

Day 2 – PFLSE - Adult Learning

Handout - Teaching Adults

“There is no essential difference between the ways in which adults and children learn, but there are profound differences between teaching young people and teaching adults.”

Alan Rogers

Malcom Knowles Nine Characteristics of Adults as Learners

Adults need to control their learning.

Adults need to feel that learning has immediate utility.

Adults need to feel that learning focuses on issues that directly concern them.

Adults need to test their learning as they go along, rather than receive background theory and general information.

Adults need to anticipate how they will use their learning.

Adults need to expect performance improvement to result from their learning.

Adult learning is greatest when it maximizes available resources.

Adult learning requires a climate that is collaborative, respectful, mutual and informal (and fun!).

Adult learning relies on information that is appropriate to what is known at a given time, i.e., it is developmentally paced.

Additional Information about Teaching Adults:

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- Adults prefer self-direction in determining the goals and outcomes of their learning.
- Adults bring a vast reservoir of experience to the learning situation that should be capitalized on. They also value learning through direct experience.
- Adults are presumed to become ready to learn when they experience a need to know or do something to perform more effectively.
- Because adults typically enter a learning situation after they experience a need in their life, they are presumed to bring a task- or problem-centered orientation to learning. This is in contrast to the subject-centered approach associated with traditional, pedagogical (child) approaches to education.
- The andragogical (adult) model presumes that although adults will respond to external motivators such as a job promotion, the most potent motivators are internal.
- Involve adults in mutual planning.
- Adult curriculum needs to be relevant to their cultural backgrounds. Be sensitive to individual differences.
- Adults respond better to opportunities created within the classroom for students to make linkages between course content and knowledge gained in the contexts of work, family, and community living. Use activities that stimulate cognitive development and growth, challenging adults to grapple with the kind of ill-defined problems they encounter in everyday life.