Hello there, and welcome to Changes in Adult Learning in the Digital Age. My name is Gino Sangiuliano, and in this lesson, we will examine the many aspects related to learning in the digital age, including globalization, knowledge society, and technology in e-learning. There’s a lot to get to, so let’s get started.

What does a garbage disposal have to do with online learning? Everything. We were in the process of replacing a sink, so I had to remove the garbage disposal. Believe me when I tell you that I’m pretty handy. I fix things, I know my tools, and I’m pretty logical. I’m not very patient, however. So five minutes of struggling at getting this thing off felt like hours. I twisted, I unscrewed, I tapped. Nothing worked.

As I lay under the sink, tired and frustrated, my 13-year-old son calmly walked up to me, knelt down, held out an iPad and said, watch this. It was a two minute video on YouTube explaining and showing how to remove a garbage disposal. There was a little latch on the backside that needed to be disengaged. Once that was done, it twisted right off. It struck me funny that a teenager immediately thought of looking online for help, and I didn’t.

When it comes to learning, we’re extremely fortunate to live in the digital age, where we have easy and quick access to information and knowledge. We don’t even think twice anymore when it comes to things like directions, phone numbers, or even trivial information like who starred in that movie, or what was so and so’s batting average. This shift has had a profound impact on the facilitation of adult learning. It is timely, pertinent, and much more self-directed.

Educator and researcher Peter Jarvis identifies certain elements that are shaping adult learning today. They are globalization, the knowledge society, technology, and demographic changes. These topics can overlap, and are often referenced together. Let’s take a look at each one.

Globalization is defined as the movement of people, ideas, goods, and services across national borders. This is not a new idea. However, it has dramatically changed over the past generation. It has become much more about the speed and intensity of that movement.

Knowledge society is sometimes referred to as the knowledge economy. The knowledge society is more complex than just information society, because it is a combination of information and data that we are inundated with today. The demand to keep up with information is nearly impossible. Researchers estimate that information doubles every two years, if not sooner.

Change is happening, and it’s happening fast, which is why in today’s world is important for individuals to continue learning beyond the first 20 or 30 years of their life. As educators, we need to prepare our students for jobs that
don't exist yet.

And what sustains globalization and the knowledge society? Well, technology does. Technology has and continues to change how adults learn, both informally and formally. I learned how to remove that garbage disposal from watching a YouTube video, but I have also learned about standards based instruction from an online course. The ability to access information at our fingertips, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, has been a game changer.

Our society is connected to devices and plugged in. In 2012, the US Census Bureau stated that 80% of households access the internet either at home or via a mobile device, and that number is steadily rising. As a result of this increase comes a greater demand for e-learning, which we will discuss shortly. In the near future, the aging population of the world will outnumber that of children for the first time in history. This is yet another reason to take a closer look at adult learning theories now.

Teaching is changing. Terms like blended learning, online classrooms, flipping lessons did not exist five years ago. These changes have occurred because of the way society learns in the digital age. Today's adults have the ability to connect with others and the world around them with things like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, texting, and email, for example.

The following statement may make some teachers uncomfortable. We can no longer assume that we know more about some topics than our students do I find this incredibly exciting. Our students have so much to offer in the way of knowledge that will benefit us, the teachers, as well as their peers. Our practices need to capitalize on this notion. They no longer need to just look at us for information and knowledge. The constant access empowers them to learn as we facilitate that learning.

Now that digital access has become so accessible, there is much higher demand for e-learning in higher education. Not all e-learning is the same, however. There are many variations. There are full online courses, or hybrid and blended courses. Here are some models.

Face to face driver. In this model, the teacher still leads the learning and defines the curriculum, however, integrates technology use in the classroom.

Rotation. Here, students are provided with a schedule that requires them to move between an online course and their traditional course.

Flex. In this model, the online course provides students with the majority of their instruction. But the students also have to access a teacher at the traditional brick and mortar school for tutoring and support.

Online Lab. Students take classes in an online course, but they do so in a traditional school setting. You
sometimes see this happen in high schools that are short staffed.

Self-Blend. In this model, students supplement traditional school courses with online courses that they choose.

And finally, Online Driver. Here, students work from home with an online course and typically have in person check ins with someone from the traditional school.

E-learning and traditional learning have some differences. For instance, from an instructor's point of view, e-learning opens up the possibility for asynchronous teaching and learning. E-learning is not defined by seat time. It can be done wherever, whenever, and for however long it takes. E-learning can be tailored to fit everyone schedule and learning style, in order to meet the student's needs and goals.

The majority of e-learning still continues to remain mostly informal and outside of the traditional educational context, but that's quickly changing. The continuing evolution of technology is now making lifelong learning a reality with adults.

For adult learners in the field of education, the planning, development, and participation of professional development have long been a topic of conversation. With over 20 years experience behind me, I have heard it all. Why do we have to learn this? This is a waste of time. We did this already. They can expect us to do that. Why do I have to be here?

Today's educator can have far more autonomy when it comes to their professional development. It can be completed online, on their schedule, about the topics that they want to learn more about. By focusing on the use of online tools for teaching and learning, we can be more effective and more efficient. I will leave you with this example of how online learning has become part of professional development for the teachers that I work with.

Our state recently began administering the PARCC Assessment. It was a big change from the previous pencil paper testing that was taking place. We held a few meanings to cover the logistics. However, in terms of teachers learning about how to be test administrators, that was done by video tutorials, online practices, and links to PowerPoints. For some teachers, this was a new way of learning.

So it's time to go ahead and summarize what we covered in this lesson. We began by looking at how learning has changed in the digital age, and the impact that globalization, knowledge society, technology, and demographic changes has had on adult learning. Then we shifted to teaching in today's world, and the many models of e-learning. Finally, we talked about how professional development has changed in the digital age.

Here's today's food for thought. By participating in this lesson, you're engaging in an online learning experience. So how's it going? Are you comfortable with learning this way?
As you reflect on how this information can be applied, you might want to explore the additional resources section that come with this video presentation. This is where you'll find links to resources chosen to help you deepen your learning, and explore ways to apply your newly acquired skill sets.

Thanks so much for watching. We'll see you next time.