sticky notes, they map out exactly what an adult learner physically does from their first contact (Awareness), through the registration process (Enrolment), up to their initial experience (Week 1)*
3	*25 min.*	*Emotional Layering (The "Feels" Lane): The group shifts down to the emotional swimlane. Using a second color of sticky notes, participants map out the corresponding emotional journey, explicitly charting friction triggers, psychological drop-offs, anxieties, and moments where motivation dips.*
4	*20 min.*	*Mid-Course Hurdles and Needs Matrix (The "Needs" Lane): Teams map out the Mid-course and Completion phases. Using a third color of sticky notes, they analyze latent user needs and flag behavior indicators—such as missed deadlines or disengagement in class—that surface later in the track*
5	*20 min.*	*Heat-Mapping Drop-Off Risks and Intervention Ideation: The facilitator gives each participant 3 colored dot-stickers. Participants review the completed visual wall and place dots on the grid points that present the most critical drop-off risks. The group then brainstorms specific engagement loops and peer-support solutions for those target risk zones.*
6	*15 min.*	*Synthesis and Local Action Commitments: Participants finalize the workflow and review the entire map. Each professional records the prioritized intervention points on their personal sheets, specifying how they will modify early-warning checks and assessment structures within their home institutions*

5. DEBRIEF QUESTIONS



- When looking at the completed visual matrix, what specific friction points between Enrolment and Week 1 surprised the group the most regarding the adult learner's emotional reality?
- How can our organization systematically transform the identified "Needs" markers into automated early-warning checklist items that teachers execute at week 2 and week 6?
- In what ways do the practical life circumstances of adult VET learners disrupt traditional, rigid assessment pathways, and how can we design milestones that make progress feel immediate?
- What specific structural change can we introduce to our local onboarding process next month to actively foster a stronger sense of peer belonging right from day one?

5.1 KOLB EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

Concrete experience	*Participants work directly in a physical room to map an adult learner's step-by-step timeline on a wall grid covering five major lifecycles.*
Reflective observation	*The group conducts a structured visual review of the entire wall map to observe emotional trends, map drop-off risks, and pinpoint exactly where student motivation falters.*
Abstract conceptualisation	*Participants analyze localized student pain points to identify systemic retention barriers, categorizing them into broader concepts of life circumstances, motivation, and structural fit.*
Active experimentation	*Professionals translate the prioritized grid intervention points into targeted operational changes, such as revised feedback loops and peer networks, to implement within their VET courses.*

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