Adult Learning

HOW TO TEACH FOR LEARNING
Five Principles of Adult Learning

1. Personal Benefit
2. Experience
3. Self Direction
4. Application & Action
5. Learning Styles
Personal Benefit

“What’s in this for me?”

- Solves or avoids a problem for them
- Provides an opportunity or increased status
- Leads to professional or personal growth
Experience

“Oh, I’ve heard that before.” or “I already knew that.”

- Involves them in sharing what they know
- Builds on what they know
- Validates their expertise
Self Direction

“I learn better while ‘doing’.”

- Take charge of their learning and make decision about the content and process
- Contribute to the learning of their co-learners
- Have some degree of independence in the learning process
Application & Action

“When will use this on/in the job/real life?”

- There is immediate application for the learning
- They participate actively in the learning process
- They can practice new skills or test new knowledge before leaving a learning session
Learning Styles

“I’m an active learner.” or “I’m really a visual learner.”

- The learning taps into a mix of learning styles that fit their preferences and stimulate their ‘multiple intelligences’
- Multiple means are used to represent the material being learned
Reinforce Learning

When lecturing, with or without PowerPoint, stop every 15-30 minutes and engage learners in an activity to reinforce what the learner(s) have been listening to.

➔ ENGAGE: Turn to you elbow partner and using your personal learning style demonstrate your knowledge of the 5 principles of adult learning.

➔ REFLECT: Did your learning style come out in your teaching? How does this realization apply to the 5 principles of adult learning?
Techniques

A. Reflection
B. Summarize
C. Share Knowledge
D. Teach
E. Receive Feedback
Reflect

Learning is enhanced when participants are given the chance to stop and digest the material being presented to them. This is time for the learner to figure out how to personally apply the newly obtained knowledge.

Examples:

➔ Write three ways you can use or apply what you’ve just learned. Circle the one you plan to do first.
➔ Write one question that you have about what you’ve just learned.
➔ Spend the next four minutes reading and reviewing the notes and the other information in your packet. Highlight the important points. Write any questions you still have.
Summarize

Having participants summarize the most important things they have learned is a powerful way for them to interact with the material.

Examples:

➔ Superlatives: After a presentation, ask participants to identify the most important piece of information or concepts that were presented. Then ask them to identify the most _______ thing you presented and share that with a partner. Continue this process, substituting superlatives in the blank.

➔ Flip Chart Summary: Divide participants into small groups and give each a flip chart sheet. The task is to design a poster that summarizes the key points they’ve learned. There are 3 rules: 1-page limit is one sheet of paper; 2-joint effort, all team members should contribute; and 3-time limit is 5 minutes.
Share Knowledge

Often adult learners have some level of background knowledge with the subject they are learning. To build on this, give the learner(s) some control over the content to validate their expertise.

Examples:

➔ Leaky Fishbowl: Have 5-8 volunteers sit in a circle in the middle of the group. Have a set of questions ready, and give the small group a question to discuss. There are two rules: only those in the middle can talk; and those outside the circle can join it by standing behind someone until an inner circle participant voluntarily vacates the chair. Periodically give a new question to discuss

➔ Item List: Create a list or outline of the topics to be presented on a flip chart. Give participants a few sticky dots and have them mark the ones that are highest priority for them to hear about from you. Focus on the high priority items and less so on the low.
Teach

We learn best what we have to teach. Here are some engaging learner teacher strategies.

➔ Pair Share: Have participants take a few minutes to explain to a partner what they have learned and how they will use it
➔ Triad Teaching: Divide participants into three and have each person - either verbally or with symbols, icons or drawings - teach the others something they have learned.
➔ Showtime: Divide participants into small groups and assign each a portion of the material that has been presented. Have each group prepare a short, creative presentation on the topic they are assigned.
Receive Feedback

Adult learners enjoy receiving feedback on what they have learned. Creating fun ways to self-assess what they have learned motivates them to take a more active role in their learning.

→ Bingo: In advance, create 25 questions that cover the material you will be presenting. In creating the questions, ask yourself: If they can only take away 25 things from what I presented, what would I want those to be? Create a Bingo card with one-word or short-phrase answers to your questions in each of the boxes. During the session ask one or more of your questions. Have participants find the answers on their cards either individually or in teams. Tell them as soon as the individual or team thinks they have the right answer, they should stand up. The first to stand gets to share their answer. If they’re correct, they get to cross off a box on their sheet. If wrong, the next one standing gets to give an answer. Continue until someone gets BINGO or until you’ve exhausted your questions.
Receive Feedback Cont...

Team Quiz: Before your session, explain to participants that you will be stopping periodically to have them, in groups of 3-5, write two questions for their fellow participants. One should be factual and the other should be open-ended, requiring some higher level thinking: evaluation, synthesis, or inferential thinking. Give ~3 minutes to write the questions. Debrief by having each team ask their factual questions, then do the open ended questions. make sure everyone gets a chance to answer.