

Setting the Climate

The first session of any class is crucial in terms of allowing your students to know what their learning experience with you will entail.

Consider the following:

- adults who have been away from systematic education for even short times may underestimate their ability to learn. They'll be nervous.
- methods of teaching have changed since older adults were in school, so that most of them have to go through a period of adjustment.
- various physiological changes occur in the process of aging and need compensatory consideration.
- adults respond less readily to external sanctions for learning and will be looking for how you can enrich their experiences.

These (and other) concerns will be brought with the students into your classroom--no one will talk about them. It's important that the first exposure be positive. Paraphrasing Mager, the learning climate should be arranged in such a way that the participant is in the presence of as many pleasant conditions as possible and as few as possible unpleasant ones. If you cannot always produce a positive attitude toward learning, you should at least attempt to insure that you are not the cause of a negative one.

As you plan your initial sessions, think about providing a positive

- physical environment (temperature, ventilation, easy access to water, coffee, or tea if permissible, adequate light, acoustics).
- human and interpersonal climate (greet your students warmly, let them choose their own seats, talk about them--acknowledge and value them as people; let them know they'll have an opportunity to interact and help design their learning; specify any expectations you have of them--keep your expectations reasonable and state them clearly).
- organizational climate (provide timelines for any important aspects of your class--term papers, etc.; let them know of any institutional deadlines, i.e., graduation, drop date, etc.; where to get tutorial help or other resources they may need, etc.).

Be sure to visit your assigned work area before the class begins so you know what to expect. Arrive early so you can greet the first ones to arrive (they're usually the most anxious about achieving success in your class). And relax--teaching adults is fun.

Benedict/Cavall

What About the Opening Session?

Adapted from M. Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education*

The opening session of any training or teaching situation is very important. Setting a comfortable climate, a friendly but professional tone, can motivate and interest your adult learners. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. How will you introduce yourself?
2. What procedures will you use to engage learners in becoming acquainted with one another in terms of their work, experience, interests, etc.?
3. What other procedures will you use to establish a climate of mutual respect, collaboration, informality, supportiveness?
4. How will you engage learners in examining, clarifying, and influencing the objectives of the course or training session?
5. How will you acquaint learners with your plan of work for the training or course and their responsibilities in it?
6. How will you help them prepare to carry out the responsibilities you expect of them?
7. How will you acquaint learners with the resources (material and human) available to them for accomplishing their learning objectives?
8. What learning activities will you suggest learners engage after your workshop or in between the first and second sessions?
9. What physical arrangement of your meeting room do you prefer to facilitate interaction among the learners and between them and you?

-Gretchen T. Bersch



Planning Discussions as Part of Your Training

Discussion can add greatly to your training session. When people participate in good and rich discussion, it can help their learning. It can create more democratic learning situations and is an excellent way to elicit a diversity of views and voices. Stephen Brookfield and Steven Preskill give a list of good reasons for including discussion as part of teaching and training and discuss ways to plan, conduct and evaluate lively discussion.

Reasons for Using Discussion

In *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, Brookfield and Preskill make fifteen arguments regarding the ways that participating in discussions helps learning. I've replaced "student" with "learner."

- 1 It helps learners explore a diversity of perspectives.
- 2 It increases learners' awareness of and tolerance for ambiguity and complexity.
- 3 It helps learners recognize and investigate their assumptions.
- 4 It encourages attentive, respectful listening.
- 5 It develops new appreciation for continuing differences.
- 6 It increases intellectual agility.
- 7 It helps learners become connected to a topic.
- 8 It shows respect for learners' voices and experiences.
- 9 It helps learners learn the processes and habits of democratic discourse.
- 10 It affirms learners as co-creators of knowledge.
- 11 It develops the capacity for the clear communication of ideas and meaning.
- 12 It develops habits of collaborative learning.
- 13 It increases breadth and makes learners more empathetic.
- 14 It helps learners develop skills of synthesis and integration.
- 15 It leads to transformation.

Decide what your reasons are for using discussion as part of your training session.

Brookfield, S., & Preskill, S. (1999). *Discussion as a way of teaching: Tools and techniques for democratic classrooms*. San Francisco : Jossey-Bass, pp. 22-23.

Planning Your Workshop

From: Martin, M. (1982). "Be a better teacher." In Klevins, C. *Materials & methods in adult & continuing education*. Los Angeles: Klevins Publications, pgs. 323-325. Handout: G. Bersch.

Dr. McKinley Martin wrote:

The key to successful teaching is good planning. There is not substitute for it! One of the most effective ways of improving your teacher-student relationship is to know what you are doing, when you are supposed to do it, and especially why you are doing it. Adult students are so different in their experience, background and behavior that over planning is important to assure adequate planning. Be sure that you have involved your adult students in all of this planning.

Sample Daily Lesson Plan

Date:

Subject:

1. Learning Goals: Why am I teaching this workshop or session?

2. What do I expect participants to learn in this session?

3. Workshop Procedures: How am I going to teach this session?

Teacher/learner discussion	Demonstration
Interaction by learners	Lecture
Group work	Media
Debate/panel discussion	Reports
Role play/simulation	Quiz or test
Other	

4. What materials and equipment will I use?
(books, mediated/audiovisual, computers, handouts, etc.)

5. If it applies, what is the next workshop's assignment?

6. How could today's workshop have been improved?

Lecturing Creatively

From: Brookfield, S. (1990) *The Skillful Teacher*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 149-162.

The lecture method of teaching has frequently been abused. It is often authoritarian, teacher-centered, boring and delivered in a mind-numbing manner. The challenge, writes Stephen Brookfield, is to make lectures as enlivening and critically stimulating as possible. He offers guidelines and techniques to meet this challenge.

Be Clear About Why You Choose to Lecture

Some of the most common reasons for lecturing are:

- To establish the broad outlines of a body of material.
- To set guidelines for independent study.
- To model intellectual attitudes you hope to encourage in students.
- To encourage learners' interest in a topic.
- To set the moral culture for discussions.

Research Your Audience

Pace Your Presentation

Personalize Your Presentation

Speak from Notes

Use Visual Aids

Use Critical Incidents

Leave with a Question

See Yourself as Your Audience Sees You

Learning as a Whole Person

As you reflect on your learning from the workshop yesterday with Julie, think about a time when you learned as a whole person- where your intellect, emotions, body and spirit were all involved.

What were you learning?

What were the circumstances?

Beside yourself, who was involved?

What happened?

What feelings do you recall about the event?

What can you learn by reflecting on that event today?

Basic Principles of Adult Learning*

1. Needs assessments are crucial to identifying what adults need to learn and should precede the development of training/educational programs.
 - Ask directly. Helping adults to identify what they want to know as well as what they need to know engages them in the learning process.
 - Observe directly. What have you observed as training or educational needs? Clarify whether adults have the information but are not applying it OR don't have the information, therefore need to be trained.
2. Learning environments for adults need to be "safe." If adults feel threatened or embarrassed, the learning process is damaged.
 - Avoid excessive evaluation and testing as means of accountability for new knowledge. It rekindles negative experiences from childhood.
 - Adopt the "there are no wrong answers or stupid questions" attitude.
3. Develop more "mutual" relationships between the learners and the teachers. Develop and encourage learners to see themselves as part of both the teaching and learning process.
 - Ask for examples from adults in the learning context to supplement your examples. Validate questions and comments from adult learners.
 - As teacher or presenter, emphasize mutual interests and concerns, de-emphasize "I know, you don't know" perspective.

4. Learning activities must be sequenced and reinforced.

- Break down new knowledge into a series of steps or tasks to be presented beginning with simple tasks and proceeding to more complex ideas and tasks.
- Help learners to master simple tasks and build upon them as materials becomes more difficult. This helps to build confidence and reduce anxiety.

5. The ability to act on new knowledge is based on having the time and the opportunity to reflect on the new knowledge, to question and consider how this knowledge applies to them.

- Encourage small group discussions whenever possible especially when presenting controversial or difficult material. Ask small groups to directly answer the question of “how does this apply to you?”
- Encourage constructive criticism of new material. It is easier to accept/retain materials you have questioned and then digested.

6. Adult learners must be respected as decision-makers.

- Ask adult learners to respond to new material presented in a decision-making capacity—i.e. How would you apply this information to what you do? When would this information be helpful? Not helpful?
- Use exercises to demonstrate the decision-making process to clarify the complex process of making decisions based on what we do and don't know.

7. Learning is a combined process of ideas, feelings, and action.

- Adults receive new information within a learning context.
- The cognitive process evokes an emotional response.
- How the adult “feels” about what s/he has “thought” determines how the new knowledge will be applied.
- Attitudes are caught not taught.

8. Adults need to see the immediate relevancy of the new knowledge presented to them.

- Training should be timed to be immediately applicable.
- Use examples, learning activities directly related to the situation in which they will be applied.
- Make the connection and reinforce it!

9. Adults need to develop relationships with and “use” other learners in the learning context as well as needing to feel they are contributing to others’ learning.

- Infuse the learning context with opportunities to interact with other adult learners.
- Small learning groups may be helpful in providing support and safety to adult learners.

10. Actively engage adults in the learning process through “hands-on” and participatory learning activities.

- Provide ample opportunities for adults to “do something” with what they are learning.
- Use creative, unusual experiences and don’t over-rely on role plays and question and answer format.

11. Learning is reinforced by accountability

- Accountability applies both to the teacher and learner.
- Teacher should be evaluated by learners. Learners should be evaluated by both self and the teacher.
- Build in small, non-threatening evaluation steps along the way but don't avoid evaluating out of fear of threatening safety.

*Source: Vella, J. (1994). *Learning to listen, learning to teach: The power of dialogue in educating adults*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

For additional reading on adult learning...

Canton, P. (1994). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Galbraith, M. W. (Ed.) (1990). *Adult learning methods: A guide for effective instruction*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing.

Imel, S. (2000). *Change: Connections to adult learning and education*. ERIC Digest No.1 221. ED446252.

Mezirow, J. (1996). Contemporary paradigms of learning. *Adult Educational Quarterly*, 46(3), 158-173.

Vella, J. (1994). *Learning to listen, learning to teach: The power of dialogue in educating adults*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Vella, J. (2000). *Taking learning to task: Creative strategies for teaching adults*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Introduction By Disclosure

- OBJECTIVE:** To facilitate the rapid breakdown of facades and norms against self-disclosure within a group.
- PROCEDURE:** Ask each participant to stand and share with the group a personal response to any one (or more, as the instructor desires) of these questions.
1. What is your greatest achievement?
 2. What is your most prized possession?
 3. If you could have a T-shirt printed with a message, what would it say?
 4. What is the most fun that you ever had?
 5. If you discovered that you had only one year to live, what would you do differently?
 6. If you were stranded on a deserted island:
 - a. What three books would you like to have along?
 - b. What three people would you like to have there with you?
- MATERIALS
REQUIRED:** None.
- APPROXIMATE
TIME
REQUIRED:** One-half minute per person, per question.
- SOURCE:** R. Jones, ITT CBC, Rye, New York.

*From: Scamnell, E. More games trainers play.
New York: McGraw-Hill*

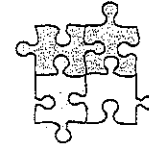
Considering Your Audience

- Age, Gender, Culture
- Language
- Education Level
- Previous Experience
- Prior Knowledge
- Skills & Abilities
- Personalities & Traits



Choosing What to Teach

- What are your training goals and objectives?
- What content will you choose for your training?
- In what order will you do things?



Developing Your Training Strategy



- What methods will you use?
- What materials will you use?
- What tools, equipment or special items will you need?

Your Training Tool Box



- Lecture
- Demonstration
- Case Study
- Hands-on Activities
- Interactive Computers
- Discussion
- Brainstorming
- Role Play
- Collaborative Learning Projects
- Small/Large Group
- Problem Solving
- Debate or Panel
- Video & Audio

Creating a Good Learning Climate



- How will you and your learners introduce themselves?
- How can you create a trusting, comfortable atmosphere?
- How can you make the learning enjoyable or even fun?

Evaluating Your Training



- What is the purpose?
- Will you evaluate...
 - The Content?
 - The Trainer?
 - The Learning?
- Who will use it?
- How will you evaluate?

Suggested Reading: Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Disability

- Beck-Massey, D. (1999). Sanctioned war: Women, violence, and disabilities. *Sexuality and Disability, 17*(3), 269-276.
- Carlson, B.E. (1997). Mental retardation and domestic violence: An ecological approach to intervention. *Social Work, 42*(1), 79-90.
- Curry, M.A., Hassouneh-Phillips, D., & Johnston-Silverberg, A. (2001). Abuse of women with disabilities: An ecological model and review. *Violence Against Women, 7*(4), 418-431.
- Englert, D. R., Diserio, A., & Ryan, K. (n.d.) The prosecutor's guide to mental health disorders. *American Prosecutors Research Institute, 1*(10), 1-8.
- Gilson, S.F., Cramer, E.P., & Depoy, E. (2001). Redefining abuse of women with disabilities: a paradox of limitation and expansion. *Affilia, 16*(2), 220-235.
- Gilson, S.F., DePoy, E., & Cramer, E. (2001). Linking the assessment of self-reported functional capacity with abuse experiences of women with disabilities. *Violence Against Women, 7*(4), 418-431.
- Hassouneh-Philips, D., & McNeff, E. (2005). 'I thought I was less worthy': Low sexual and body esteem and increased vulnerability to intimate partner abuse in women with physical disabilities. *Sexuality and Disability, 23*(4), 227-240.
- Hoog, C. (2004). *Model Protocol on Safety Planning for Domestic Violence Victims with Disabilities*. Washington: Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
- Monahan, K., & Lurie, A. (2003). Disabled women sexually abused in childhood: treatment considerations. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 31*(4), 407-418.
- Nosek, M.A., Chubb-Foley, C., Hughes, K., and Howland, C.A. (2001). Vulnerabilities for abuse among women with disabilities. *Sexuality and Disability, 19*(3), 177-189.
- Petersilia, J. (2001). Crime victims with developmental disabilities: A review essay. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 28*(6), 655-694.
- Saxton, M., Curry, M.A., Powers, L.E., Maley, S., Eckels, K., & Gross, J. (2001). "Bring my scooter so I can leave you": A study of disabled women handling abuse by personal assistance providers. *Violence Against Women, 7*(4), 393-417.
- Sobsey, Dick. (1994). *Violence and abuse in the lives of people with disabilities: The end of silent acceptance?* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.