
MODULE 2: ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Day:

Time:

Level of Understanding:

Instructional Strategies:

- Lecture
- Discussion
- Small Group Activities

Module Equipment/Facilities:

- Standard Classroom Setup

Participant Materials/Handouts:

- Workbook 2.1: Adult Learning Principles Activity
- Workbook 2.2: Target Audience Analysis Activity

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this module, you will be able to determine the target audience requirements based on adult learning principles.

Introduction

This module reviews the principles of adult learning that form the foundation of adult learning. The module will distinguish the difference between education and training and describe characteristics of adult learners. Emphasis is placed on understanding how to use multiple learning channels to optimize learning. The final activity applies the information presented to completing an analysis of the target audience.

Module Topics

An outline of key topics and an approximate time plan are shown below.

Topic	Enabling Learning Objectives	Approximate Time
Introduction	▪ Not applicable	10 minutes
Adult Learner Characteristic	▪ Describe the characteristics of adult learners	60 minutes
Multiple Learning Channels	▪ Describe how the multiple learning channels support adult learners	10 minutes
Target Audience	▪ Determine the characteristics of the target audience	30 minutes
Module Summary	▪ Not applicable	10 minutes

The module times are guidelines only. The actual time required may vary based on the experience level and interest of the participants or other factors encountered during the training session.

Key Terms

Key Term	Description
Auditory Learning	Auditory learning is learning by hearing or listening.
Education	Education provides the learner with general knowledge and skills, such as reading, writing, and problem solving.
Job Aid	A job aid is a mechanism that guides the performance of work, especially useful when an individual is completing detailed processes or tasks that are not performed frequently. Common job aids include checklists, cookbooks, decision guides, forms, worksheets, resource centers, and references.
Kinesthetic/Tactile Learning	Kinesthetic/tactile learning is learning by doing.
Learning Channels or Modalities	Learning channels or modalities are all of the ways course participants access, acquire, process, and demonstrate what they know.
Target Audience Analysis	Target audience analysis is the process of gathering relevant information about the target audience for training. Knowing the audience's learning preferences, motivations, and unique needs is critical for training.
Task	A task is a behavior described using a verb, an object of the verb, and simple language. The behavior has a beginning and end.
Training	Training refers to the acquisition of specific skills needed to perform a job task. The bottom line – training is teaching course participants how to do something they will use on the job.
Visual Learning	Visual learning is learning through seeing or observing.

Topic: Module Topic**10 Minutes****Slide 1 Adult Learning Principles**

- Title Slide

*Graphic Description: U.S Flag and Seal***Module Preparation**

- **Timing and Methods:** Use the suggested time plan at the beginning of the module. As with all modules in this course, read all the content (Facilitator Guide and PowerPoint slides) and familiarize yourself with each facilitator note before class.
- Be thoroughly prepared for exercises, discussions, and activities required for the module. Follow all facilitator notes. Use a combination of lecture, large-group discussion, and small-group activities.

Orientation to Participant Guide

- When beginning this module:
 - Refer the participants to the beginning of this module in the Participant Guide.
 - Note the list of addenda the participants will use during this module. Explain that instructions for all exercises are included in the addenda.
 - Review the key terms and abbreviations/acronyms before beginning the module.

Slide 2 Module Objective

- At the end of this module, you will be able to determine the target audience requirements based on adult learning principles.

Graphic Description: No Graphic

- Briefly discuss the terminal learning objective.
- Highlight the key topics to be presented:
 - Describe the characteristics of adult learners
 - Describe how the multiple learning channels support adult learners
 - Determine the characteristics of the target audience

Topic: Adult Learner Characteristics**60 Minutes****Enabling Learning Objectives:**

- Describe the characteristics of adult learners

Slide 3 Adult Learner Characteristics

- Motivations and readiness
- Previous learning

-
- Active learning

Graphic Description: No graphic

- This is an agenda slide to introduce the adult learning characteristics

Slide 4 Adult Learners: Motivation and Readiness

- Adults learn more when training:
 - Relates to a personal need or benefit
 - Explains the reason why
 - Focuses on job-related or practical situations
 - Helps them succeed

Graphic Description: Participant using tool in classroom

- Explain that adult learners are motivated to learn when they have a need to learn. They want to know how the training will help them immediately. In addition, adult learners see themselves as capable of self-direction and want others to see them in the same way.
- Explain the implications for training:
 - Begin the training by providing course participants with an opportunity to explore why they need to learn the knowledge and skills.
 - Explain the benefits to be derived from the training.
 - Allow course participants to try out new learning quickly. Facilitators may motivate adults by convincing them of the potential benefits of learning. However, to stay motivated, adults need a chance to experience the benefits for themselves.
 - Allow adult learners to direct their own learning. Do not structure training too rigidly.
 - Treat adults as adults. Avoid activities that will embarrass them or make them feel belittled.

Slide 5 Adult Learners: Previous Learning

- Adults learn by
 - Associating new learning to past experiences to create their own understanding
 - Recognizing the need to change previous assumptions, procedures, or techniques

Graphic Description: Participants in discussions

- Explain that adult learners possess a large bank of previous learning. This previous learning can be both an asset and a deficit. Adults learn best when they are able to link new knowledge and skills to those they learned previously. This linkage allows adult learners to use existing knowledge and skills and decreases anxiety about learning.
- Explain that existing knowledge and skills can also be a hindrance to learning. If the new knowledge and skills to be acquired are contradictory to the course participants' existing knowledge and skills, the individual may:
 - Not want to change what he or she already knows and can do

- Experience interference from existing knowledge and skills—they may need to unlearn previous learning and habits
- Explain the implications for training:
 - Help the course participants build bridges between existing learning and new learning by:
 - Using analogies and common examples
 - Allowing course participants to explore what they already know about an area before providing new instruction
 - Giving individuals credit for what they know or are able to do
 - Highlighting new or changing techniques and presenting the reasons for the change
 - Demonstrating and comparing old and new procedures
 - Provide job aids or help individuals develop their own job aids to help them unlearn previous learning that is interfering with new learning.

Slide 6 Adult Learners: Active Learning

- Adults learn and remember more when the training is active rather than passive
Graphic Description: Participants talking demonstrating active learning; Professor lecturing to class demonstrating passive learning
- Explain that studies show that over a three-day period, the retention of learning is as follows:
 - 10% of what we READ
 - 20% of what we HEAR
 - 30% of what we SEE
 - 50% of what we SEE and HEAR
 - 70% of what we DISCUSS WITH OTHERS
 - 80% of what we EXPERIENCE PERSONALLY
 - 95% of what we TEACH TO SOMEONE ELSE
 - Source: William Glasser, *Choice Theory in the Classroom*, July 1998.
- Adults can learn by reading, listening, and watching, but they will learn more if they are actively involved in the learning process.
- Explain the implications for training:
 - Minimize passive learning (lectures and reading assignments) and maximize learning by doing.
 - Pair information presented in lectures or reading assignments with such activities as discussions, exercises, role plays, and job simulations.
 - Use a blend of learning technologies to increase involvement in the learning process.
 - Make sure that you have course participants do something active for every 20 to 30 minutes of instruction.
 - Allow course participants to summarize what they have learned by asking them to state the major principles or steps.

Slide 7 Adult Learning Principles Activity (Workbook 2.1)



- Purpose: to describe adult learning principles
 - Duration 45 minutes (15-preparation; 30-presentation and debrief)
 - Group: Small group
 - Debrief: Large group discussion

Graphic Description: No Graphic

- Organize participants into small teams of three to five individuals. If you have a large class, consider splitting the participants into breakout rooms to expedite the activity. If time is limited (three-day agenda), you may alter this activity to be a large group discussion.
- Refer participants to **Workbook 2.1: Adult Learning Principles Activity**.
- Explain that the purpose of this activity is to demonstrate the principles of adult learning. You may allow the participants to select a topic or assign one topic to each group. Make sure that all four principles are covered.
- Review the following instructions:
 - For one learning principle, identify:
 - Motivation and readiness to learn
 - Previous learning
 - Active learning
 - Develop a three-minute presentation that answers the following questions:
 - What learning principle is the team presenting?
 - Why is this learning principle important?
 - How could this learning principle be used in training? Note: Tell a story or demonstrate the use of this learning principle.
- Emphasize that the presentation should:
 - Be creative! Participants may use chart paper or objects in the room. Use of PowerPoint presentations is not allowed.
 - Involve as many team members in the presentation as possible.
 - Demonstrate the adult learning concepts in your presentation.
 - Limit presentation to three minutes.
- Monitor the time for preparation. After 10 minutes, remind the class that 5 minutes remain. After 15 minutes, reconvene the class.
- Have each team make its presentation by a participant who did not make the presentation in 1.1. Limit the presentations to three minutes.
- After all of the teams have presented, summarize the learning principles demonstrated.

Topic: Multiple Learning Channels

10 Minutes

Enabling Learning Objectives:

- Describe how the multiple learning channels support adult learners

Slide 8 Multiple Learning Channels

- Hearing
- Seeing
- Touching/Doing

Graphic Description: Headset as example of hearing; Whiteboard as example of seeing; Building blocks as example of touching/doing

- Describe the learning channels
 - **Hearing:** Examples of learning through hearing (auditory learning) include:
 - Listening to lectures
 - Using word association to remember facts
 - Repeating facts with eyes closed
 - Participating in group discussions
 - **Seeing:** Examples of learning through seeing (visual learning) include:
 - Drawing maps or diagrams
 - Reading text rather than having it read aloud
 - Developing topic outlines or writing notes summarizing the key concepts
 - Associating images or symbols with text describing key concepts
 - Watching videos, demonstrations, or animations
 - Color coding words or key concepts
 - **Doing:** Examples of learning by doing (tactile or kinesthetic learning) are activities that engage the course participants' hands and bodies (not just their minds) and include:
 - Interspersing physical activities or movement into the training flow
 - Writing on charts or boards
 - Participating in role-playing
 - Completing hands-on or field exercises
- We use multiple sensory channels to learn and experience the world around us. For example, we integrate visual and auditory information to perform many work tasks. Our brains have evolved to develop, learn, and operate optimally in multisensory environments.
- Although some course participants prefer one learning channel or modality, research shows that teaching in multiple modalities or channels improves the ability to learn. Therefore, our training should use multiple learning channels or modalities.
- Source: Ladan Shams and Aaron R. Seitz, Benefits of multisensory learning (<http://shamslab.psych.ucla.edu/publications/tics2008-reprint.pdf>).

Slide 9 Formula for learning

- Learning = Telling + Showing + Doing

Graphic Description: Example of participants listening, being shown tools, and participants doing a task

- Use this slide to summarize the key concepts related to active learning and learning channels.
- Explain that ATA courses use this formula to foster learning.

Slide 10 TeachBack



- Explain multiple learning channels

Graphic Description: No Graphic

- Conduct a TeachBack exercise by asking the participants: **Explain multiple learning channels.**
- Acknowledge the participant responses. **Responses may vary.** *If not mentioned, add the following:*
 - **Hearing**
 - **Seeing**
 - **Touching/doing**

Topic: Target Audience

30 Minutes

Enabling Learning Objectives:

- Determine the characteristics of the target audience.

Slide 11 Analyzing Your Audience (1 of 2)

- Who needs to receive training?
- What are their current skill and knowledge levels?

Graphic Description: No graphic

Slide 12 Analyzing Your Audience (2 of 2)

- What are their preferred learning channels?
- What is their motivation level?

Graphic Description: No graphic

- Note that understanding the characteristics and preferences of the target audience is important.
- Explain that the first step in achieving the training goal is to gather information about those attending the training.
- Understanding the characteristics of the audience can help the training team establish rapport, tailor the presentation, and meet unique needs. The analysis includes information about trainees' background, previous training experiences, relevant work experiences, and motivation for training.
- Ask participants:
 - What information do you get before you begin a training session?
 - What can you do if you do not receive any advance information?

- Optional Discussion Question: Are there other questions besides those on the visual that you like to ask?

Slide 13 Target Audience Analysis Activity (Workbook 2.2)



- Purpose: to determine the target audience who will attend the training course
 - Duration 25 minutes (15-preparation; 10-discussions)
 - Group: Individual
 - Debrief: Large group discussion

Graphic Description: No graphic

- Refer participants to **Workbook 2.2: Activity: Target Audience Analysis**.
- Explain that the purpose of this activity is to analyze the target audience who will attend the training course the participants will be presenting when they return to their countries.
- Tell participants to work individually to complete the target audience analysis as specified in Workbook 2.2. Note: If time is tight, facilitators may do this as a large group discussion.
- Monitor the time. After 10 minutes, remind the class that there are 5 minutes remaining. After 15 minutes, reconvene the class.
- Ask volunteers to share their analysis. Facilitate a discussion of the implications of the analysis results for presenting the ATA course.

Topic: Module Summary

10 Minutes

Slide 14 Module Summary

- Adult learning principles
- Multiple learning channels
- Target audience analysis

Graphic Description: No Graphic

- Summarize the module:
 - Distinguish the difference between education and training
 - Describe the characteristics of adult learners
 - Describe how the multiple learning channels support adult learners
 - Describe additional factors that affect adult learning
 - Determine the characteristics of the target audience
- Ask if there are any questions about the contents of this module.
- Explain that the next module, Presentation Facilitation, will introduce the student to how to prepare to facilitate training.