Instructor's Guide

TEACHING ADULTS

THE LEARNING INSTITUTE

STANISLAUS COUNTY

TEACHING ADULTS: INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

1. INTRODUCTION

Creating and facilitating excellent training courses does not require an advanced degree in adult education. By utilizing the strategies and tips in this guide you will be able to teach like a veteran instructor!

What's Different About Teaching Adults?[1]

To be effective in teaching adults, it's important to know your audience and have a general understanding of how adults learn. Much has been written *about* the topic, and you can find suggestions for additional reading in Section 6: References.

To best reach adults, there are five key factors you should focus on in the development of your training:

1. The material presented should have immediate usefulness to the learners.

2. The material presented should be relevant to adult learners' lives.

3. The training environment should be welcoming so that all learners feel safe to participate.

4. The training presentation should be engaging.

5. The training should be presented in a respectful manner, where learners have an opportunity to share their experiences.

> ## *Teaching Keys*
>
> *Ensure engagement by making sure is your course is:*
> - Immediately Useful
> - Relevant
> - Welcoming
> - Engaging
> - Respectful
>
> *Make connections for the students by:*
> - Telling Stories
> - Sharing Cases
> - Presenting Anecdotes
>
> Do you have a story related to your topic ready to share with your audience?

Following these key principles will help you determine what to include in your training and how to present it. Make your training relevant to the learner by recognizing the unique background and experience of people working for Stanislaus County or simply participating in the training. To engage your audience, use examples or anecdotes showing how the material is relevant.

---

[1] *Adapted from Knowles, M.L., The Adult Learner 6th ed., 2005 & "Effective Adult Learning: a toolkit for teaching adults" developed by the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice.*

2. THE THEORY BEHIND TEACHING ADULTS: PEDAGOGICAL VS. ANDRAGOGICAL

When most people think about teaching, they think about school. As a result, it is not very surprising that most people associate teaching with teaching school aged children, but children and adults learn and approach learning very differently. As instructors in Stanislaus County, we spend our time teaching primarily, if not only, adults. Thus, it is crucial that we understand the differences between a pedagogical (teaching children) and an andragogical (teaching adults) approach to teaching and the assumptions they make about the student. The table below outlines the major difference between the two disciplines and the direct application of the lessons to teaching in the Stanislaus County Learning Institute (SCLI).

	Pedagogical The traditional classroom approach to teaching based on the art and science of helping children learn.	**Andragogical** The art and science of helping adults learn.
The Learner	• Learner depends upon instructor for all learning. • Instructor is responsible for content and structure of learning. • Instructor evaluates learning.	• Learner is self-directed. • Learner is responsible for their own learning. • Learner self-evaluates what they have learned.
Role of the Learner's Experience	• Learner has little experience useful for taping as a learning resource. • Experiences of the instructor are the most influential and utilized.	• Learner brings a large amount of experience which may be tapped as a learning resource. • Diversity of experience allows for increased learning/comprehension. • Experience is a source of self-identity.
Readiness to Learn	• Based on advancement. • Proficiency levels are set and students are informed of what is required to advance to the next level.	• Learner can assess gaps where they are and where they want/need to be. • Oriented to the developmental tasks of his/her social roles.
Orientation to Learning	• Learning is a systematic process of acquiring prescribed subject matter. • Subject units are logically ordered based on step sequence.	• Learning must have relevance to real-life tasks. • Learning is organized around life/work situations rather than subject matter units.
Motivation for Learning	• External Motivators: grade and rank competition used in distribution of rewards and avoidance of negative repercussions for failure.	• Internal Motivators: recognition, self-confidence, self-actualization, self-esteem, better quality of life.

What can lessons we take away from the pedagogical and andragogical approaches and directly apply to teaching for Stanislaus County?

The Learner:

> Given that students of County instruction will generally be personally responsible for their own learning and self-evaluating, instructors would be wise to spend time measuring learning only when it is meant as an aid for the student to realize what it is that they know. Additionally, instructors can and should spend time building a sense of personal responsibility for learning in students, as this ethos will help them to continue to spend time developing and self-evaluating after the formal instruction ends.

Role of the Learner's Experience:

> The vast amount of experience contained in the pupils of County instruction can and should be utilized to the fullest extent. Instructors of adults should strive to facilitate group learning and teaching (where students teach each other) through discovery rather than taking an instructor centric approach.

Readiness to Learn:

> The educator has a responsibility to create conditions and provide tools and procedures for helping learners discover their "needs to know." Learning programs should be organized around life-application categories and sequenced according to the learners' readiness to learn.

Orientation to Learning:

> Given that student of County teaching will generally be busy individuals, it is imperative that instructors display the applied usefulness of the subject matter. Learning and information in and of itself should not be the only motivation. In-class exercises should come from and or apply to real-life situations.

Motivation for Learning:

> While adult learners are generally self-motivated in their attendance of seminars and the like, in the County teaching environment, pupils will also be in attendance because of a mandate. As a result, instructors would be wise to utilize both aspects in order to motivate students to learn and apply themselves in the learning environment and beyond.

3. OVERARCHING PLANNING

There are many ways to develop instruction, but one practical approach that works well with adult learners shifts the thinking about developing instruction from "what will you teach," to "what do the students need to learn?" This change of perspective will help the development process immensely. To get started, you first need to be able to answer several key questions addressed in this section.

Who is my target audience, and what are their learning needs?

It is the responsibility of the instructor to find out who will be in the audience and what kind of training they have already received. In general, instruction in the Stanislaus County Learning Institute will be aimed at current Stanislaus county employees. That being said, you should take steps to uncover the background experiences of the employees in attendance.

KEY PRECHECK QUESTIONS

- Who is my target audience and how can my teaching be custom suited to them?
- What are the exact learning objectives this training is aimed at achieving?
- What particular type of training should I develop to fit the learning objectives

Try to at least learn the answers to these three questions:

• **Who are you going to teach?** In the vast majority of cases, you will be teaching other employees of Stanislaus County, which means that there is a rich variety of shared experiences to leverage.

• **What is their background?** Most of the time you can gain some information about the individuals that will be attending your teaching session, for example they are all supervisors. It is important to game plan for the things you can know ahead of time and then be flexible enough to tailor your teaching as you learn more about your students.

• **Will some people need more training than others?**
In cases where there are extreme differences in skill levels, you might consider holding several sessions at different levels of expertise—for frontline workers versus managers, for example. Ideally, you should conduct a needs assessment at the beginning of a class to judge where students are at in the learning process. This helps to identify gaps in learning and further targets the training for your audience.

What are the learning objectives for this training?

Your purpose should meld the key components of your audience, its training needs, its skill and knowledge deficits, and what you want to accomplish in your course. Think through what you want participants to learn as a result of your training. They should leave the training with new information and/or skills that they didn't possess prior to taking it.

Learning objectives serve as a type of contract with your audience and help put the purpose of your training in concrete,

THE 3 TYPES OF LEARNING

Learning generally falls into three different categories:

- Knowledge: specific concepts, facts, and patterns.
- Skills: production abilities measured in quantity and quantity.
- Attitudes: realizing and engendering held feelings, values, and motivations.

measurable terms. If participants know the objectives from the beginning, they know what they are expected to learn. Objectives also clearly focus on the desired outcomes.

Before you start developing your learning objectives, it's important to determine the kind of learning your students will be gaining. Identifying the type of learning— Knowledge, Skills or Attitudes (KSAs)—will help you develop more specific learning objectives.

For example, if your students' learning involves knowledge retention and the development of intellectual skills, it is considered knowledge-based. If your students' learning involves physical movement, coordination, and motor skills, it is considered skill-based. If your students' learning deals with things emotionally like motivation and values, it is considered attitudes-based.

How do I develop learning objectives?

Developing effective objectives that get to the purpose of your training is not easy. But you can do it by following a few simple steps. Objectives should be written from the participants' point of view. They should emphasize what you want students to value, understand or do with the information or skills being taught. The simplest way to start writing learning objectives is by answering three questions:

1. What will participants be able to do as a result of the course, training, or class?

2. What are the conditions or circumstances where the participants will perform this activity, and what knowledge or materials does he/she need to do this effectively?

3. What level of proficiency is needed to perform the task or skill successfully or apply this information?

There are several different models that have been created to help in designing learning objectives. For developing practical objectives, you might consider the SMART Model. For considering objectives that may relate more to behavior change, you might consider the A-B-C-D Model.

Writing Learning Objectives

Educators have used learning, or behavioral, objectives for at least four decades. Today, the use of objectives has become routine in education and many national accrediting organizations recommend using them. Objectives are not difficult to write if you follow the guidelines on the next page. Benefits of incorporating objectives within your coursework include: emphasis of major points and reduction of nonessential material, simplification of note taking, cueing the students to emphasize major points, assistance in organizing and studying material, and guiding students to what is expected from them.

> **DESIGNING LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
>
> *Practical Objectives Should Be: S.M.A.R.T.*
>
> **S**pecific
> **M**easurable
> **A**chievable
> **R**elevant
> **T**ime-bound
>
> *Behavioral Objectives Should Focus on the: ABC&D's*
>
> **A**udience – State the learning *audience* within the objective.
>
> **B**ehavior – State the *Behavior* you want to see exhibited.
>
> **C**ondition – State the *Condition* where the behavior will occur.
>
> **D**egree – To what degree will the learner be enabled?

Four factors of strong objectives

1. The action verb is the most important element of an objective and can never be omitted. It states precisely what the student will do following instruction. Verbs are categorized by domains of learning and various hierarchies. The three domains of learning are: Cognitive Domain (emphasizes thinking), Affective Domain (highlights attitudes and feelings), and Psychomotor Domain (focuses on doing).

2. Conditions describe the relevant factors associated with the desired performance. For example: "after attending a lecture," "following review of a demonstration," or "given a case study."

3. Standards, or criteria, tell how well the learner must perform. You can omit this part of the objective when there is no difference from standard procedures or protocols. For example, the learner must: 1) achieve a percent of correct responses, 2) complete something within a given time period, 3) be in compliance with criteria presented by the faculty.

4. The audience for your learning objectives is always your students. Make sure you are clearly defining who your audience is and who your training is for before writing learning objectives.

Diagram of a Learning Objective

After completing this course, you should be able to list at least three common data sources
Audience   *Verb*   *Standard*

used to characterize health or disease status of a community.
Condition

What kind of training should I develop?

Will it be a one-time course or a series? Will it be face-to-face, online, or blended? How intensive, basic, or elaborate your training will be depends on determining the following:
• What resources are available?
• What are some potential challenges to this training (for example, format, class size, minimal resources)?
• What content needs to be created?
• What evaluation instruments need to be created?
The content and activities appropriate for your course should be tied directly to the learning needs and objectives that you have defined. To be most effective, they should be tailored to your audience.

Higher order thinking skills tend to be learned most effectively by creating, evaluating, and analyzing content. Keep in mind that the more complex your material, the more time and activities you may need to

provide your students, so they have plenty of opportunities to grasp the complexities.

4. DEVELOPING TRAINING CONTENT

How do I develop training materials?

Developing training materials involves writing, creating learning exercises, and working with content experts and trainers. It is the most time-consuming phase, but it is also a key to making sure your training is successful. Well designed, direct materials help drive your training and reinforce your learning objectives and outcomes. You may have your draft materials reviewed by several people, and they may go through a number of revisions. Make sure the materials match the learning outcomes you identified, based on your assessment of the needs of your learners. A basic way to pull together materials and/or related activities is to use your own experience as a learner.

Complete the process below for each of your learning objectives for the course or training:

1. Identify one of your clearly stated learning objectives.

2. Determine what kind of learning domain the outcome involves (knowledge, skill, or attitude).

3. Choose an instructional method (activity, handout, team project, etc.) This helps participants accomplish your stated learning objective by doing.

4. Explain how this learning experience will help your students meet the learning objectives you have identified.

How do I choose instructional methods?

There are a number of instructional methods to choose from when designing your materials. Listed below are some key methods, including purpose and when to use them:

Case studies, role plays, and small group discussions help participants discover learning points themselves and practice skills used in interactions. Best used to practice newly acquired skills, to experience what a particular situation feels like, to provide feedback to participants or to apply new knowledge to a specific situation, practice problem solving skills.

Classroom training & lectures convey information when interaction or discussion is not desired or possible. They are best used to convey information in a short time, to communicate the same information to large numbers of people, or to provide basic information to a group.

Games, table-tops, and simulations provide nonthreatening ways to present or review course material and can be used to recreate a process, event or set of circumstances, usually complex, so that participants can experience and manipulate the situation without risk and then analyze what happened. Best used to integrate and apply complex skills, to elicit participants' natural tendencies and provide feedback, to provide a realistic job-related experience, to help grasp total program content, to present dry material in an interesting way or to add a competitive element to a session.

Projects and writing tasks help participants reflect on their understanding of concepts, information, ideas and allow them to work individually or in small groups with the content. They are best used to test for participants understanding or to provide for individual input.

How do I put it all together for a course?

You have learned about your audience, assessed their needs, developed learning objectives, determined the type of training, and developed training materials. Now it's time to put it all together in a course by following these simple steps:

1. Prepare a course outline with what needs to be learned and time allotted. Clearly name the content (knowledge, skills, or attitudes) and learning objectives. Make sure your learning is sequenced, with easier learning first, building to complex.

2. Determine work-related professional competencies, capabilities or standards your course addresses, if applicable. Be sure to make clear reference to these competencies in materials you disseminate with your course.

3. Develop how learning will be evaluated. Will you include an assessment of some type? (Examples include a quiz, test, or final project.)

4. Develop a trainer's manual or instruction sheet for yourself and a syllabus denoting what the class will cover for your students. Provide this to participants in advance if possible.

5. Include a warm-up exercise, appropriate for the group and setting.

6. Plan for open questions and ways to stimulate discussion throughout the course.

7. Make your course design flexible, providing options for assignments, to help meet different learning styles.

8. Set up activities that ensure the inclusion of all participants.

9. Provide follow-up—resources, books, contact names and numbers, websites—to reinforce learning.
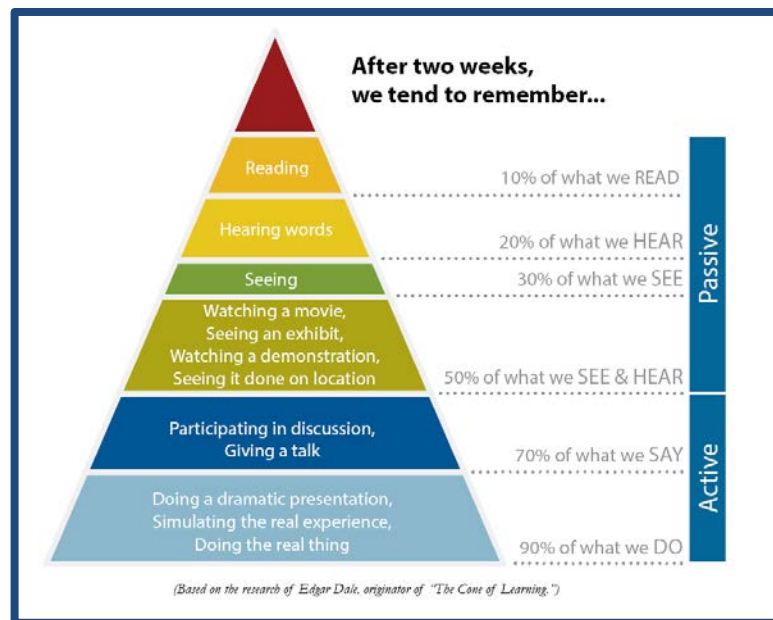

Trainer's Manual/Instruction Sheet

Depending on the type of training you are developing, it may be useful to produce a simple trainer's manual or instruction sheet. This is useful to guide the delivery process for the trainer of the curriculum, including how to prepare for the training, gathering materials, lesson planning, etc.

5. DELIVERING YOUR TRAINING

How do I increase retention?

People often remember more when they practice or use their learning compared to when they just read or hear information. The amount of information we remember is in direct proportion to the amount of involvement we had in the learning. The **Cone of Learning** (see figure below) shows that we tend to remember only about 10 percent of what we read. Our memory increases when we hear and see something together—like watching a movie or going to an exhibit. We remember about 90 percent of what we say and do, like practicing what we learned. This is important for you to recognize as you deliver training to your adult learners. Choosing the appropriate methods for delivery is critical in increasing retention

(Based on the research of Edgar Dale, originator of "The Cone of Learning.")

Facilitation Pointers

- Build Trust
- Model Positive Attitudes
- Give Supportive Feedback
- Stick to a Schedule
- Create a "Parking Lot" for Off Topic Comments
- Ask Open-Ended Questions
- Respect Every Student's Perspectives & Feelings

How do I facilitate effectively in the classroom?

How effectively your course is received depends largely on the learning atmosphere you set up and model for your participants. Support your participants by building an atmosphere of trust. Model a positive attitude, and provide constructive and supportive feedback. For example, you might say, "That's a very good example of the concept we are discussing."

Ensure the entire course content is covered. It is important to stick to a schedule and do what you say you will do. If participants deviate from the topic, create a "parking lot" for additional topics that come up. Arrange for a separate time to take those up (at a break, or designated review period). You can model effective facilitation skills by asking open-ended questions and rephrasing participants' comments accurately for clarity, when needed. Respect every person's feelings, perspectives, and contributions.

10 important lessons for effective classroom presentations

Capturing the attention of an in-person class takes skill that is developed over, but these helpful tips can go a long way in helping you to get started or improve even if you are already a master instructor.

1. Don't talk at participants. Involve them.
2. Encourage positive group dynamics. Reform and move students into groups as needed.
3. Allow participants to discover data for themselves.
4. Ask participants to keep an action or idea list, and revisit it throughout the session.
5. Learning is directly proportionate to the amount of fun you have.
6. Change the pace. Listening with retention only lasts about 20 minutes at a time.
7. Design your class so participants leave impressed with themselves and what they learned.
8. Allow adults learners to use their expertise by leaving time to share experiences.
9. Don't offer material only one way. Recognize your participants will learn differently.
10. Teach the things you have a passion for!

INSTIGATING INTERACTION

It can sometime be hard to get students to interact in classes. Use these helpful tips to get things going.

Start Small – Start of each session with an ice-breaker that lets students know that the class will be a safe and interactive environment in which their opinions matter. One way is to ask questions that everyone can give a personalized answer to, like who their favorite super-hero is or what word that starts with the same letter as their first name best describes them (Rambunctious Ryan).

That's Interesting… - When the interaction you are getting is short or vague, try the line "That's interesting…" followed by what you want from the student: "…can you tell us more" or "…can you be more specific?" or "…can you give us an example?" You can even open the comment back up to the group with "…what would you do?" By validating the student, you let them know that they are contributing positively to the learning environment and give them encouragement to continue sharing.

Energize – When students aren't involved their minds will start to wander, and if their minds are wandering, they can't and won't participate. Wandering minds can be avoided by taking time every 20 minutes or so to get active, stand-up, move around, change seats, so anything to get your students moving. Try having students stand in different corners as way of answering questions. This not only gets people moving, it also forces them to take a stand on an issue and provides a powerful visual of what people think.

DONT BREAK FIRST! – When the inevitable uncomfortable silence after you ask a question of the class arrives, DON'T BREAK FIRST! Realize that the silence is uncomfortable for everyone, not just you. When the silence is finally broken, verbally reward and validate the response "That's a great point, thank you so much for sharing…" It is not just about winning the battle of wills; it is about proving that you are serious about facilitating learning rather than lecturing.

Ask For Responses, Not Answers – It is critical that you ask questions that anyone can respond to rather than questions that require a certain answer. Fact based questions like "what is included in the Bill of Rights?" test knowledge, whereas opinion questions "What would you include in a Bill of Rights?" engender conversation and thinking because anyone can provide a valid answer, because the answer is their opinion.

Thank you for your support of Stanislaus County's continuing effort to be a true Learning Organization, a place where the best can come to get better. Your dedication to employee development and the craft of teaching will have far reaching effects. The courses you teach are instrumental in preparing our core of employees to face the challenges ahead. By imparting the knowledge that you have gained through years of experience to the rest of our staff, you actively support a critical component in the ongoing success of the County. The Learning Institute is here to support you in this effort in any way that it can.