

From Zoomers to Boomers: Supporting the Modern Adult Learner in the Age of AI

2025 October 21

#Beyondthebuzzword



Agenda

- Welcome & Introduction (10 min)
- Research & Theoretical Foundations (10 min)
- Understanding Modern Adult Learners (15 min)
- Implications for Practice (15 min)
- Q&A and Survey invitation (10 min)





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Beyond the Buzzword: Zoomers to Boomers

Who is here?



Generation	Birth Years	Nickname
1. Silent Generation	1928-1945	Traditionalists
2. Baby Boomers	1946-1964	Boomers
3. Generation X	1965-1980	Gen X
4. Millennials	1981-1996	Gen Next (Zillennials)
5. Generation Z	1997-2012	Zoomers
6. Generation Alpha	2013-2025	Alphas



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Beyond the Buzzword

Zoomers to Boomers



Let's visit the “way back” machine...

What equipment or technology do you remember being used to facilitate your learning?



Andragogy

(Knowles et al., 2025)

- 1. Need to know**
- 2. Learner's self-concept**
- 3. Role of the learners' experiences**
- 4. Readiness to learn**
- 5. Orientation to learning**
- 6. Motivation**



Andragogy

(Knowles et al., 2025)

1. Need to know
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6. Motivation

The Journey of the Modern Adult Learner



Andragogy

(Knowles et al., 2025)

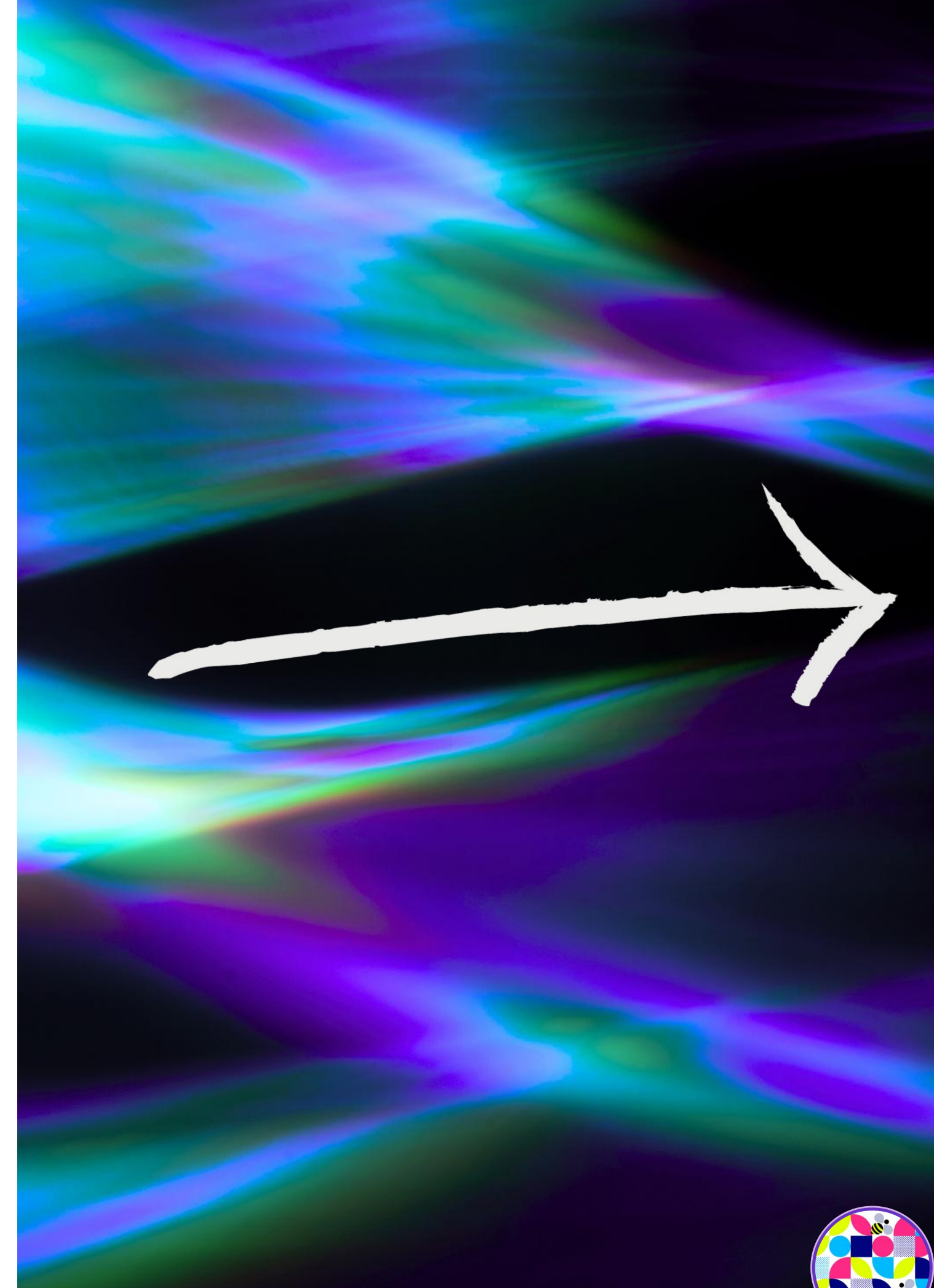
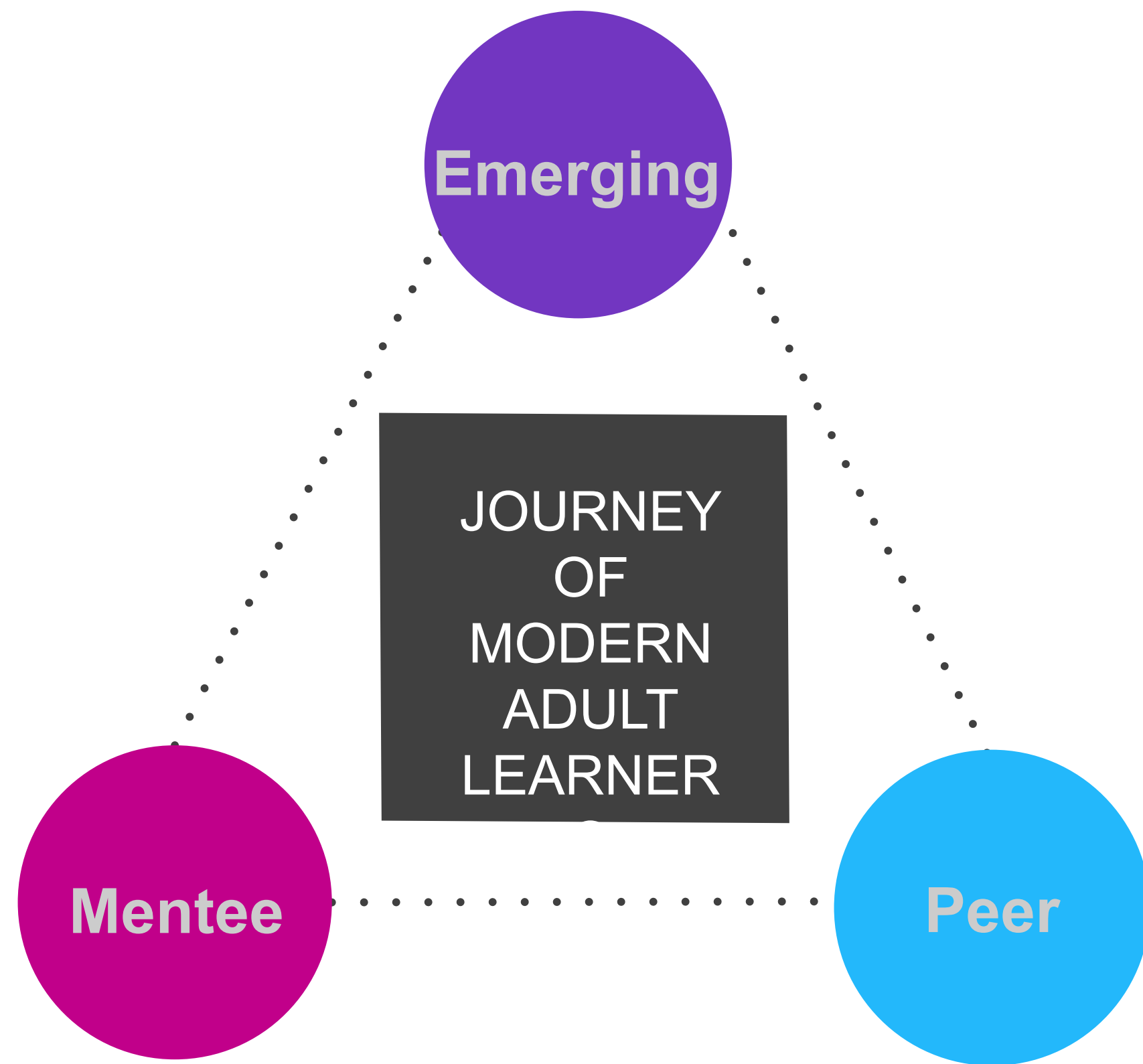
1. Need to know
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The Journey of the Modern Adult Learner



Relational
Levels:
Emerging,
Mentee,
Peer





EMP Model:

Understanding Today's Adult Learners

	<u>E</u>merging Adults	<u>M</u>entee Adults	<u>P</u>eer Adults
Higher Education	18-25 year olds; traditional undergrads;	Grad Asst., Assistant Professor, Content Expert	Associate/full professor Content expert
K12 Settings	Student teacher, new teacher, staff initial certificates	Tenured teacher, new administrators, professional certificates	Administrators, Mentor teachers, coaches
Workforce	New hires, interns	Mid-career, supervisors	C-suite, experienced veterans in industry



Defining the Role of a Facilitator

- Educators
- Professors
- Coaches
- Instructional designers
- Professional development experts
- Faculty developers
- Technologists
- Corporate trainers
- Training & development



How do you connect to the role of a facilitator?



Emerging

How do we facilitate emerging adult learners?

- Beginning of their academic or professional journey
- Actively building foundational knowledge, skills, and confidence
- Typically in their first four years within an organization/workforce
- **Often representing Generation Z (1997-2012)**
- Limited content or career-specific expertise (or company culture)
- Opportunities for experiential learning that connect theory to real-world application

**18-25 year olds;
traditional undergrads;**

**Student teacher, new
teacher, staff
initial provisional
certificates**

New hires, interns



Mentee

How do we facilitate mentee adult learners?

- Mid-career individuals who possess established foundational knowledge and skills
- Continue to seek growth through mentorship, collaboration, and advanced professional development
- Five to fifteen years of workplace experience
- **Usually representing Millennials (1981-1996) and sometimes Generation X (1965-1980)**
- Some knowledge but need support

**Grad Asst., Assistant
Professor, Content
Expert**

**Tenured teacher, new
administrators,
professional
certificates**

Mid-career, supervisors





Peer

How do we facilitate peer adult learners?

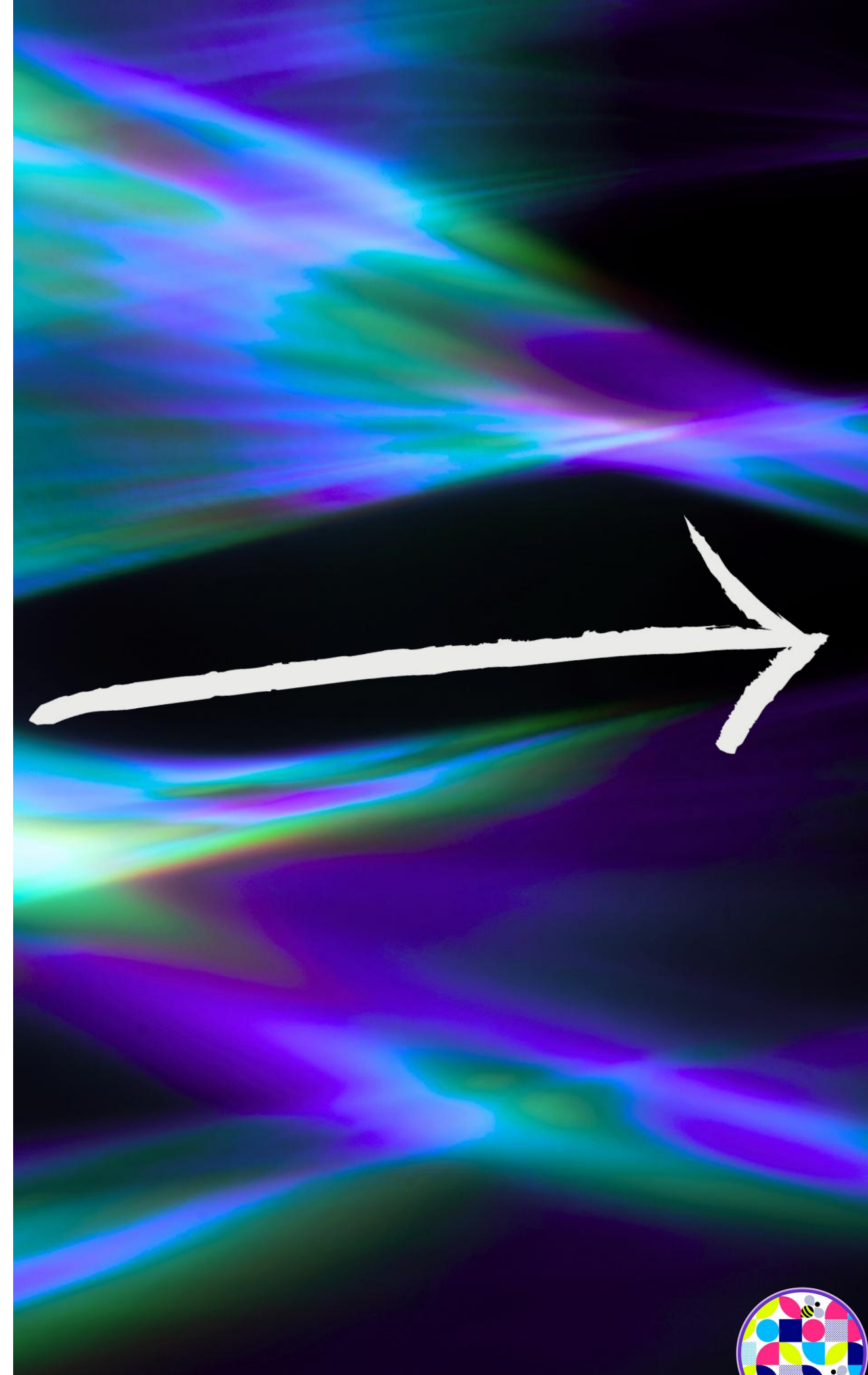
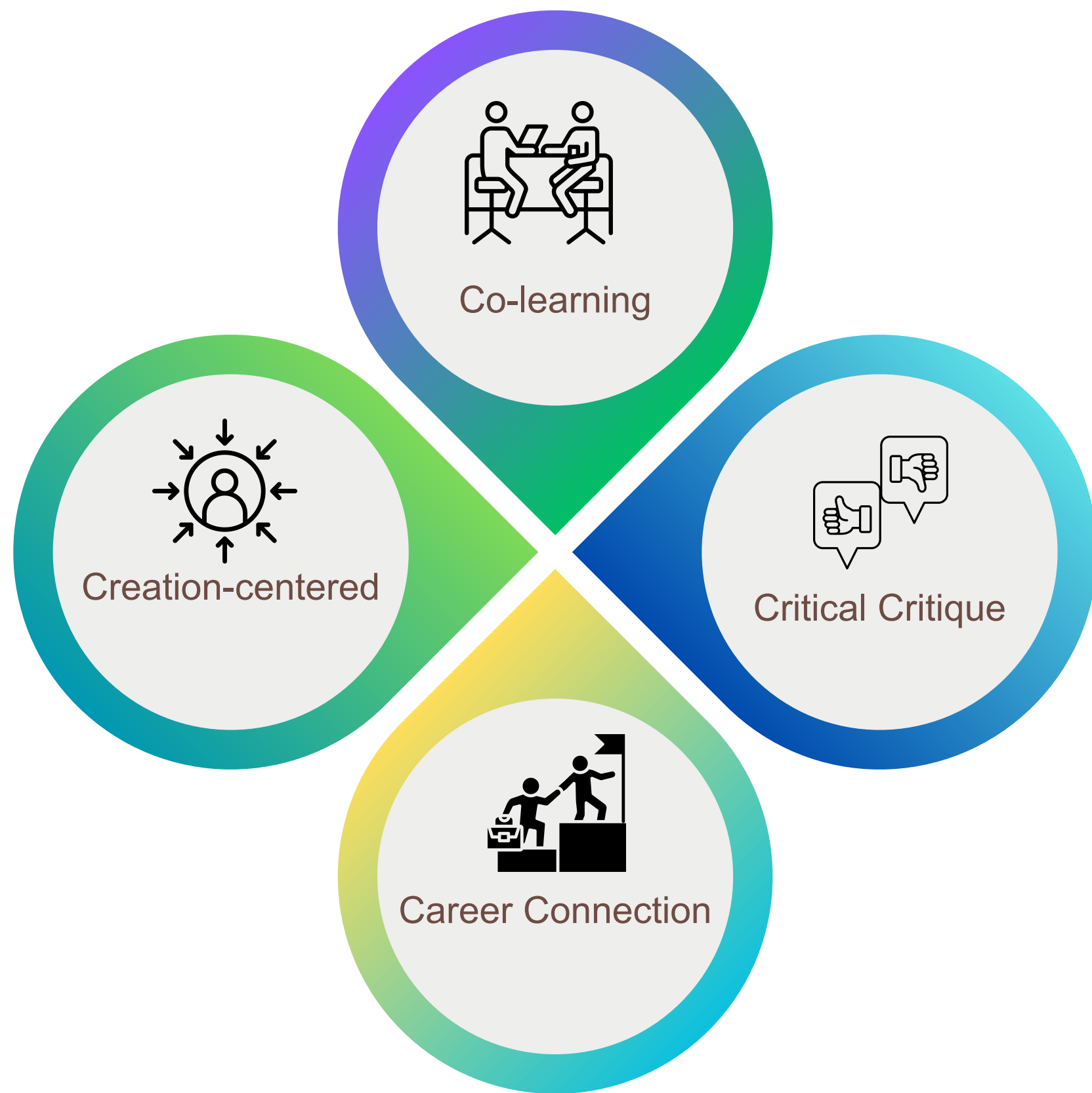
- Experienced professionals (16+ years)
- Confident leadership as mentors, coaches, administrators, tenured faculty or teachers, veteran staff, department heads, supervisors, directors, corporate training managers, or workforce developers.
- **Usually Generation X (1965-1980), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), or the Silent Generation (1928-1945)**
- Thrive in collaborative spaces where their knowledge is valued, their insights can shape collective practice.
- Grow through reciprocal learning and reflective dialogue.

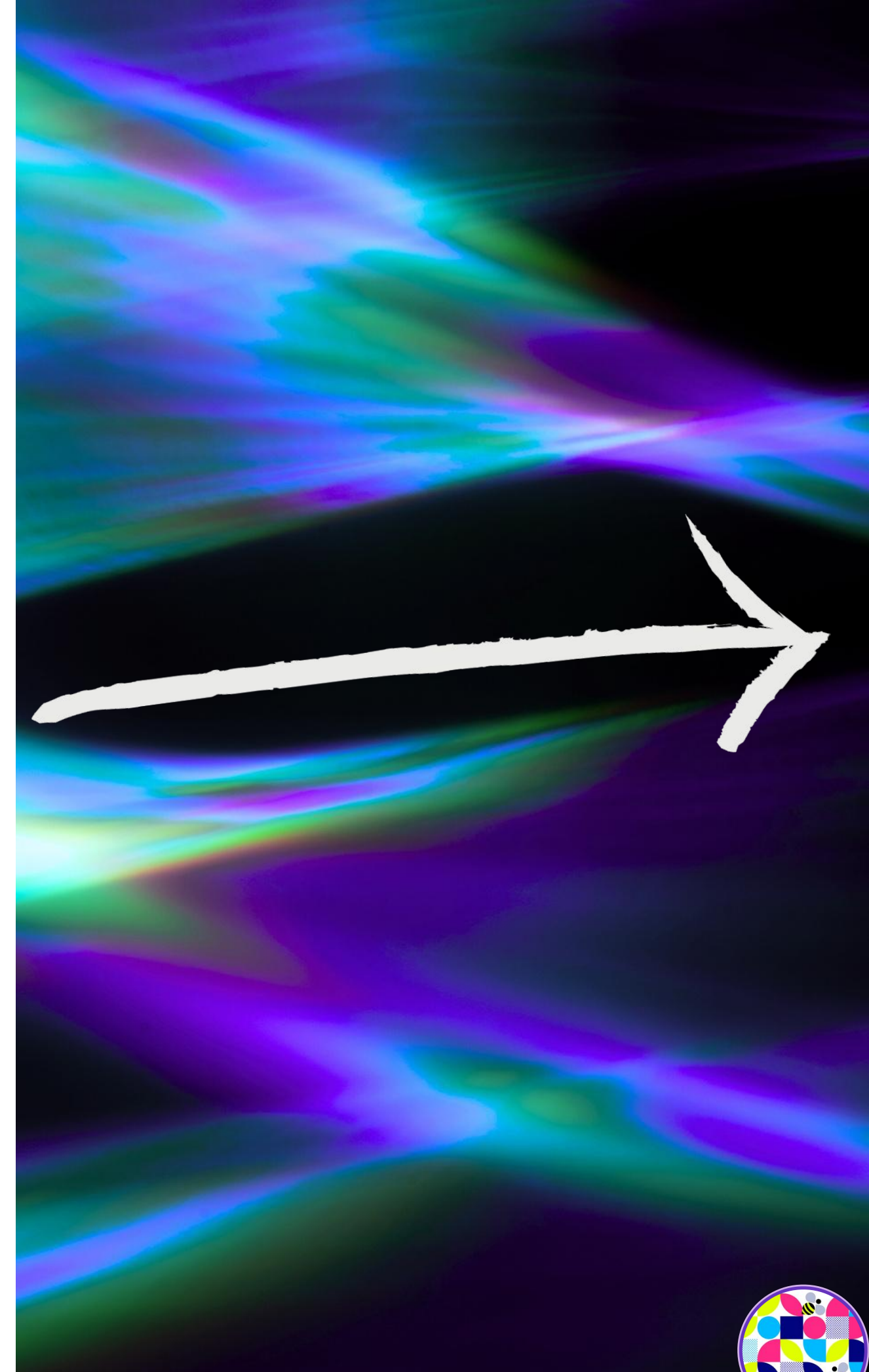
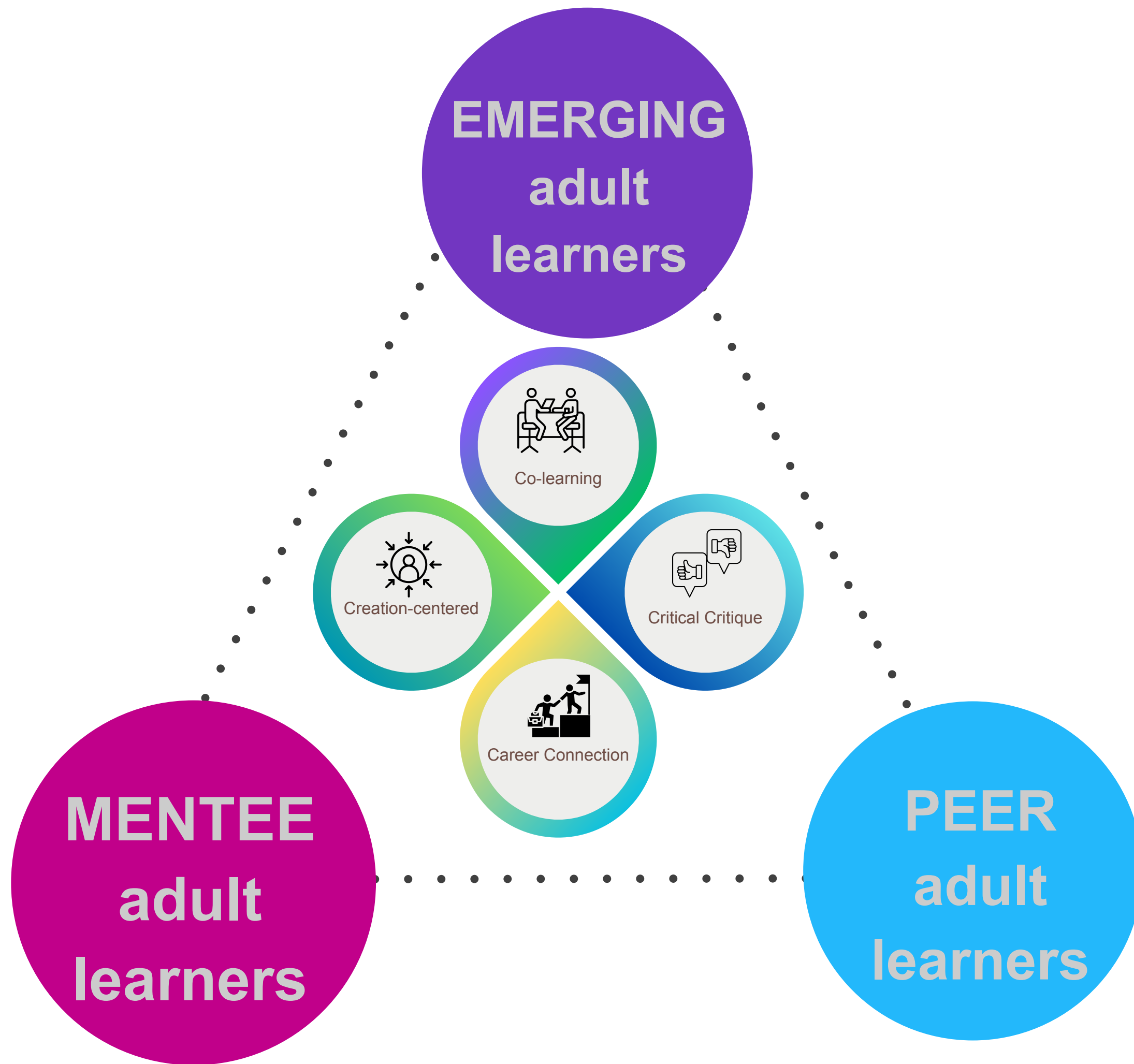
**Associate/full professor
Content expert**

**Administrators, Mentor
teachers, coaches**

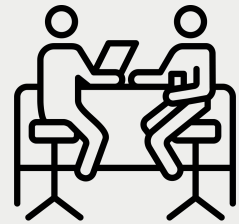
**C-suite, experienced
veterans in industry**





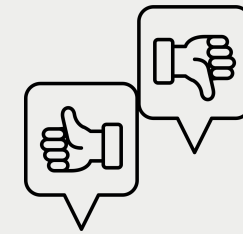


Definitions: 4 Cs Framing for EMP Model



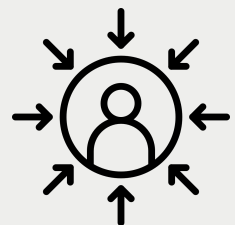
Co-learning

- Collaborative approach
- Facilitators & learners engage in mutual growth
- Shared responsibility, open to new perspectives
- Value of learning from one another



Critical Critique

- Analyze, question, and evaluate information and output
- Develop process to recognize assumptions, errors, and biases
- Engage in constructive feedback



Creation-centered

- Innovative, active, hands-on experiences
- Foster originality, problem-solving, and personal expression
- Prioritizes making, designing, and building as central to the learning process



Career Connection

- Integration of authentic learning with professional goals
- Understand how learner skills, interests, and experiences align with current and future workforce opportunities
- Goal Setting in alignment with learning

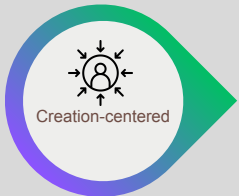


Implications for Practice (EMP>4Cs>AI)

PROFILES:	<u>E</u> merging Adult Learner	<u>M</u> entee Adult Learner	<u>P</u> eer Adult Learner
 Co-learn	Guide learners to use a new AI tool, such as Microsoft Designer , to build their own personal avatar as an introductory activity.	Explore, while providing light guidance, the wide variety of AI generators within a tool such as Magic SchoolAI . Both facilitator and learner can explore, experiment, and share out best use cases.	Investigate a new AI tool collaboratively such as LearnLM - chat that identifies the learning science principles evident in the output



Implications for Practice (EMP>4Cs>AI)

PROFILES:	<u>E</u> merging Adult Learner	<u>M</u> entee Adult Learner	<u>P</u> eer Adult Learner
 Creation Centered	Create assessments that have learners create using AI tools, such as a presentation in Gamma or an infographic in NapkinAI	Demonstrate the use of NotebookLM to help learners decipher difficult scholarly, peer-reviewed sources by creating FAQs or video or audio overviews	Collaborate with a peer teaching the same course to create engaging activities using Canva Code .



Implications for Practice ($EMP > 4Cs > AI$)

PROFILES	<u>E</u> merging Adult Learner	<u>M</u> entee Adult Learner	<u>P</u> eer Adult Learner
 Critical Critique	Instruct using real-world examples of bias and hallucinations in outputs in AI models such as ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, Gemini, Copilot, Grok.	Create custom AI apps using Playlab or Boodlebox with learners focusing on guardrails and AI models. Test apps by changing the guardrails and the AI model that powers the app to determine the strengths and weaknesses of various AI models.	Gather feedback about teaching style using MirrorTalk - verbal reflections to improve your teaching
	Utilize tools like the FLUF Test or the Co-learning with AI Roadmap		

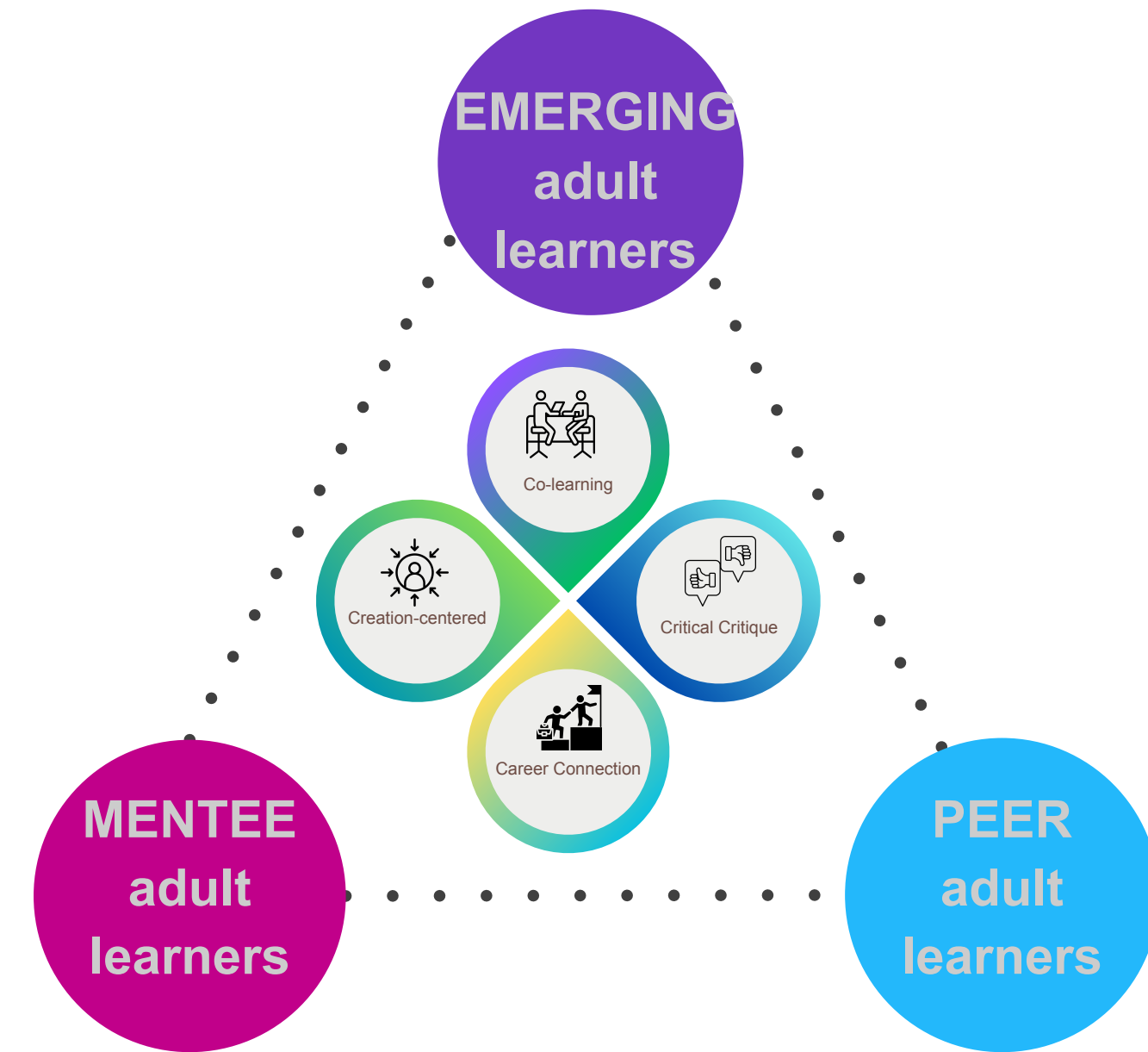


Implications for Practice (EMP>4Cs>AI)

PROFILES	<u>E</u> merging Adult Learner	<u>M</u> entee Adult Learner	<u>P</u> eer Adult Learner
 Career Connection	Prompt ChatGPT to create, update, or enhance a resume and cover letter for a specific job posting; Complete micro-learning (e.g.,AI Google Career essentials) to efficiently utilize AI in different sectors.	Use Linkedin Premium AI-powered experience for personalized job search. Quinnia and Google Interview	Take a free course to help identify how to transform businesses using AI, such as Generative AI Leader Google Cloud course



Implications for your Practice: EMP Model & Generative Technology



- How do we, as facilitators of learning, co-learn with AI during all stages of instruction?
- How do our learners “learn” how to ethically and effectively use AI in their growth?
- How do we think about using AI in connection with our own careers and for future pathways?
- How can we model this critical critique for our learners?
- How can our learners ethically use AI to demonstrate creativity and innovation in their learning?



How can you leverage the EMP
Model to enhance adult
education in the era of AI?

Questions?



THANK YOU

Survey



Next Webinar: November 11
Facilitating AI Competency Development for
Adult Learners in Higher Education

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References

Boutelier, S., Craig, M., & Parker, J. (2025, April 28). Contemporary Andragogy: Modern Adult Learners. The Teaching Professor.

Boutelier, S., Craig, M., & Parker, J. (September 11, 2025). Four C's for Emerging Adult Learners (Zoomers) in AI Learning Spaces. Online Learning Consortium.

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Knowles, M.S., Holton, E.F., Robinson, P.A., & Caraccioli, C. (2025). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development, 10th ed.* Routledge.

Parker, J. (2023). The FLUF Test: Better prompts and critical evaluation of GenAI.
<https://www.drjenniferparker.com/fluf-test-for-artificial-intelligence.html>

Microsoft. (2025). Images generated by Copilot [AI-generated image]. <https://copilot.microsoft.com>.



Facilitator Notes

Jenn

<https://www.drjenniferparker.com/fluf-test-for-artificial-intelligence.html>

https://docs.google.com/document/d/14nWw9DUslClwXz0UeDn_eUmyOorr_H0/edit?usp=sharing&oid=114777895029122273519&rtpof=true&sd=true

https://www.canva.com/design/DAFyFN0cSvg/XeOJT09VC_bU4Xl2zh3gXw/view?utm_content=DAFyFN0cSvg&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=editor

<https://grow.google/certificates/interview-warmup/>

Madeline - Slide 17

NapkinAI - <https://www.napkin.ai/blog/introducing-napkin/>

Example of NapkinAI - <https://app.napkin.ai/page/CgoiCHByb2Qtb25lEiwKBFBhZ2UaJGFmYjVhM2FjLWYyMWUtNDcwMy04MWU4LWVhNjYThkODBiZA?s=1>

Microsoft Designer - LEGO Minifigure Avatar - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RA8tZsWxcvfQpZkfPjaDPU6thxzieKwz/view?usp=sharing>