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INTRODUCTION TO ADULT LEARNING

Understanding the Adult Learner

"Treat Learners like Adults"

Adults are people with years of experience and a wealth of information.

Focus on the strengths learners bring to the classroom, not just gaps in their knowledge. Provide opportunities for dialogue within the group. Tap their experience as a major source of enrichment to the class. Remember that you, the teacher, do not need to have all the answers, as long as you know where to go or who to call to get the answers. Students can be resources to you and to each other.

Adults have established values, beliefs, and opinions.

Demonstrate respect for differing beliefs, religions, value systems, and lifestyles. Let your learners know that they are entitled to their values, beliefs, and opinions, but that everyone in the room may not share their beliefs. Allow debate and challenge of ideas.

Adults are people whose style and pace of learning has probably changed.

Use a variety of teaching strategies such as small group problem solving and discussion. Use auditory, visual, tactile, and participatory teaching methods. Reaction time and speed of learning may be slow, but the ability to learn is not impaired by age. Most adults prefer teaching methods other than lecture.

Adults relate new knowledge and information to previously learned information and experiences.

Assess the specific learning needs of your audience before your class or at the beginning of the class. Present single concepts and focus on application of concepts to relevant practical situations. Summarize frequently to increase retention and recall. Material outside of the context of participants' experiences and knowledge becomes meaningless.

Adults are people with bodies influenced by gravity.

Plan frequent breaks, even if they are 2-minute "stretch" breaks. During a lecture, a short break every 45-60 minutes is sufficient. In more interactive teaching situations, breaks can be spaced 60-90 minutes apart.

Adults have pride.

Support the students as individuals. Self-esteem and ego are at risk in a classroom environment that is not perceived as safe or supportive. People will not ask questions or participate in learning if they are afraid of being put down or ridiculed. Allow people to admit confusion, ignorance, fears, biases, and different opinions. Acknowledge or thank students for their responses and questions. Treat all questions and comments with respect. Avoid saying "I just covered that" when someone asks a repetitive question. Remember, the only foolish question is the unasked question.

Adults have a deep need to be self-directing.

Engage the students in a process of mutual inquiry. Avoid merely transmitting knowledge or expecting total agreement. Don't "spoon-feed" the participants. Individual differences among people increase with age. Take into account differences in style, time, types and pace of learning. Use auditory, visual, tactile, and participatory teaching methods.

Adults tend to have a problem-centered orientation to learning.

Emphasize how learning can be applied in a practical setting. Use case studies, problem solving groups, and participatory activities to enhance learning. Adults generally want to immediately apply new information or skills to current problems or situations. Note: New information and skills must be relevant and meaningful to the concerns and desires of the students. Know what the needs are of individuals in your class. Students do not wish to learn what they will never use. The learning environment must by physically and psychologically comfortable.

Adapted from: California Nurses Association, AIDS Train the Trainer Program for Health Care Providers [1988]

What's going through their minds before attending class...

What they're thinking:

Activists:

- Is this going to be fun or another boring session where I sit and listen to someone babble all day?
- Are we going do something challenging and have some problems to solve?
- I hope there will be other like-minded people there that I can mix with.
- Will I learn something new that I didn't know before?

Reflectors:

- Will I be given adequate time to consider, assimilate, and prepare?
- I hope there will be a wide variety of people there with a variety of views that I can listen to and reflect on.
- This better not be one of those ... "hurry up and slap something together sessions."
- I hope I get a chance to watch others in action.

Theorists:

- If this is going to be worth my time it better have a clear structure and purpose.
- I already have lots of questions, so I hope I'm given an opportunity to ask them.
- I'll learn the most if they have a model for me to follow.

Pragmatists:

- The best programs are conducted by an expert who can do things themselves.
- This better not be one of those "feel good" programs with no practical application that improves performance around here.
- I love those tip's and techniques sections of learner manuals.
- I get the most out of sessions that focus on "real" problems that give me a chance to practice or experiment.

Experiential Learning Cycle

Addresses all of the four learning styles:

APPLICATION
How do I apply what
I've learned?
(Pragmatist)

O/C
Orientation/
Clarification
(Activitst)

GENERALIZATION
Draw conclusions
based on reflections
(Theorist)

REFLECTION
What did I just
experience?
(Reflectors)

Learning Cycle: Potential Phase Questions

Here is a list of potential questions to use during each phase of the learning cycle to enhance the class experience.

Reflection Phase – learners have completed the "experience" (heard a lecture, watched a demonstration, completed an experience, etc.). Questions should generate data and/or cause learners to "reflect" on the experience.

- What did you observe?
- What happened?
- Who else had a similar experience?
- Were there any surprises?
- What were you aware of?

Generalization Phase – learners have reflected and generated data. Questions should help to make sense of the data that was generated for the individual and the group.

- What does that mean to you?
- What struck you about that?
- How do those fit together?
- How might it have been different or better?
- What did you learn, or relearn?
- Does that remind you of anything?

Application Phase – learners are concerned with using what they have learned in their "real world" situation. Questions should help learners to apply the knowledge they have gained to their personal/professional lives.

- How could you apply that?
- What would you like to do with that?
- How could you make it better?
- What are the options?
- What changes can you make to improve it?
- What would the consequences of doing/or not doing it be?

Taken from Hillestad Learning Technologies

PROMOTING YOUR CLASS

Descriptions
Write to sell your class!

Use Key Words

- Quick
- Fast
- Easy
- Step by step
- As easy as 1, 2, 3

- Immediate results
- Ready to use
- How to
- Discover
- Remarkable

Use Powerful Verbs

- Explore
- Enrich
- Discover
- Create
- Develop
- Improve

- Transform
- Solidify
- Connect
- Capture
- Conquer
- Design

Marketing Ideas

- Put up flyers (provided upon request)

- Facebook/ Twitter blasts to family and friends (use your course link that was emailed to you)

- Leave a YourU in your local gym, church, temple, or Dr's office

- Tell people about your course.

- Let people know about the better with friends discount (if applicable to your class).

CLASS PLANNING PROCESS

Date of Course

Title

Description (Topic of Your Class)
- Short description for YourU: 200 characters or less
- Long description for registration site: maximum two paragraphs

Learning Objectives
- What do I want students to understand?
- What do I want them to take away from this class?
- What will students be able to do when they leave this class?

Materials Needed
- List all materials that will be needed to teach this lesson.
- Who will be responsible for securing materials?

Procedure

(Include a DETAILED description of each step. Write what you will SAY and DO.)
- Preparation of the learning environment (if required)
- Engage - Introduction of the lesson
- Implementation of the lesson (specific procedures and directions for teacher and students)
- Closure
- Clean-up (if required)

Consider
- How you have planned to meet the needs of <u>all students in your classroom</u> with varied learning styles and abilities, English language proficiency, health, physical ability, etc.
- How will you keep engaged adults who are fast learners?
- How will you support the learning of students struggling with your objectives?
- If you are pressed for time- what can be omitted? What is necessary to fulfill the learning objectives?
- ***What could go wrong with this lesson and what will you do about it***? Think about this! It may help you avoid an embarrassing situation.

Sample Course Outline

Social Media Basics

Prior to the course, I surveyed the students to gage their skill level and to find out what they were most interested in learning. This was very helpful, because I had more than four hours of content to whittle down.

Note: The course is held in a computer lab and students are encouraged to follow along and ask questions. (The most frequently asked is, "What is a hashtag.")

Day 1 (2 hours)

Facebook
- What is Facebook and how does it differ from other social networks
- Getting started
- Privacy
  - Basics
  - Adjusting privacy settings
- Using Facebook
  - Sharing
  - Adjusting account settings
  - Navigating
  - Timeline and tagging
  - The Activity Log
  - Chat and messages
  - Texts
  - Groups and Pages

Instagram
- What is Instagram
- Getting started
- Instagram vocabulary
- Using Instagram
  - Navigating
  - Sharing photos and videos
  - Editing tips
  - Liking and commenting
  - Privacy and posting

Day 2 (2 hours)

Twitter
- What is Twitter
- Getting started
- Privacy considerations
- Using Twitter
  - Navigation
  - Who to follow
  - How to Tweet
  - Timeline
  - Discover what's happening
  - Searching

Pinterest
- What is Pinterest
- Getting Started
- Pinterest vocabulary
- Using Pinterest
  - Navigating
  - Creating a Pinboard
  - Managing Pins and Pinboards
  - Exploring Pinterest
  - Repinning
  - Privacy and posting

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
For Professional Development and Mini Course Instructors

Position Summary

Mini Course instructors develop, plan, and deliver a noncredit course(s) from start to finish. They instruct a group of participants (students) in the selected subject matter, endeavoring to create and maintain a quality and positive instructional environment and image of the UW-Parkside Mini Course and Continuing Education program as a whole.

Expectation

Our instructors come to us from varying backgrounds, interests and experience levels. Previous teaching or training experience is preferred but not required. New instructors that teach through UW Parkside's Continuing Education program are required to attend a two-hour informational and training session. A session will be made available each semester. We expect that you will teach or provide training to the best of your ability keeping in mind the following guidelines:

1) Schedule your class or course and be on time for all class sessions. Assume your class or course is running unless otherwise notified.
2) Be knowledgeable in the areas you are instructing, but be willing to admit the limits of your knowledge and refer students to other resources if appropriate.
3) Be enthusiastic in the subject matter you are teaching and in your teaching of that subject.
4) Use the Mini Course program to facilitate information exchange, but not to advocate a single point of view, belief, cause, or business.
5) Maintain an open, democratic classroom free of biased language, actions or activities.
6) Allow for flexibility in class structure/content upon suggestions from students and/or Mini Course staff.
7) Assist with marketing your class or course to ensure minimum enrollments are met to avoid cancellation.
8) Follow UW-Parkside's campus policies (i.e. rooms are left the same upon the completion of a class, no cars may use the sidewalk to drive directly to building entrances, be respectful to other classes being held, etc.)

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND EMAILS
University Police: 262-595-2455
Mini Course Office: 262-595-3340, minicourses@uwp.edu
Mini Course Office Location: Continuing Education & Community Engagement, Tallent Hall
Emergency: 262-595-2911

Specific Responsibilities

1) Create, facilitate, and evaluate a class or course plan from start to finish.
2) Complete a short and full description of class/course for marketing purposes by the deadline provided by Continuing Education staff.
3) Complete all paperwork in a timely manner, including Instructor Contracts, W-9, Criminal Background Check, and other documents as requested. The aforementioned documents are to be completed before the start date of the course(s).
4) If you want instructor or supply payment to go to a company instead of an individual, an invoice must be submitted on company letterhead within 14 days of class end. The W-9 you submitted must reflect the person/organization being paid or it will be rejected. (Ex: If your payment is to go to your business but the W-9 is filled out as an individual, it does not correspond; or vice-versa).
5) Provide an invoice with original receipts, or other appropriate documentation, for agreed upon supply cost reimbursement within 14 days of class end.
6) Promoting your course(s) is required in order to reach the minimum enrollments to avoid class cancellation.
7) If you teach children under 18, the university requires a criminal background check for the instructor, which must be completed no later than 3 days before the class starts. You will receive a request for authorization via email. Please complete and return as instructed.

General Policies

1) If doors are locked they can be opened by contacting University of Wisconsin-Parkside Police.
2) All lights and electronic equipment that you turned on must be turned off before you leave for the night.
3) Photo copies that need to be made for your class should be submitted to the Mini Course office or through e-mail to minicourses@uwp.edu no later than **2 weeks** before the date needed.
4) If there is inclement weather, Mini Courses follows university policy. When UW-Parkside classes are cancelled the Mini Course classes will be cancelled. Please check our website at www.uwp.edu or call our information line at 262-595-2345. News of UW-Parkside closures also will air on television and radio.
5) ***Do not reschedule classes on your own.*** Rescheduling is strongly discouraged but may be necessary under certain circumstances. The Mini Course office will work with you if rescheduling is needed.

Classroom Policies

1) A class list will be sent via e-mail to you 24-48 hours before the class.
2) You will be notified 48-72 hours in advance if your class will be cancelled due to lack of enrollment.
3) Any classroom furnishings (desks/tables/chairs/etc.) moved during class need to be returned to their original locations at the end of class.

Refund/Payment Policies

1) All refunds and class payments will be handled by UW-Parkside's Continuing Education program. At no time should an instructor address refund issues with students or take money. Refer them to Continuing Education at 262-595-3340.

2) Instructor stipends will be sent to instructors after the course has been completed. Payments usually arrive within 14 days following the completion of the course. Instructors teaching more than one course will be paid on a per course basis.

Supplies/Reimbursement Policies

1) All supplies and supply costs must receive **prior approval**. Please submit a list of needed supplies and estimated costs for approval when you return your contract or at the same time you submit your class proposal. Supply costs need to be taken into consideration when pricing a course. Reimbursements for supplies will be made when the course is completed and when an invoice along with original receipts is submitted. Failure to submit this information will result in non-reimbursement for these expenses.

2) Photocopies are not considered an expense – these must be done through the university. Please see General Policies #3.

Waiting List

1) There will be a waiting list created for classes that reach their maximum enrollment. This list will be kept by UW-Parkside. If enough individuals are on the waiting list we may request the instructor to teach another session of the class.

2) Waiting lists will also be used when students withdraw from a class. If a student withdraws from a class the first individual on the waiting list will be notified.

Parking

UW-Parkside has 3 lots available for parking: Tallent Hall, Student Center, and the Rita.

A parking permit will be provided to all Mini Course instructors and registered mini course students. You will receive a parking permit via email and will be valid only on the date(s) of your class. The parking permit MUST be displayed in your vehicle. Permit users are restricted from using meters and reserved spots. REMINDER: Permits are only valid for use in specified lots and are not valid in residence hall parking lots.

If you or a student receive a ticket in error please contact the Mini Course office to work with the UW-Parkside University Police. If you have any questions, contact Continuing Education staff at 262-595-3340.

MINI COURSE INSTRUCTOR CHECKLIST

Pre-Class Checklist

- ☐ Class catalog description submitted – 200 words or less
- ☐ Class online registration site description submitted – 2 paragraphs maximum
- ☐ Instructor Bio submitted – 2 paragraphs maximum
- ☐ Instructor headshot submitted – 250 pixels maximum
- ☐ Course contract returned
- ☐ W9 returned
- ☐ Handout originals submitted to Continuing Education department for duplication
- ☐ Course supplies and costs approved by the Continuing Education department
- ☐ Online class registration link received
- ☐ Room location received
- ☐ Class marketing plan implemented
- ☐ Parking permit received
- ☐ Class roster received

Day-of-Class Checklist

- ☐ Computer passwords received (if applicable)
- ☐ Handouts or supplies received (if applicable)
- ☐ Arrive early enough to arrange classroom to suit needs of class
- ☐ Inform and **encourage students to complete the online class evaluation** they will receive in an email upon class completion
- ☐ **Classroom returned to original set-up** (all course materials cleaned up and desks/tables returned to original arrangement)
- ☐ Lights off
- ☐ Room locked

Post-Class Checklist

- ☐ Original receipts and invoice submitted to Continuing Education department (if applicable)
- ☐ Payment received within 14 days of course completion and submission of all required documentation
- ☐ Submit class proposal(s) for following semester