



PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING

ADULTS PREFER LEARNING SITUATIONS WHICH:

1. **Are Practical and Problem-Centered, So ...**
 - Give overviews, summaries, examples, and use stories
 - Plan for direct application of the new information
 - Design in collaborative, problem-solving activities
 - Anticipate problems applying new ideas, offer suggested uses
 - **CAUTION** – Guard against becoming too theoretical

2. **Promote Their Positive Self-Esteem, So ...**
 - Take into consideration the diversity of culture, values and attitude
 - Provide low-risk activities in small group settings
 - Plan for building success incrementally
 - Help them become more effective and competent
 - **CAUTION** – Readiness to learn depends on self-esteem

3. **Integrate New Ideas With Existing Knowledge, So ...**
 - Help them recall what they already know that relates to the new ideas
 - Share your agenda and assumptions and ask for input on them
 - Ask what they know about the topic
 - Ask what they would like to know about the topic
 - Build in options within your plan so you can easily shift if needed
 - Suggest follow up ideas and next steps for after the session
 - **CAUTION** – Match the degree of choice to their level of development

4. **Show Respect for the Individual Learner, So ...**
 - Provide for their needs through breaks, snacks, coffee, comfort
 - Provide a quality, well organized experience that uses time effectively
 - Avoid jargon and don't "talk down" to participants
 - Validate and affirm their knowledge, contributions and successes
 - Ask for feedback on your work, ideas, provide input opportunities
 - **CAUTION** – Watch your choice of words to avoid negative perceptions

5. Capitalize on Their Experience, So ...

- Don't ignore what they know, it is a resource for you
- Plan alternate activities so you can adjust to fit their experience level
- Create activities that use their experience and knowledge
- Listen before, during and after the event
- **CAUTION** – Provide for the possibility of a need to unlearn old habits

6. Allow Choice and Self Direction, So ...

- Build your plans around their needs, compare goals and expectations
- Share your agenda and assumptions and ask for input on them
- Ask what they know about the topic
- Ask what they would like to know about the topic
- Build in options within your plan so you can easily shift if needed
- Suggest follow up ideas and next steps for after the session
- **CAUTION** – Match the degree of choice to their level of development

Adapted from: Best Practice Resources, John Goodlad