The Adult Learner

Skill Standards: D. Provide Student Instructions

Key Activities:
D1: Prepare and/or gather current instructional materials/equipment.
D2: Provide individual and group instruction.
D3: Initiate, develop and implement student assessments.
D4: Modify instructional material and methods based on student and industry assessments and feedback.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
To effectively instruct adults, it is essential that the instructor has a basic understanding of the adult learner. By understanding the adult learner and how one learns, the instructor can teach more effectively and can motivate and improve retention rates with students. In this course, instructor-learners will identify learning principles and adult characteristics, learning styles, demographics and motivation. They will also learn to modify curriculum and instruction based on the needs of the adult learners in their classroom.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: The instructor-learner will:
• Identify characteristics of adult learners to design effective instruction.
• Identify the similarities and differences of adult and younger learners.
• Identify, define, and discuss concepts of learning styles in relation to adult learner needs in the classroom.
• Align, apply, and coordinate adult learner principles to lesson plans and instructional activities to meet the needs of diverse adult learners.
• Identify and demonstrate various strategies/teaching techniques that can engage adult learners in their educational process.

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT:
• Lessons and instructional delivery methods are designed to meet the needs of diverse adult learners.
• Benchmarks have been established to ascertain student progress so that adult learners will be able to identify where they are in the educational process.
• Adult learners report that the instructional climate and materials are appropriate and support their learning.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:
• Group and individual instruction of adults accurately and effectively addresses the cognitive, psychomotor and cognitive domains of adult learning.
• Adult students are effectively oriented to the learning task, including outcomes and assessments.
• Instruction for adult students begins where the students’ prior and related skills and abilities lie.
• Learning is facilitated with clear and effective presentations, demonstrations and active learner involvement.
- Instruction promotes the application, transfer and retention of learning.
- Student questions and discussions are effectively acknowledged, guided and integrated into the learning process in a positive way.
- Students are encouraged to mentor other students when appropriate.
- Materials are appropriate for diverse learners and reflect diversity.
- Students are provided with regular feedback so that they can monitor their own progress against set benchmarks.
- Students are encouraged to take learning risks and report feeling supported in their risk taking.

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:** The instructor-learner will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of group and individual instruction models based on adult learning principles and the ability to adapt strategies to diverse adult learners.
- Demonstrate knowledge of learning tasks, outcomes, and assessments, making sure that they are clear and relevant to the adult student's needs.
- Demonstrate the ability to connect the students’ prior and related skills and abilities to new information.
- Develop instructional opportunities for students to practice, perform and receive feedback on skills.
- Integrate questions from students into the learning process.
- Provide a variety of activities to adult learners that give the adult student the opportunity to choose a meaningful activity and be self-directed.
- Modify curriculum based on the needs of adult learners.

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<tr>
<th>Essential Content</th>
<th>Discussion Topics and Key Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Psychological and Mental Development</td>
<td>Adults as Learners (K. Patricia Cross)</td>
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<td>Post-Secondary Work Education by Department of Workforce Education and Development, Southern Illinois University.</td>
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<td>Erik Erickson’s Life Stages in A Conversation with Erik Erickson</td>
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<td>“The Course of Adult Intellectual Development” by K. Warner Schaie</td>
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<td>Who are Adult Learners?</td>
<td>Diverse in age, experience, skill</td>
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<td>Diverse in needs</td>
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<td>What things to consider when working with Adult Learners in the workplace</td>
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<td>Adult Women In Community Colleges by Janene White</td>
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<td>Adult Development Theories by Marti Russell (attached)</td>
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<td>Generalizations of Adult Learners by Marti Russell (attached)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Characteristics of Adult Learners</td>
<td>Age 18 to 60 in same class</td>
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<td>Many different strengths and weaknesses</td>
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<td>Differences in work ethic</td>
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<td>Varying familiarization with technology</td>
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<td>Differences in life experiences</td>
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<td>Family and personal issues such as transportation, childcare, domestic violence and income that impact learning</td>
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<td>Issues with their own children</td>
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<td>Fear of failing (now a new career)</td>
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<td>Need to know the relevance of what they are learning: How will this make me money, get me a good job?</td>
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<td>Need for comprehensive education whereby theory is put into actual hands-on practice</td>
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<td>Essential Content</td>
<td>Discussion Topics and Key Points</td>
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| Characteristics of Adult Learners (cont.) | • Sometimes fearful of new ways of learning such as group work, technology, getting verbal feedback, peer critiques, etc.  
• Take some time in adapting to ungraded assignments and activities  
• Often assist each other for schoolwork and other issues such as carpooling, planning social events, babysitting, etc.  
• Often a sense of purpose  
• Cultural diversity may impact social and gender relationships in the classroom.  
• Balancing classroom friendships with professional relationships  
• Awareness of sexual harassment and diversity issues |
| Domains of Learning as Applied to Adults | • Domains help to identify the learning task and performance measures and learning activities:  
  • Cognitive  
  • Affective  
  • Psychomotor |
| Andragogy vs. Pedagogy: Malcolm Knowles | • Need to apply new knowledge/skill  
• Independent learner vs. dependent learner  
• Learners have valuable experience vs. teacher’s valuable experience  
• Problem-centered learning vs. subject-centered learning  
• Internal-motivation vs. external motivation  
• Collaborative design vs. authoritative  
• Mutual negotiation and diagnosis vs. teacher imposed  
• See relevant websites. |
| Learner Preferences/ Styles | • Myers-Briggs, Finding your Learning Type from People Types and Tiger Stripes by Gordon Lawrence  
• Kolb (See relevant websites.)  
• “Situational Instruction: A strategy for facilitating the learning process” by Douglas H. Smith  
• “Helping Adult Learners Develop Their Higher Order Thinking Skills” cycling through learning activities  
• The Learning Process by Rita Smilkstein  
• Right Brain/Left Brain  
• Adult Learning: What do We Know for Sure - Adapted from Zemke (attached)  
• Thirty-Three World-Class Competencies - Adapted from Weinstein (attached)  
• Tested Techniques for Teaching Adults - Adapted from Peter Murk (attached)  
• 30 Things You’ve Gotta Know - Adapted from Zemke (attached)  
• 15 Earmarks of Cutting Edge Adult Learner Programs by Cal Crowe (attached)  
• Principles of Adult Learning summary from Brookfield (attached)  
• “Learning Principles Applicable to Adults”  
• Teaching Diverse Learners by Navone and Pund (attached)  
• Techniques: Teaching Adults More Effectively by Robert Wendell (attached) |
| Motivation | • Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (See relevant websites.)  
• May determine success more than scholastic ability  
• Enthusiasm  
• Expectations  
• Relevant instruction and feedback  
• Consistency  
• Motivate Your Students by Mike Buschmohle (attached)  
• Motivation by Marti Russell (attached)  
• Motivation by Richard Sullivan and Jerry L. Wircenski (attached)  
• 20 Ways to Motivate Trainees by Dean Spitzer (attached) |
SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

- **How We Learn:** Think of something you do well. Think of your first experience with this. Jot down all of the steps taking you from that first point to the present. (individually) As a group, determine what steps were common to all in this process.
- **Students take Rossman Adult Learning Inventory** to challenge them on the characteristics of adult learners. Please refer to Additional Resources below.
- **Read:** *Why can't I get this Right* by Stephen Brookfield.
- **Take a Personality Assessment:** Gardner’s 7 intelligences, Myers Briggs, Kolb, or any other assessment of learning style, personality assessment, or overall tendency to interpret the outside world.
- **Teach one thing only by lecture, group discussion, small group, demonstration and discuss the pro’s and con’s of each strategy.**
- **Develop a list of different learning activities that are most appropriate to adult learners.**
- **Have the class come up with a list of characteristics of adult learners. Compare this list to the research.**
- **Have instructor-learners do a self-analysis of their preferred learning style and to identify the ways that they learn best.**
- **Have the class do a chart that compares and contrasts the similarities and differences between adult and child learners.**
- **Have the adults in the class by groups design an instructional activity for a particular topic. Each group would design their activity to a domain of learning. Thus, one group would design a lesson or activity involving the psychomotor domain, another the cognitive, etc.**
- **Discuss methods of instruction, Bloom’s Taxonomy, and learning activities that appeal to all three domains of learning.**

SUPPORT MATERIAL:
The following materials are attached at the end of the course:

- Things to Consider when Working with Adult Learners in the Workplace by Cal Crow
- Different Settings and Different Learners by Susie A. Navone
- The Evolution of Learners
- Adult Development Theories by Marti Russell
- Getting in Touch with Our Learners by Susie Navone
- Generalizations of Adults Learners by Marti Russell
- Domains of Learning
- Learning and Communication by Cal Crow
- What We Know About Adult Learning by Susie A. Navone
- Thirty-Three World-Class Competencies
- Tested Techniques for Teaching Adults
- 30 Things You’ve Gotta Know by Susie A. Navone
- 15 Earmarks of Cutting Edge Adult Learner Programs by Cal Crow
- How Does One Approach Teaching Diverse Adult Learners? by Navone and Pund
- Principles of Adult Learning summary from Brookfield
- Learning Principles Applicable to Adults
- Motivation by Trident Training Center U.S. Navy training outline
- 20 Ways to Motivate Trainees by Dean Spitzer
PRIMARY TEXTS/RESOURCES:

- People Types and Tiger Stripes by Gordon Lawrence 1993. This is a book that uses the Myers Briggs results to emphasize how type affects teaching and learning. The book provides practical applications to help teachers consider motivation and type in planning their instruction.

ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES:

- “Adult Development Theories” - Adapted by Marti Russell, 1990, from Teaching Adults in Extension, Education Development by Alan Rogers.
- “Generalizations of Adult Learners” - Adapted by Marti Russell, 1990, from Teaching Adults in Extension by Alan Rogers.
- What We Know About Adult Learning - Adapted by Susie A. Navone, 2001 from “Adult Learning: What Do We Know for Sure? by Ron and Susan Zemke as cited in Adult Learning in Your Classroom, 3rd ed.
- “What You Need to Know About Teaching Adults” - Adapted by Susie A. Navone, 2001 from Thirty-Three World-Class Competencies by Margot B. Weinstein.
- “Teaching Adults” Adapted by Susie A. Navone, 2001 from Tested Techniques for Teaching Adults by Peter J. Murr.
- “Thirty Ideas You’ve Gotta Know” Adapted by Susie A. Navone, 2001 from 30 Things we Know For Sure About Adult Learning.” By Rom Zemke and Susan Zemke.
- “Motivation” Adapted by Marti Russell, 1990 “Teaching Adults in Extension” by Alan Rogers.
- “Motivate Those Learners” - Adapted by Susie A. Navone from “20 Ways to Motivate Trainees” by Dean R. Spitzer as cited in Adult Learning in Your Classroom, 3rd ed.


WEBSITES:
See also 3 sites listed on page 18.8 in Section #18: Websites and Resources of this guide.

- [http://archon.educ.kent.edu/~nebraska/curric/tim1/artsum.html](http://archon.educ.kent.edu/~nebraska/curric/tim1/artsum.html) Summary of Andragogy
- [http://www.duq.edu/~tomei/tomei/advancedsites.html](http://www.duq.edu/~tomei/tomei/advancedsites.html) A collection of links to web sites for Andragogy, Assessment, learning styles, Adult Learning, etc. A must have and use.
- [http://www.qualifi.com/adult1.htm](http://www.qualifi.com/adult1.htm) Instructional principles for Adult Learners: Learning by Design by D. Woodal. This also contains a learning theory primer.

GLOSSARY:

- Myers-Briggs:
  A psychological exam administered to adults to help identify and define their patterns of behavior which influence how adults learn and process information. There are four dimensions with two preferences in each dimension. There are 16 possible combinations. The preferences are: introvert and extrovert, intuition and sensing, thinking and feeling, and judging and perception.

- Problem-centered learning:
  Adults prefer to take single concepts or theories and apply them to real-life situations. Learning in general needs to be applicable to the adult and relevant to their life experiences.

- Subject-centered learning:
  Subject-centered learning is primarily used with younger learners who are more willing to learn subjects methodically whether or not there is an immediate relevance or use to the learner.
Support Materials for Course 8: The Adult Learner
Things to Consider When Working With Adult Learners in the Workplace
Prepared by Cal Crow, Ph.D., Center for Learning Connections, Highline Community College.

1. Many adults don't trust their own abilities outside the workplace. The idea of performing, of competing and of being judged while operating in unfamiliar territory can be threatening. (Adults do not like to be put in situations where they might be "shown up.")

2. Many adults operate from an industrial way of thinking, in which power was equated with force, strength and a strong back. They are not aware that power is now being equated with information, know-how and a strong mind. They do not understand that more education and training could help them operate from a position of greater power and efficacy.

3. Many adults operate in social milieus where education is not valued. Telling family and friends that one is considering a return to school could result in ridicule and ostracism. (A well-known consultant asked two young, about-to-be-dislocated timber workers if they had thought about returning to school. They responded that they hadn’t considered it because, “College is for nerds.”)

4. Many adults believe their work schedules preclude them from attending school. They are frequently unaware of the variety of courses and time schedules, or of distance learning opportunities offered by many postsecondary institutions.

5. Many adults have had poor school experiences. They could hardly wait to get out. Some left before graduating. Suggesting that they return to such an uncomfortable situation is often intimidating. They see no reason to undergo further embarrassment and humiliation.

6. Many of today’s adults were told as high school students to “find a good job,” because they were not college material. The message stuck. To think of themselves as college students today does not fit with any of their self-perceptions.

7. Our old view of the world resulted in end-point thinking. “I’ve had history. I’ve met my requirements. I’ve completed my education.” (Lifelong learning is a relatively new concept, and still unfamiliar to many working adults.)

8. The idea of human growth and development, or human resource development is not well understood by many adults. (Not too many years ago, the final chapter in developmental psychology textbooks focused on the adult at about age 24!) Rather than being viewed as promoting growth and helping maximize one’s potential, adult learning is often seen as a chore undertaken only to meet someone else's requirements.

9. Because of our emphasis on short-term thinking in this country, many adults have difficulty seeing any long-term payoff for returning to school. And because of the volatility of our international economy, we can offer few guarantees that returning to school will mean more money, more security, etc.

10. Many adults assume that they are “too old” to return to school. They can’t see themselves sitting in a class with 19 year olds. They are not aware that the average age on many campuses is in the 30s.
Different Settings and Different Learners
Adapted by Susie A. Navone from “Effective Teaching in Adult and Higher Education” by Paul Westmeyer, Ed.D.

There are a variety of different settings where adult education occurs. They include:

1. Colleges
   A. Community or Junior Colleges
   B. Four-Year Colleges
   C. Universities
      (1) Undergraduate programs
      (2) Professional schools at the undergraduate level
      (3) Graduate programs
      (4) Post-graduate programs

2. Proprietary Schools

3. Continuing Education Programs
   A. Colleges and Universities
   B. Community Colleges
   C. Professional Schools
   D. Public Schools
   E. Service Centers
   F. Industry/Business
   G. Organizations
   H. Proprietary Schools for Continuing Education

4. Special Programs
   A. Adult Basic Education/Literacy Programs
   B. GED (General Educational Development) Programs
   C. Senior Citizens’ Programs
   D. Other

5. Other: Such as library-centered programs, museum programs, parks and recreation programs, etc.

Just as there are a variety of different learning environments where adults study, the adults also vary in their physical, psychological, emotional, and developmental stages in their lives. An effective adult learning program recognizes that there are common life events for adults but the reaction and effect on each adult is different.
The Evolution of Learners

CHILDREN AS LEARNERS:
• Prefer concrete learning experiences.
• Are dependent.
• Are enthusiastic.
• Become progressively independent.
• Are willing learners. They know that whatever the teacher wants them to do is bound to be good for them.
• As the children mature, they frequently have part-time jobs.

YOUNG COLLEGE-AGE LEARNERS:
• Depend on parents, at least in part, but independent in spirit.
• Are socially oriented.
• Are financially concerned, and frequently have part-time jobs for support while moving toward a bigger goal.
• Desire for a practical education.

OLDER COLLEGE-AGE LEARNERS (BETWEEN AGE 24 AND 40):
• If these students were in college but dropped out to earn a living, and have now returned within a 5-6 year period, they are not much different from their younger peers.
• If these are students attending college for the first time, they are different from their peers. They identify with some social group and with their own family rather than with fellow-students.
• Their work experience, family ties, and parental roles motivate them strongly when they can see the relevance of a class.
• Generally they have come to college in order to learn new job skills.

MIDDLE-AGED LEARNERS:
• May be fearful and hesitant about learning.
• May feel an urgency about getting an education.
• Responsibilities in life are more important than their learning responsibilities.
• Have a rich background of experience and when they can relate this to the classroom they become much more participatory and much more comfortable.
• May feel less fear towards the professor because of a minimal age difference.
• Consider the instructor as the informational authority, but not so in other areas.

RETIREMENT-AGE LEARNERS:
• Are self-confident with respect to learning.
• Are motivated more by intrinsic interest in the content than by its relevance.
• Have wide background experiences to build on.
• Are slower physically and may have faculties impaired.
• Are good at learning problem-solving procedures.
• May require more time and practice to learn.
Adult Development Theories
Compiled and adapted by Marti Russell, 1990, from “Teaching Adults in Extension,”
Education Development by Alan Rogers.

It is an accepted fact that children grow through infancy, childhood, and adolescence into
early adulthood, but how do adults continue to grow?

1. Some theorists see human life development in three stages: a period of growth (up to
approximately 21 or 25 years), followed by a stable period of no growth, then finally, a
period of decline.

2. Some theorists see adulthood as a period of changing concerns or focuses. First, the
adult is focused upon his/her job; followed by a focus upon family; and the final focus
becomes social interests – friends and neighbors. (Future focus, current or “now” focus,
and past focus idea.)

3. Some theorists see adult life evolving through a series of crises points:
   - New job or unemployment
   - Building up a home
   - Marriage, parenthood
   - Moving house
   - Children Leaving Home
   - Death of Parents
   - Death of partners and peers

There is no clear agreement about the development of adults, but it is clear that not all adults
will have the same patterns of change and growth. Therefore, it is important for adult
educators to remember these basic developmental ideas:

- Our learners will be changing, not static
- They will have different concerns from each other and us
- They will have different time perspectives
- They will each be facing different crises points and role adjustments

To be a good adult educator, IT IS CRITICAL TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND AND SHARE THE
LEARNER’S CONCERNS OR FOCUSES.
Getting in Touch with Our Adult Learners
Submitted by Susie Navone, Renton Technical College

When designing course content or even in the midst of an instructional setting, it is critical for adult educators to try to understand and share the learner’s concerns. But HOW DO WE DO IT? Here is a simple set of questions designed to assist us in this process.

When thinking of the adult learners in my setting, I consider the following:
• Age range
• Male/Female ratio
• Educational Level
• Occupations
• Approximate Income Levels
• Interest Levels
• Willingness to work
• Intelligence
• Knowledge of Subject being Present

As a general rule, if your vision of the learners checks out above the 50% level, you’re right on target with course content and instruction. If your vision is less than 50% correct, you will be a more successful instructor if you review and adjust course content and methods.

Generalizations of Adult Learners
Compiled and adapted by Marti Russell, 1990, from “Teaching Adults in Extension” by Alan Rogers.

1. Adult learners are ADULTS and for the most part, they like to have some control over what is learned, how it is learned, and when and where it is learned. They like to be autonomous or self-directed in their learning experiences.

• Ask yourself, what portion of my course reflects this need for autonomy, allows the learners to be in control?

2. Adult learners are still growing. They are very interested in furthering their growth within a self perceived need area. We need to listen to their specific purpose, or needs/goals, for attending our classes, and then make sure our instruction fits into these important knowledge growth areas.

• Ask yourself, how will I see growth in the learners according to their stated needs/goals, as well as my course goals?

3. Adult learners are very busy people with many other roles besides student - worker, spouse, parent, community volunteer, union member. Adult learners tend to be practical learners. They want to achieve their educational goals as quickly as possible, with as little interference with the rest of their roles as possible.

• Ask yourself, is the information presented concisely and are the course goals/requirements compatible to practical usage and application.
4. Adult learners come with a clear set of expectations or intentions for further education based upon their past educational experiences, knowledge, skills, and understandings. Your learners may range from the highly successful honors student to the remedial student who still needs some basic skills work. We must attend to the varying and diverse learning style needs within our adult learner groups.

- Ask yourself, how am I attending to the individual learning style needs of the students, both instructionally and personally?

5. Adult learners arrive in our classes with a variety of life experiences. The wise trainer will find ways to use the many experiences that exist in any group of adults, realizing that the experiences of each group member can serve as a resource to the entire group. Another important reason for attending to learner’s experiences, is that adults tend to view themselves based upon what they have done.

- Ask yourself, how do I utilize the learner’s experiences within the instruction?

Domains of Learning

**COGNITIVE DOMAIN**
- Knowledge: Recall of information
- Comprehension: Interpret information in one’s own words
- Application: Apply knowledge to a new situation
- Synthesis: Bring together parts of knowledge to form a whole and build new relationships for new situations
- Evaluation: Make judgments on the basis of given criteria

**PSYCHOMOTOR DOMAIN**
- Performing
- Manipulating
- Constructing

**AFFECTIVE DOMAIN**
- Receiving: Willing to give attention to an event or activity
- Responding: Willing to react to an event through some form of participation
- Valuing: Willing to accept or reject an event through the expression of a positive or negative attitude
- Organizing: Willing to organize values, determine relationships among values, and accept some values as dominant over others
- Characterizing: Acting consistently in accordance with accepted values
There are many variables involved in the learning process, and many “types” of learners. The more we know about how people learn, the more likely we will be able to engage them in constructive communication. Following are examples of different ways of learning:

**Feeling:** You probably learn best by becoming emotionally involved, and by being able to draw on previous experiences.

**Observing:** You probably learn best by watching someone else, and by having examples to follow.

**Thinking:** You probably learn best by having access to good information, and by being able to “think things over.”

**Performing:** You probably learn best when you are actively involved, and when you have a chance to try things out.

**Abstract-Random:** You probably learn best by interacting and sharing with others, and by using fantasy and imagination.

**Abstract-Sequential:** You probably learn best through intellectual activity, and when you can get lost in your thoughts.

**Concrete-Random:** You probably learn best when you can test and challenge convention and when you can be different from others.

**Concrete-Sequential:** You probably learn best when things are predictable, and when you can work things out “step by step.”

**Sensing:** You probably learn best when you are receiving information through the senses, and when you are on “solid ground.”

**Intuition:** You probably learn best when you can envision possibilities, and when ideas come to you spontaneously.

**Visual:** You probably learn best when you can see or visualize something.

**Auditory:** You probably learn best when you can hear something.

**Kinesthetic:** You probably learn best when you can be physically or emotionally active. Everyone wants to feel competent, confident and connected. By understanding how others view their world, and responding accordingly, we can help increase these “three Cs” immeasurably.
What We Know About Adult Learning
Adapted by Susie A. Navone from “Adult Learning: What Do We Know For Sure?” By Ron Zemke and Susan Zemke.

Based on the work of Malcolm Knowles, four assumptions were made about adult learning or andragogy:

1. Adults tend to be more self-directed as they mature.
2. Adults use their life experiences to build on. They tend to learn more through discussion and problem solving than through passive listening.
3. Adults are aware of specific learning needs that are generated by real-life events.
4. Adults are competency-based learners wanting to apply their new skill or knowledge to their circumstance.

Through looking at more than 300 references including Knowles and Meniam, the Zemke's were able to divide the information into three basic categories: adult learning and motivation, designing curriculum for adults, and working with adults in the classroom. The following are the highlights of their synthesis.

MOTIVATION TO LEARN

- Adults are highly motivated when they need to learn something new or different which makes them very teachable.
- There are also moments when adults are receptive to learning and better able to retain their learning.
- Adults need to use their new learning immediately or they lose their newly learned skill or knowledge.
- Most often, adults are more likely to seek out learning experiences because of life changing events.
- Adults are also motivated to learn if they perceive that the learning is relevant to the rest of their lives or if it helps to maintain their sense of self-esteem or pleasure.
- The adult's level of motivation can often be increased if the instructor stimulates curiosity about the subject, demonstrates its usefulness, creates a safe environment for the learner, and explores the learner’s expectations about the learning experience.

CURRICULUM DESIGN

- Adults prefer applying a single concept or theory to problems that are relevant.
- Assessing learners' prior knowledge is essential to designing effective programs.
- New information that can be integrated with what adults already know is more quickly learned.
- The new information should be presented in a structured format so that the learners can begin to organize the new information with their prior experience.
- New information presented in a story form is better able to stick to prior experience and learning.
- Make sure that new information is reviewed, summarized, and paced well in order to facilitate retention and recall.
- Learning activities need to be realistic, stimulate thought, and be challenging.
- Learners need constructive feedback that lets them know how they are doing without being so critical that it inhibits risk taking in the future.
- Curriculum design should account for learning style differences when possible.
• The curriculum designer needs to take into account the participants’ different life stages and values.
• Pre and Post training activities need to be well-planned in order to help the transfer of new knowledge or skills back on the job.

In the Classroom
• The physical and psychological environments need to be managed well to create an optimum level of involvement.
• Facilitation is more effective than lecturing to engage students in setting the course objectives, tapping into prior experiences, and helping learners reach consensus.
• Facilitation is used to:
  o Establish goals
  o Clarify expectations
  o Uses questioning techniques
  o Understands that adults have something to lose in the classroom
  o Balances the presentation, discussion, and sharing of new material
  o Develops a learning environment that allows for diverse opinion and experience and resolution to problems.
  o Reinforces participants contributions and accomplishments
• Provide opportunities to use new skills and knowledge in small groups that provide for safe interactions that allow adults to contribute and collaborate

Thirty-Three World-Class Competencies
Adapted by Susie A. Navone from “Thirty-Three World-Class Competencies” by Margot B. Weinstein

These competencies are critical for instructors to learn since it is no longer sufficient just to get learners to understand information; they must also be able to use it. These competencies include: understanding adult learners, instructional competencies, and personal competencies.

UNDERSTANDING ADULT LEARNERS
1. Adults want meaningful new information that can be applied to the learner’s context
2. A variety of approaches should be used to tap into learners’ different abilities.
3. Know your learners because they are diverse in experience as well as in characteristics and therefore will have different needs.
4. Use adult motivation and curiosity to increase interest in learning and improve retention.
5. Reassure adult learners that they have the knowledge and experience to solve problems.
6. Instruction needs to include the attitudes, skills, and abilities of the adult learner so that one can think better critically and become more independent.

INSTRUCTIONAL COMPETENCIES
7. Instructors must have knowledge and experience to help draw theory to practice.
8. Know as much as you can about how the knowledge or skill fits into the workplace.
9. Present new information logically and sequentially so that it is easier for learners to store and retrieve information.
10. Present information clearly, breaking large subjects into small segments.
11. Make the learning environment comfortable, both physically and psychologically.
12. Vary your teaching methods.
13. Use questions to gain insight into what the learners understand and what they don’t.
14. Be able to collect information from a variety of media and make use of the material.
15. Be able to write clearly and for the intended audience and purpose.
16. Facilitate student cooperative and collaborative learning.
17. Be able to present material verbally in a clear and understandable manner.
18. Influence groups to accomplish tasks and to meet the needs of the members.
19. Be able to give and receive verbal and non-verbal feedback to communicate observations, opinions, and conclusions.
20. Use technology as it applies to your discipline.
21. Evaluate your program and content through evaluation, feedback and discussion with adult learners.
22. Be flexible to meet the changing needs of adult learners.

PERSONAL COMPETENCIES

23. Communicate your need to learn and interest in your field to inspire your learners.
24. Care about the learners’ feelings and respect their viewpoints.
25. Use humor to invite participation and increase motivation.
26. Be able to listen and communicate effectively.
27. Use humor to keep adults involved.
28. Be a role model that inspires and motivates learners.
29. Demonstrate problem-solving skills.
30. Use ideas logically, creatively, and objectively.
31. Form a network with key people within the industry.
32. Reflect on your program and discover ways to improve the next one.
33. Take care of yourself.

Tested Techniques for Teaching Adults
Adapted by Susie A. Navone from “Tested Techniques for Teaching Adults” by Peter J. Murk

Tested Techniques that might enhance your teaching and learning environment include:
1. Find out your learners’ interests.
2. Use an “ice-breaker” to deal with anxiety or hostility in a positive way.
3. Create a positive learning environment where “Everyone serves as a teacher and everyone acts as a learner.”
4. Know your adult students as individuals. Find out how each learner differs from the others and respect those differences.
5. Use questioning techniques to:
   • Stimulate different levels of thinking
   • Recall information
   • Draw implications and make value judgments
6. Provide an overview of the material by providing:
   • An overview of the lesson
   • A written agenda and a timetable
   • An advanced organizer
• Reviews of the material
7. Allow for information to be processed using right-brain and left-brain strategies.
8. Expect that each learner will learn at least one new concept or idea each class period.
   o Share these expectations
   o Discuss important principles and concepts.
   o Summarize the principles that were learned.
9. State your purposes and goals clearly before any major assignment.
10. Use “warm-ups” before beginning a lesson: Use “brainstorming” or Give a pre-test.
    Clarify expectations of the lesson.
11. Use “spaced-out practices to improve retention.
12. Use visual imaging: “See it, say it, spell it, try it, do it, critique it and then remember it.”
14. Vary review and reflection strategies to bring closure to the learning
    • Try written summaries
    • Use journals
    • Discuss what was learned
    • Discuss the application of the learning
    • Try creative writing techniques
    • Create opinion surveys for major concepts in the unit
    • Try role-playing, to bring closure and retention of ideas/concepts
15. Give feedback to reinforcement students’ accomplishments:
    • Compliment them on difficult tasks
    • Use the “One Minute Manager Technique”
    • Reinforce lessons learned and skills developed
    • Use the ‘teachable moment: Build your lesson around an event/issue as a starting
      point for discussion and learning.
16. Assist each learner to evaluate his or her own progress.
17. Treat your students as adults.
18. Use learning materials that offer realistic studies or situations to develop problem-solving
    skills and promote class discussion.
19. Use small groups of three to five people to provide non-threatening interactions and
    discussions.
20. Use non-offensive humor and smile.
21. Meet the social needs of your adult students.

30 Things You’ve Gotta Know (About Adult Learners)
Adapted by Susie A. Navone from “30 Things We Know For Sure About Adult Learning” by Rob Zemke and
Susan Zemke

1. Adults seek out learning experiences to help cope with life-changing events.
2. Learning is often a coping response to significant change.
3. Learning experiences are often related to the life-changing event.
4. Adults will engage in learning that is perceived to help them cope with change.
5. Adults are usually motivated to learn because the new knowledge or skill will be useful
6. Self-esteem and pleasure are secondary motivators.
7. Adults tend to be more interested in single-theory or concept courses, not survey courses.
8. New information needs to be integrated with prior knowledge.
9. Information that conflicts with prior knowledge is learned more slowly.
10. Information with little overlap with prior knowledge is also learned more slowly.
11. The pace of the learning tasks that permits mastery.
12. Adults are usually more accurate and take fewer risks to compensate for being slower in some psychomotor learner tasks.
13. Adults tend to let errors affect their self-esteem.
14. Instructors need to know if new knowledge will be in concert or conflict with learner values.
15. Diversity needs to be accepted.
16. An idea needs to be explained from more than one value set or perspective.
17. Adults prefer self-directed learning to group learning.
18. Different media is appealing to adults.
19. How-to instruction is preferred.
20. Adults don’t like to learn in isolation.
21. The learning environment needs to be comfortable.
22. Self-esteem, ego, and prior learning experiences that were unfavorable can inhibit an adult's ability to take risks and participate in learning.
23. Learner and instructor expectations need to be discussed and clarified.
24. Tap into adults’ prior experiences.
25. Use open-ended questions to help draw out learner knowledge and experience.
26. Solicit feedback from the learner about the curriculum and learning tasks.
27. Control the learning environment by risking giving it up.
28. Protect the minority opinion.
29. Integrate new knowledge and skill with transfer activities.
30. Approach new learning theories as additional tools in a toolbox instead of a fix it all approach.

15 Earmarks of Cutting Edge Adult Learner Programs
Prepared by Cal Crow, Ph.D., Center for Learning Connections, Highline Community College, Des Moines WA

1. Values are challenged.
2. Curiosity is increased.
3. Learners focus on what might be rather than on what is, thereby increasing possibilities available to them.
4. Self-efficacy is increased.
5. Problem-detecting, problem-perceiving and problem-naming receive more attention than problem-solving.
6. By creating new contexts, learners expand the number of analogies available to them.
7. Learners’ abilities to see connections and create alternatives are increased.
8. Learners become adept at handling complexity.
9. Learners help determine both content and agenda.
10. Learners are able to construct relationships and create metaphors.
11. The focus is on searching, rather than on finding or following.
12. Learners develop an “attitude of participation,” characterized by cooperation, dialogue,
and empathy.
13. Reflective, imaginative thinking is encouraged.
14. Both fluid intelligence and crystallized intelligence are taken into consideration.
15. Learners become holistic thinkers.

**Principles of Adult Learning**

- Adults learn throughout their lives.
- The negotiations of the transitional stages in the life-span are the immediate causes and motives for much of this learning.
- They exhibit divergent learning styles and learn in different ways, at different times, for different purposes.
- As a rule, however, they like their learning activities to be problem-centered and to be meaningful to their life situation.
- They want their learning outcomes to have some immediacy of application.
- The past experiences of adults affect their current learning, sometimes serving as an enhancement, sometimes as a hindrance.
- Effective learning is also linked to the adult's subscription to a self-concept of himself or herself as a learner.
- Adults exhibit a tendency toward self-directedness in their learning.

**Learning Principles Applicable to Adults**

- What we learn first in a situation sticks with us the longest and tightest, so make your major points early and correctly.
- It is difficult to provide new information if it is in conflict with the old information or skill.
- The adult learner tends to recall not only the information or skill but also the sequence of events through which it was learned the first time.
- The setting, procedure, and attitude tend to be remembered more than specific details.
- To improve retention, recall, review, and possibly re-teach over a short period of time.
- Teaching to a point above what is expected of the learner can increase retention.
- Interrupted practice can enhance learning more than if the practice occurs in one continuous session.
- Several practice sessions are better than one.
- All learning is positively or negatively influenced by prior learning.
- Feedback on a student's progress can reinforce the action.
Motivation
Submitted by U.S. Naval instructors from the Trident Training Center, Bangor, Washington

DEFINITION OF MOTIVATION:
Need  Drive  Action

DESCRIPTION OF MOTIVATION
Categories: Internal and External

PRINCIPLES
• Establish a learning oriented environment.
• Utilize student's needs and internal motives.
• Make subject matter interesting.
• Help students set and attain goals.
• Aid students to assume increasing responsibility.
• Provide informative feedback.

MOTIVATION TECHNIQUES
Modeling the desired behavior:
• Be enthusiastic toward class and lesson topic.
• Exhibit self-confidence, high expectations, expertise.
• Start and end class on schedule.
• Demonstrate professional demeanor and appearance at all times.

Arousal of the achievement motive:
• Give recognition (reward) whenever possible, ensuring that it is deserved.
• Stimulate personal competitiveness. Emphasize performance.
• Assist students in evaluating their progress toward their goals.
• Utilize curiosity, and encourage its growth.
• Emphasize need to know and the student's benefits from excelling in the subject matter.
• Provide realistic goal setting.
  o Intermediate
  o Long Range

Concern for students:
• Be available for individual counseling.
• Follow up on poor performance.
• Be friendly, sincere, and show an interest in the class.
• Assign questions and tasks to students in keeping with their ability to perform.
How Does One Approach Teaching Diverse Adult Learners?

By Susie Navone, ESL Instructor and Dan Pund, Warehousing Instructor, Renton Technical College

How does one approach teaching diverse learners? This was a concern that we had to address in developing our program to teach Warehousing and Forklift Operation to refugees. There are three important ideas that we could not forget while both developing and teaching this program. They are cultural awareness, the awareness of different learning styles and needs, and the importance of schema.

THE INSTRUCTOR WHO IS AWARE, CAN PLAN.

Cultural awareness is much more than just being cognizant that there are different languages and food. Cultural awareness in the classroom includes being aware that students may have different expectations of what teachers do and what are student responsibilities. A student may come to the classroom expecting the teacher to lecture for three hours, and that students show their respect by not asking questions. Imagine the confusion and disappointment for this student when he or she is asked to participate in a group activity. Or for the instructor who asks if there are any questions about an assignment and finds that there are none. Yet when the assignment is turned in, finds that very few understood what to do. An instructor who is aware of these potential situations can plan for them.

HOW BIG IS YOUR TEACHING TOOL BOX?

Being aware of different learning styles and needs is essential in lesson planning. Each one of us has a preferred learning style. As teachers, we teach to our preferences. Unfortunately, our strengths as teachers may not meet the needs of many students. That is why we must make conscious decisions to get more tools for our toolbox by learning about new methods of instruction and by varying the forms of presentation.

Content can be learned by using visuals, demonstrations, language charts, mini-lectures, role-playing, group assignments, as well as a whole host of other activities. It is not easy to use such a variety of activities. However, we must be willing to learn, to use, to revise, and to try activities again if we are interested in our students' learning.

USE AN ADVANCED ORGANIZER TO BUILD ON SCHEMA.

To be able to teach, an instructor must come to understand what students already know, or their schema. This is of particular importance when working with ESL populations. Many ESL students had promising professional careers and/or years of valuable experience in a trade, which should be valued and used to everyone's benefit in the classroom. These students don't need to learn so much of the how. What they lack may be the advances that have been made by technology or the language to communicate their experience to others or to pass a professional exam.

How do you find out what they know? We can use advanced organizers. Advanced organizers are the questions, pictures, scenarios that we use to find out what students already know. Have your students brainstorm. Advanced organizers help to prepare students for what they are about to learn by activating a student's schema and by helping to build the bridge to the knowledge or skill to be learned.
STUDENT LEARNING MEANS STUDENT SUCCESS.
Based on the importance of these three assumptions, several teaching tools can be implemented that may increase student learning and therefore their success. Having cultural awareness, the instructor might expect that these students might feel confused, frustrated, isolated, etc. for a whole host of reasons. The more the instructor can help students to feel comfortable, both physically and emotionally, the more the students will be able to learn.

The instructor should also try to vary the learning activities and the media that are used as much as possible in the classroom. To keep our students learning new things and interested in what we are teaching we need to find out what they already know. By using advanced organizers to activate students’ schema, we are giving them the keys to new doors.

Variety is the key to helping all students to learn. What helps one student to learn, may not work for another. Moreover, what works for one group, may not for the next. Of course, there is no substitution for a wealth of patience and flexibility.

AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE IN THE WORKPLACE?
As if this weren’t enough to keep in mind, how could a skills instructor and an ESL instructor work together to provide the kind of environment described above? The first is to be clear of purpose. Then the instructors need to be able to maintain on-going communication, know that disagreements will happen, and learn to use each person’s strengths for benefit of the students.

CLARITY OF PURPOSE
To be clear of purpose, the instructors need to understand why and what they are teaching. They also need to discuss their own teaching philosophy and assumptions. The objectives for the course need to be determined mutually, as well as the grading policies, importance of attendance, and how the classroom should be managed. Once these things have been established, then each instructor needs to be consistent in their applications.

THERE’S NO SUBSTITUTE FOR COMMUNICATION.
Each instructor should be committed to on-going communication with each other. The instructors need to learn to be specific about what each one wants to teach, where one wants assistance, or not. It’s also important to be willing to discuss what worked and what didn’t work on a regular basis. The instructors might also talk their concerns about students, progress that has been noted, or information that might effect student participation and performance.

USE “I” AND EXPLAIN “WHY.”
The instructors need to realize that disagreements will happen. When they do, stick to the basics. Use “I” statements when talking about what happened and how one feels. Respectfully speak your mind, making sure to offer the “why” behind one’s opinion. Be able to agree to disagree. Finally, when the disagreement happens while the students are present, always allow the instructor to save face by waiting to talk about the situation at the next break time.
Finally, the instructors need to recognize that for all the potential problems, team teaching presents a wealth of strengths that can be used for the students’ benefit. Each instructor has a wealth of information and experience to offer to each other and to the students. Each one has teaching strengths and weaknesses, that when put together can offer a variety of learning experiences for the students.

**IT’S NOT FOR EVERYONE.**

Team teaching is not for everyone. It takes an incredible commitment to student learning to make the relationship work. Without the commitment, it would be difficult to put the ego aside. With it, the students benefit from an incredible amount of energy, resources, and talent that are unequalled by just one instructor. It’s expensive, but effective!!

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### 20 Ways to Motivate Trainees

*Adapted by Susie A. Navone from “20 Ways to Motivate Trainees” by Dean R. Spitzer*

**BEFORE TRAINING:**

1. Have a positive attitude about training and relate its importance to the adult learner.
2. Don’t rush the learning.
3. Train people when they have the need for the new knowledge or skill.
5. Invite learners to become involved in designing the training or learning.
6. Let learners make some choices about meeting their learning needs.
7. If possible, give financial incentives to help motivate.

**DURING TRAINING:**

8. The most motivating experiences are usually the most active.
9. Using fun can make it more energetic and productive.
10. Use a variety of media and instructional activities.
11. Provide social interaction via small group discussions, cooperative learning, etc.
12. Facilitate peer tutoring and mentoring.
15. Ensure success by beginning the learning event with simple tasks that are easily mastered to more complex tasks that require more practice.

**AFTER TRAINING:**

17. Make sure new skills are being used.
18. Provide assistance after the learning by using follow-up meetings or assistance from others who went through the training.
19. Trainees will get more out of the training if the supervisor is actively involved.
20. Recognize improvement immediately.