ADULT LEARNING

Terminal Objective (TO): Apply adult learning principles to plan, deliver, and assess competency-based training that meets minimum criteria specified in the NTC Instructor Evaluation Rubric (IER).

Enabling Objectives (EO):
- Identify six core adult learning principles (Knowles)
- Distinguish between education, learning, and training
- Define three domains of learning (Bloom)
- Explain competency-based training and the BLM (Instructor competencies and IER)

DIFFERENT DRUMMERS

If I do not want what you want, please try not to tell me that my want is wrong.

Or if I believe other than you, at least pause before you correct my view.

Or if my emotion is less than yours, or more, given the same circumstances, try not to ask me to feel more strongly or weakly.

Or yet if I act, or fail to act, in the manner of your design for action, let me be.

I do not, for the moment at least, ask you to understand me. That will come only when you are willing to give up changing me into a copy of you.

I may be your spouse, your parent, your offspring, your friend, or your colleague. If you will allow me any of my own wants, or emotions, or beliefs, or actions, then you open yourself, so that some day these ways of mine might not seem so wrong, and might finally appear to you as right -- for me. To put up with me is the first step to understanding me. Not that you embrace my ways as right for you, but that you are no longer irritated or disappointed with me for my seeming waywardness. And in understanding me you might come to prize my differences from you, and, far from seeking to change me, preserve and even nurture those differences.

The point of this book is that people are different from each other, and that no amount of getting after them is going to change them. Nor is there any reason to change them, because the differences are probably good, not bad.
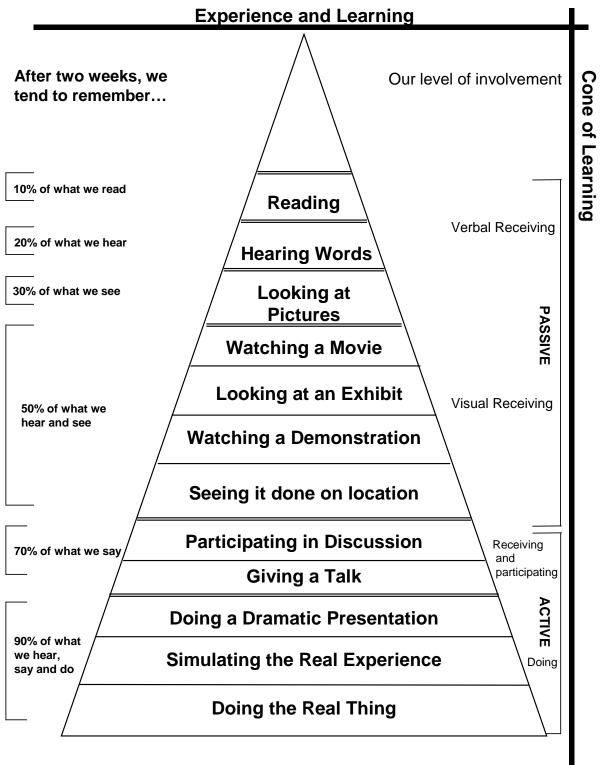
People are different in fundamental ways. They want different things; they have different motives, purposes, aims, values, needs, drives, impulses, urges. Nothing is more fundamental than that. They believe differently: they think, cognize, conceptualize, perceive, understand, comprehend, and cogitate differently. And of course, manners of acting and emoting, governed as they are by wants and beliefs, follow suit and differ radically among people.

Differences abound and are not at all difficult to see, if one looks. And it is precisely these variations in behavior and attitude that trigger in each of us a common response. Seeing others around us differing from us, we conclude that these differences in individual behavior are but temporary manifestations of madness, badness, stupidity, or sickness. In other words, we rather naturally account for variations in the behavior of others in terms of flaw and afflictions. Our job, at least for those near us, would seem to be to correct these flaws. Our Pygmalion project, then, is to make all those near us just like us.

Fortunately, this project is impossible. To sculpt the other into our own likeness fails before it begins. People can't change form no matter how much and in what manner we require them to. Form is inherent, ingrained, indelible. Ask a snake to swallow itself. Ask a person to change form--think or want differently--and you ask the impossible, for it is the thinking and wanting that is required to change the thinking and wanting. Form cannot be self-changing.
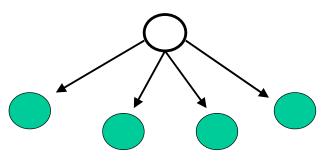
Of course, some change is possible, but it is a twisting and distortion of underlying form. Remove the fangs of a lion and behold a toothless lion, not a domestic cat. Our attempts to change spouse, offspring, or others can result in change, but the result is a scar and not a transformation.

Experience and Learning

After two weeks, we tend to remember…

Our level of involvement

10% of what we read

20% of what we hear

30% of what we see

50% of what we hear and see

70% of what we say

90% of what we hear, say and do

Reading

Hearing Words

Looking at Pictures

Watching a Movie

Looking at an Exhibit

Watching a Demonstration

Seeing it done on location

Participating in Discussion

Giving a Talk

Doing a Dramatic Presentation

Simulating the Real Experience

Doing the Real Thing

Verbal Receiving

PASSIVE

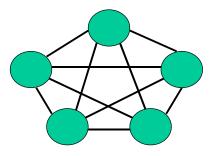Visual Receiving

Receiving and participating

ACTIVE

Doing

- Adapted from Edgar Dale (1969)
Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching
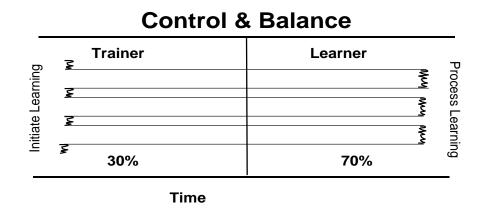
2.2

The Facilitative Trainer Model

Move from a "linear" approach of "I talk, you listen"

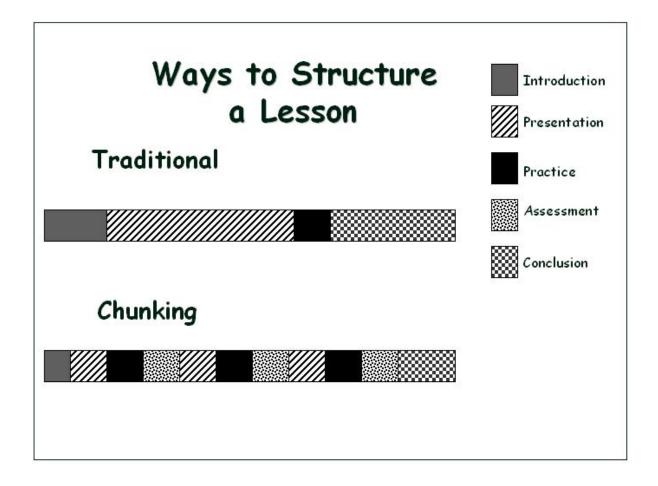**To a "Geodesic" style of "Let's all learn from each other."**

You must control and balance the training process so you can manage time, handle disputes, and draw out non-contributors.

Control & Balance

Trainer | Learner

Initiate Learning

Process Learning

30% | **70%**

Time

Initiate learning about 30 percent of the time leaving 70 percent of the session for the adults to process the learning.

Ways to Structure a Lesson

Chunking takes something that seems to be very large and unmanageable and breaking it down to smaller more manageable "chunks." The example illustrates the steps in "chunking" a large lesson into manageable parts. Taking bite-size pieces and building towards a complete exercise through small assessments that will measure progress along the way ensures that the students are ready to be assessed on the completed lesson.

Adult learners, especially younger adult, often want to

- Learn quickly
- Learn in chunks
- Learn at their own pace and in their own sequence
- Learn by trial and error or discovery
- Learn creatively
- Learn through real life situation, problem, or simulations
- Learn something only when they need to use it.

Interactive vs. Passive Learning	
INTERACTIVE	PASSIVE
• Active & Voluntary Learners	• Passive & Captive Audience
• Concerned With Using Knowledge Today	• Concerned with Learning for the Future
• On an Equal Relationship	• Subordinate to Teacher
• Flexible	• Rigid and Traditional
• Views Learners as Responsible & Capable	• Views Learners as Empty Vessels To Be Filled
As an adult learner which learning model would you prefer?	

Thinking about Lesson Planning for Adults

1. *Think of yourself as a coach rather than a teacher or lecturer*. Adult learners come with lots of experience. **Call** on that experience, **honor** that experience, and **build on** that experience.

2. *Think of presentations not as lectures but as an invitation to a conversation*. Adult learners come with fixed habits, preoccupations, established attitudes, selective listening, and a strong sense of pride

3. *Greet participants at the door before class.* Adult learners often fear participating and looking foolish or stupid. Some adults fear authority and presenters who are introduced as experts. Create a friendly and "safe" learning environment.

4. *Show adults how to do something rather than telling them*. Adult learners usually need reason to learn and they need to own the learning goals. They need to know **WIIFM** - What's in it for me? Be able to answer that question.

5. *Chunk learning where possible*. Be sure to divide technical training into more bite-sized pieces.

6. *Know the signs of boredom.* These include silence, fidgeting and poor eye contact. Be ruthless about starting and ending on time.

7. *Change what participants see or hear every seven to 10 minutes*. Avoid long lectures to passive participants. Get them doing something. Adult learners need to feel successful by using their own experiences, participating actively, and receiving feedback from themselves, other participants, or the coach. Recognize success early and often.

PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION

Good instruction is an involved process that must be approached only with adequate preparation and understanding. Applying sound principles will greatly help one become a more proficient instructor. The following are some of the more common principles:

1.   **We learn through sensations, commonly known as the five senses.**

Sight: Stimulated by light, objects, color, and motion.
Hearing: Stimulated by sound, speaking, and noises.
Touch: Stimulated by liquid, solids, heat, cold, and textures.
Taste: Stimulated by sweet and sour.
Smell: Stimulated by odor (closely related to taste).

We retain about :

_____ Percent of what we read.
_____ Percent of what we hear.
_____ Percent of what we see.
_____ Percent of what we hear and see.
_____ Percent of what we say.
_____ Percent of what we hear, say and do.

2.   **Learning requires activity on the part of the learner.**

You cannot teach persons if they are not receptive and active. Mental and physical activity must be planned. Discussion, deliberate thinking, problem solving, and the opportunity to practice manual skills are only a few of the many types of activity that can be programmed.

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3.   **Friendly competition stimulates learning.**

When possible, trainee groups should be allowed to compete with each other. This practice stimulates on-the-job performance and often aids in developing speed and accuracy in a given operation.

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4.   **Challenging problems stimulate learning.**

Whenever possible, opportunities should be created, to provide individual and group problem solving opportunities.

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5.   **Knowledge of standards required makes learning more effective.**

An understanding of standards of quality, quantity, and performance is essential if the learner is expected to meet such standards on the job. Such an understanding enables trainees to better visualize how the training received will help them perform their jobs.

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6.   **Things should be taught the way they are to be used.**

Instruction that is difficult to understand frustrates the learner. An instructor must analyze job needs and be sure that the presentation fits the work situation.

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7.   **Effective learning is likely to occur when a logical relationship exists among things taught.**

In many teaching situations the logical order of presentation of instruction is the same as the order in which the job or operation is performed.

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8.   **People learn more when they are held accountable and made to feel responsible for learning.**

Learners should be given the understanding that the content of the training will, in some definite way, assist them in job performance. They must also understand that they will be expected to use the knowledge or skill acquired to their best advantage.

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9.   **ENTHUSIASM AND ATTITUDES ARE CAUGHT NOT TAUGHT!**

Concerns of Adult Learners

Matt is sitting in the training room. He is one of more than ten thousand employees participating in training sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management. He is surrounded by twenty-four other trainees.

In his mind, Matt is questioning the value of the forthcoming training. Others in the classroom also have doubts. Some feel hostile about being here. Some are sure they already know most of what will be taught. Others expect that the training will solve all their problems. Some feel that the ideas to be presented may be good, but that they won't work for them because of their special work circumstances. Some are convinced that the ideas presented will be "way up in the clouds" and impractical for them.

Matt in particular, is feeling stress. He feels a lot of work-related pressure. His teenage son's behavior has been getting on his nerves. He has a lot of things on his mind and thinks he is too busy this week to sit in a classroom all day. Besides, his past classroom experiences have been unsatisfying.

What's Going On?

Many training sessions are subtly disrupted by the participants' past training experiences, work histories, time demands, and personal needs. These disruptions have a lot of influence: they can actually help determine whether the time, effort, and money put into training programs pay off.

A training participant's state of mind in approaching training can determine how much he or she will benefit from the event. Before a session begins, trainees may decide that it is exactly what is needed and may focus all their energy toward it. Or they may have a strong conviction that they will learn nothing in the class, and respond by "tuning out." Each individual's appraisal is based on the assumptions and perceptions of reality he or she carries into the training experience. Let's explore four different categories of these perceptions.

Classroom History

Adults carry many memories and strong feelings about classroom experiences in the past. Those memories include those from childhood and adolescence, from college days, and from continuing education programs. Such memories affect the ways in which different people approach the classroom experience.

- The classroom may present a threatening situation in which survival is a major issue.
- The teacher is perceived as the only source of learning in a classroom.
- Learning is viewed as a passive process; responsibility for the learning outcome lies with the instructor.
- The classroom is seen as a place where boring, trivial, or irrelevant things occur.

Work History

Each adult in a training session is likely to have a long and varied history of work in a variety of organizations. Members of a training class may have experienced work cultures that had varying degrees of openness to training and new ideas. For example, some work settings expect new knowledge and skills to be used immediately; others see no link between business needs and training.

Other adult learners feel at risk in their careers. Because of past experiences, they are anxious about keeping up with changes in their fields and are concerned about falling behind and being replaced. The following perceptions also influence their attitudes toward training class.

- Training offers little to participants who are already successful at work.
- The employee's work situation is so unique that classroom learning is not applicable.
- Training is a punishment or a remedial activity for dysfunctional people.
- Learning outcomes are not applied in their work settings

Time and Life Demands

Adults enter the training setting with multiple roles and responsibilities. They have many demands on their time, numerous preoccupations, and a wide variety of commitments. Many people, situations, and issues are constantly competing for their attention and time.

Adult learners are not primarily students. They are business people, homemakers, parents, community volunteers, and professionals. They may fill a host of other roles as well. Many feel divided into pieces—with several of the pieces elsewhere. Here are a few of those possible demands:

- Participants enter training feeling stressed and preoccupied with work-related projects. They have difficulty focusing on training experiences.
- Participants are distracted by concerns about friends and family members.
- Colleagues cannot be trusted to manage work activities adequately while participants are in training.

Personal Needs

To some extent, this category overlaps the other three, but some personal needs fall outside the boundaries of the previous categories. Such needs can distract trainees from learning by blocking the energy and concentration required in training environments.

- Being a member of an unfamiliar group will make their experience uncomfortable.
- Training provides a setting for impressing everyone, which may lead to job offers.
- The environment provides an opportunity to find a mate.
- Training experiences reveal personal inadequacies.

STRATEGIES FOR TRAINING ADULTS

1. Be willing to learn from the group, as well as facilitate the learning process.

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2. Set up positive, effective learning environments in which the learners can take responsibility to learn.

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3. Don't assume you have to be the answer person.

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4. Make training interactive and collaborative.

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5. Show respect for all trainees and their ability to enrich the training environment because of their differences.

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