

TEACHING ADULT LEARNERS: TIPS AND STYLES

Tips

Adults learn best when:	Matching adult learning needs with appropriate methods
1. They feel valued and respected for the experiences and perspectives they bring to the training situation.	1. Elicit participants' experiences and perspectives through a variety of stimulating activities.
2. The learning experience is active rather than passive.	2. Actively engage participants in their learning experience through discussion and a variety of activities.
3. The learning experience actually fills their immediate needs	3. Identify participants' needs; develop training concepts and learning objectives to these identified needs.
4. They accept responsibility for their own learning	4. Make sure that training content and skills are directly relevant to participants' experiences so that they will want to learn.
5. Their learning is self directed and meaningful to them	5. Involve participants in deciding on the content and skills that will be covered during the training.
6. Their learning experience addresses ideas, feelings, and actions.	6. Use multiple training methods that address knowledge, attitudes, and skills
7. New material relates to what participants already know	7. Use training methods that enable participants to establish this relationship and integrate new material
8. The learning environment is conducive to learning.	8. Take measures to ensure that the physical and social environment (training space) is safe, comfortable, and enjoyable

9. Learning is applied immediately.	9. Provide opportunities for participants to apply the new information and skills they have learned.
10. Learning is reinforced.	10. Use training methods that allow participants to practice new skills and receive prompt, reinforcing feedback.
11. Learning occurs in small groups.	11. Use training methods that encourage participants to explore feelings, attitudes, and skills with other learners.
12. The trainer values participants' contributions as both learners and teachers.	12. Encourage participants to share their expertise and experiences with others in the training

Styles

Learning Styles	Consider using:
Learn best with abstract concepts and lectures	Case studies and discussions about theories and research
Learn best while observing others	Demonstrations and videos
Learn best from exercises	Role playing and other experiential activities
Learn best through visual means	Videos, images, and slides

Adapted from Trainer's Guide for Cancer Education, National Cancer Institute, located at <http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/resources/trainers-guide-cancer-education>