

ADULT LEARNERS

Review these characteristics/needs of Adult Learners. How can you accommodate these characteristics/needs as you design workshops and/or make presentations?

1. Adults play a variety of roles every day. Being a workshop participant is only one of those roles.
 - * Participants have to balance the demands of contradictory roles (e.g., attending a workshop; providing child-care after school for children; planning for the substitute; dinner preparation; attending school events; taking graduate classes, etc.)
 - * Participants have a limited amount of energy for each role.
2. An adult's receptivity to learning is determined by their pre-existing "load" and "power" quotient in the learning area.
 - * load = responsibilities
 - * power = ability to influence change
3. Adults with low self-esteem will not put themselves in a position to take risks.
4. Adults want to know the benefits of learning specific information or skills.
5. Once adults understand the benefits of what they are learning, many adults will do things for the good of others (especially for their children).
6. Adults are a result of their past experiences, which are diverse. Therefore, each adult may react differently to the same current experience.
7. Many adults are proud of their past experiences and want to share them with others.
8. Adults allow their past experiences and decisions to limit their vision of the future.
9. Adults need to connect new knowledge to past experiences and future goals. Goals can be personal or organizational.
10. Adults have "habit needs."
 - * Coffee first thing in the morning
 - * Mid-morning snack
 - * Nutritious versus junk food at workshops
 - * Use of bathroom at certain times
 - * Favorite TV program or after-school activity
 - * Knitting, crossword puzzles, etc.
11. Adult bodies are no longer as flexible as their younger bodies used to be. Flexibility begins to diminish around age 42.
12. Adult ability to learn does not decline, but the time needed for a response increases and new materials are harder to learn.