Understanding your audience

Adult learners

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Learning Objectives

• Recognize that people have different learning preferences
• Identify the ways in which adults and children learn differently
• Describe the elements of a successful adult education program
• List the motivators and barriers for adult learning
What is learning?

• Learning is a process
• Learning produces change
  – Knowledge
  – Behaviors
  – Skills
  – Values
  – Preferences
• Learning is something that students do

Does everyone learn the same way?

• Individual learning styles/preferences are different
• Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (VAK) learning styles (VARK)
• Innovative instructional activities that cater to audience
Kolb’s model

- Laboratories
- Text readings
- Simulations/games
- Readings

- Observations
- Field work
- Films/videos
- Problem sets

Simulations
Case studies
Laboratories
Field work
Projects
Homework

Logs
Journals
Discussion
Brainstorming
Thought questions
Rhetorical questions
Online discussion

Lecture
Projects
Papers
Analogies
Model building

- Divergers ask: “What is it?”
- Assimilators ask: “What does it mean?”
- Convergers ask: “What can I do?”
- Accommodators ask: “How can I do it?”
Bottom line

• Good educational program will incorporate multiple approaches

• We retain:
  – 10% of what we see
  – 30-40% of what we see and hear
  – 90% of what we see, hear, and do

Does everyone learn the same way?

• Individuals learn differently throughout their lives
• Birth to death
• Brain development varies among individuals
Pedagogy

• The art and science of helping children learn
• Teacher assumes responsibility
  – What is learned
  – How it is learned
  – When it is learned
• Teacher tests that it has been learned

Androgogy

• The art and science of helping adults learn/approach to adult learning
• A. Kapp 1833 first used the term
• M. Knowles in 1960 developed theory of adult education
• Adult: someone who has achieved the self-concept of being responsible for their own life
Androgogy

• Learning is more independent and self-directed
• Teacher encourages and nurtures learning
• Teacher is a facilitator

Principles

• Adults need to know why something is important
• Adults need to learn experientially
• Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their learning
• Adults approach learning as problem-solving
• Adults learn best when the topic has immediate value
• Adults are internally motivated to learn
Key factors found in successful adult learning programs

• An environment where students feel safe and supported, individual needs are respected, where abilities and achievements are respected

• An environment that fosters creativity and intellectual freedom
• An environment where students and instructors are peers
• Students are self-directed and take responsibility for their own learning
Key factors found in successful adult learning programs

- Problem based and collaborative
- Regular feedback mechanisms and instructors that hear them
- Active involvement in learning

Motivations for adults

- Social relationships
- Fulfill expectations from someone with formal authority
- Social welfare
- Personal advancement
- Escape/stimulation
- Learning for the sake of learning
Barriers to learning

• Lack of time
• Lack of confidence
• Lack of information about opportunities
• Scheduling problems
• Lack of motivation
• “red tape”
• Doesn’t see the need to change/learn

Summary

• People have a variety of learning styles/preferences
• Adults learn differently than children
• Development of an extension program with adult stakeholders should consider these differences
• "Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand." Confucius, circa 450 BC