

Instructor and Training Consultant Core competencies:

Training, accountability, adaptability, communication, inclusiveness, customer focus, occupational knowledge, technology orientation

Alabama Pathways Professional Development System has adopted and adapted these competencies from national training certification programs and various sources within the related fields of service and education employment to serve as a guide for trainers. Training Consultants are expected to have skills in the following areas of expertise: experience and knowledge in the early childhood education and/or related business and service professions, designing learning, delivering training, assessing training needs and evaluating learner achievement.

Alabama Pathways Professional Development System: Goals for Instructors:

1. The trainer understands the role and function of training as a strategy to help the early childhood education organizations achieve excellence, and knows how competency-based training can promote "best practice" throughout the early childhood education profession.
2. The trainer has skills sufficient to communicate effectively with the early childhood and child care staff who will comprise the trainer's audience.
3. The trainer understands his/her role as a member of the training development and delivery team and assigned work groups, and knows how and when to collaborate with program directors, training managers and agency staff to assure that training addresses identified needs.
4. The trainer can differentiate between training needs and other types of competency and performance problems, and knows the training system's proper role in addressing these problems.
5. The trainer actively pursues self-development activities including professional reading, training events, and active involvement in professional training organizations.
6. The trainer seeks to develop and utilize skills in serving as a role model and best practice / performance consultant rather than simply a deliverer of training.

Trainer Responsibilities and Competencies:

The following competencies are considered best practice for trainers and should be demonstrated in the development and delivery of training programs. The competencies have been adopted from a variety of sources including Creative Training Techniques' guides for trainers, ASTD, and the Institute for Human Services. The skills and competencies are also models for early childhood professionals for adaptation in their own role of teaching young children and relating to families and co-workers.

A. Adult Learning

1. The trainer understands and can apply principles of adult learning to training development and delivery. This includes engaging learners to identify their own learning needs; helping trainees set personal learning objectives; drawing on and incorporating trainees' past experiences and expertise; using experiential and interactive training techniques; helping trainees apply training content to their roles and responsibilities in the child care profession and their jobs; and creating practice opportunities during the training session.
2. The trainer can create a comfortable physical learning environment and orient trainees, including preparing the training room, greeting and engaging trainees, and attending to the social, emotional and comfort needs of the learners.
3. The trainer knows the conceptual frameworks for describing learning styles; can recognize differences in trainee learning preferences and styles; understands how individual development and cultural background can impact learning preferences; and can develop and use training strategies that address a variety of learning styles and preferences.
4. The trainer understands the typical stages in the development and mastery of new knowledge and skills; understands the adult learning paradigms that represent these steps (i.e. levels of learning, conscious/unconscious competence;) and can develop training materials that promote sequential development.

B. Training Delivery Skills

1. The trainer recognizes the impact of the physical training environment in facilitating or impeding learning; can arrange the training room to promote comfort, interaction, and group development; and can assure that training facilities are easily accessible to persons with disabilities.
2. The trainer can use a variety of self-management strategies to reduce personal stress and stage fright associated with public speaking.
3. The trainer understands the impact of personal appearance and dress, physical positioning in relation to trainees, hand and body movements, positioning of a podium or tables, and tone of voice, on both the quality of the presentation, and receptivity by trainees.
4. The trainer demonstrates the use of name tags/name tents, "ice-breaker" exercises, introductions, and other activities at the beginning of a session to create a positive group climate and begin the engagement process.
5. The trainer demonstrates the ability to speak clearly at an appropriate volume; can vary volume, pace, tone, and inflection to maintain trainee's attention; and can avoid unnecessary and distracting vocalizations ("uh," "ummm," "you know," "like," "I mean.")
6. The trainer can adjust his/her presentation methods, use of language, and group management style to achieve the optimal level of formality for the group, and/or to match learners' level of expertise.
7. The trainer understands the potential impact of learners having been mandated to attend training, and can use supportive engagement strategies to help trainees identify personal learning objectives and develop an investment in the training.

8. The trainer demonstrates the use of reflective listening (a best practice technique also for early childhood educators to use with children) and feedback to encourage group involvement, to clarify and expand upon trainee contributions, to guide the direction of the discussion, and to enhance trainees' understanding of the content and concepts.
9. The trainer can use verbal enhancers that more fully communicate and explain essential concepts and information, including examples and illustrations, creative phrasing, analogies, quotations, rhetorical questions, and comparing and contrasting concepts.
10. The trainer can use summarization, bridging, and segue to help preserve continuity when moving between segments of the training.
11. The trainer knows strategies to keep the group focused, on task, and within established time frames, while remaining responsive to group needs and concerns.
12. The trainer knows strategies to engage and involve trainees who display resistance or a lack of involvement, or who exhibit disruptive behaviors that interfere with the development of constructive group process.
13. The trainer can use information from written participant evaluations, evaluation summaries, and feedback from trainees and appropriate agency staff to identify opportunities for improving the training.

C. Experiential Learning

1. The trainer appropriately uses experiential exercises to increase awareness, modify attitudes, challenge misconceptions, and facilitate learning and mastery of both knowledge and skills.
2. The trainer demonstrates understanding of the detrimental outcomes of using experiential exercises inappropriately, or placing them improperly in the curriculum sequence.
3. The trainer designs and develops a variety of individual, small group, and large group experiential exercises and activities that enhance learning and application.
4. The trainer facilitates experiential activities by clearly and concisely explaining instructions; providing ongoing direction and feedback to trainees; helping process and draw conclusions about the exercise; and engaging in problem solving when the activity is not progressing or accomplishing learning objectives.
5. The trainer elicits information to evaluate the effectiveness of experiential activities in achieving objectives, and can make needed modifications.

D. Group Facilitation

1. A trainer clearly and accurately communicates the goals and objectives of the training; can help trainees identify unrealistic expectations for the training; and can negotiate to achieve consensus about the desired outcomes for a training session.
2. A highly skilled trainer helps the group members clarify, negotiate, reach consensus, and adhere to norms or ground rules for the training session; and can enter into a verbal contract that establishes the trainer's role in supporting and enforcing these norms.
3. The trainer uses group facilitation strategies that promote the development of a safe, learner-centered environment, group cohesion, comfort with risk taking (such as role playing, singing, or speaking before their peers), and commitment to common learning objectives.

4. The trainer chooses the training strategy best suited to meet a particular learning objective; and knows integrates a variety of strategies to address different learning styles and to keep the training from becoming repetitious or boring.
5. The trainer can recognize non-verbal cues from trainees; can use active listening and reflection to determine their meaning; and can elicit feedback to clarify points and to determine the level of understanding or agreement.
6. The trainer demonstrates understanding of the factors that can create resistance and dissension within training groups, including a lack of pre-training preparation; forced attendance at training; pre-existing interpersonal conflict among group members; problems in the work environment; and personal, social, and emotional factors of trainees.
7. The trainer utilizes a variety of group management strategies, and intervenes to manage problematic behaviors without alienating either the individual or group.
8. The trainer provides timely, sensitive and relevant feedback to the group, and can challenge ideas in a manner that stimulates creative thinking and promotes growth, while maintaining trainees' self-esteem.
9. The highly skilled trainer recognizes, processes, and understands trainees' emotional responses to training content or exercises; can acknowledge and normalize feelings; can help the group identify constructive ways to deal with feelings; and can intervene to help individual trainees deal with acute emotional distress.
10. The trainer effectively handles confrontation and conflict with and between trainees; and uses a series of verbal and non-verbal interventions to de-escalate the conflict, explore and clarify the issues, and facilitate resolution, while discouraging disruptive behavior and preventing emotional withdrawal.

E. Transfer of Learning

1. The trainer understands the concept of learning as a "process rather than an event" and identifies opportunities and activities to promote transfer before, during, and after the training event.
2. The trainer understands the roles of child care center directors, licensing consultants, grant administrators and managers, supervisors, program directors and instructors, trainers, and learners in promoting transfer; knows the importance of supervisory intervention with learners both before and after training; understands how organizational or institutional barriers can prevent transfer; and can work collaboratively with others to design and implement effective transfer of learning activities.
3. The trainer understands the impact of individual learning preferences and culturally based learning styles, and can design a variety of teaching and transfer strategies that address different styles.
4. The trainer gives relevant examples and encourages critical assessment of how new learning can be applied to trainees' jobs/roles and responsibilities; elicits examples of practice dilemmas and successes; and can help trainees identify and resolve barriers to application of new learning in their child care center or school classroom, family childcare home or other program or work place.
5. The trainer demonstrates understanding of the sequence and stages in acquiring and mastering new knowledge and skills; and knows how and when to use mentoring, coaching, and other on-the-job training (site based technical assistance) activities to promote continued trainee development.
6. The trainer demonstrates understanding of the importance of collaborating with ALABAMA PATHWAYS program supervisors, early childhood program managers, work groups, and team leaders to promote transfer of learning, and can design post-training site based technical assistance (on-the-job) learning activities that promote continued skill development by trainees.
7. The trainer helps to assess and provide feedback regarding trainees' acquisition of knowledge and skill at the completion of training; and can recommend additional professional development opportunities, self-development or training activities to promote skill development.

8. The trainer employs a variety of assessment methods to be used before, during, and after training to measure the impact of training; and can collaborate with training managers to implement comprehensive evaluations of training effectiveness.
9. The trainer incorporates a variety of classroom activities that support transfer, such as idea catchers, action planning, supervised practice, and rehearsal.

F. Developing and Using Audio Visual Media and Materials

1. The trainer designs, develops and/or incorporates a variety of audio-visual materials including flip charts, posters, overhead transparencies, computer generated visuals, handouts, slides, videos, and audio tapes, to enhance the training and reinforce learning.
2. The trainer selects and incorporates audiovisual materials that best support the content being presented.
3. The trainer designs, produces and distributes handouts in a logical and organized manner.
4. The trainer can operate, disassemble and make emergency repairs to audiovisual equipment, including flip chart stand, overhead projector, TV/VCR, video recording equipment, cassette/CD player, LCD projector and computer.
5. The trainer can use a contingency plan with alternative instructional methods in the event of equipment failure or unexpected emergency, or to accommodate trainees with visual or auditory disabilities.

G. Computer and Distance Learning Technology

1. The trainer integrates computerized training aids to enhance training, and can design and develop presentations and demonstrations using software such as Power Point.
2. The trainer demonstrates understanding of the range and types of knowledge and skills that are most effectively acquired using self-directed, computerized learning (e-learning), and knows how to integrate interpersonal and trainer-directed strategies that support and augment computer-based and self-directed learning activities. Trainers are encouraged to provide a plan for blending e-learning programs with traditional delivery methods that maintain learner contact, including strategies for collaboration such as email games, blogs or conference calls.
3. The trainer demonstrates understanding of use of computer-based communication strategies such as group e-mail, chat rooms, and list serves, to promote dialogue and interaction among learners.
4. The trainer knows how to use computer applications and communication strategies to promote transfer of learning and skill building by preparing trainees to attend training, and by providing regular opportunities for follow-up and coaching after training.
5. The trainer articulates the strengths, benefits, and limitations of distance learning.

H. Professionalism and Ethics

1. The trainer maintains a professional demeanor in the training environment, including maintaining standards for dress, adhering to pre-set time frames for the training, and being well organized and fully prepared for the training.
2. The trainer demonstrates understanding, and incorporates into practice, the values, ethics and standards of the professions and the practice/ fields in which trainees work; and can address and reinforce these in all training activities.
3. The trainer models standards for adult learning and professional development, including: respect for trainees; supporting trainees' self-determination; and maintaining appropriate confidentiality, privacy, and self-disclosure.

4. The trainer knows the core philosophy and values that underlie the trainees' field(s) of practice (i.e. regulation, program or center administration, child welfare, adult services, public human services, special education, child psychology, etc.); and can integrate this information throughout the training.
5. The trainer can articulate the concepts of best practice in the fields of early childhood education and family services, and knows the unique role and responsibility of the trainees' programs, agency(ies) and staff.
6. The trainer knows the "best practice" standards that apply to the field of practice and competency area s/he trains.
7. The trainer fully understands the liabilities of attempting to train in competency areas in which the trainer lacks sufficient knowledge, skill, and/or first-hand experience.
8. The trainer understands the importance of keeping current on laws, state mandates, and practice changes in the fields/related fields of early childhood education and family services, and can incorporate up-to-date information into training curricula.
9. The trainer knows the laws regarding copyright and plagiarism, and knows how to fully and accurately cite sources for materials used in the curriculum.

CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct supports the goals and mission of Alabama Pathways and applies to instructors, members, and PDS management team.

I. GENERAL

Non-Discrimination

Alabama Pathways programs and activities do not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, gender, ethnic origin, ancestry, age, disability, socioeconomic status, or marital status. This non-discrimination policy applies to learner participation, instructor involvement, and general treatment of all programs and activities.

Intellectual Property Rights

Instructors, guest presenters or other course participants may not use approved training events to sell or reproduce material without permission that infringes third party intellectual property rights (such as copyright, trademark, trade dress and right of publicity). The course instructor is considered responsible for upholding this policy. Intellectual Property Rights comprises the issues of software licensing, material (i.e., books, CDs, DVDs, periodicals, video cassettes, audio recordings and reprints), courseware, and Internet content usage. Information about Intellectual Property Rights and Copy Rights is included in the Instructor Guide.

Photocopying

Photocopying textbooks and original content including computer software is a violation of international copyright laws and as such will not be tolerated. Photocopied textbooks and software will not be allowed in ALABAMA PATHWAYS courses or learning events. Photocopying for classroom use must not substitute for the purchase of books or other materials.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in any Alabama Pathways training. Non-smoking policies are most effective where members of the community are self-policing, and so everyone is asked to act as a role model by conforming to the policy and encourage others to do so as well.

Sexual Harassment

Alabama Pathways is committed to providing a secure educational and work environment for its learners, instructors, staff, and administrators. Accordingly, Alabama Pathways does not tolerate any form of harassment, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is any conduct of a sexual nature that significantly impairs a person's ability or opportunity to perform his or her job or educational pursuits.

Cellular / Mobile Phone

Alabama Pathways strongly discourages the use of cellular/mobile phones in the classroom and during any learning event. Participants and learners should turn off/mute their phones prior to entering the above mentioned sessions and not to turn on again until they are out of the above mentioned sessions. Instructors should also abide by the rules and refrain from using their cell phones during class time. Instructors are asked to remind learners/participants policies concerning the use of cell phones.

Dress Code

All administrators, staff, and instructors are expected to maintain a level of dress and personal appearance appropriate to their position and working environment.

II. INSTRUCTOR

Absence

Enrollment of a learner in learning activities is regarded as an agreement whereby the learner is promised a prescribed number of hours of instruction and the instructor must deliver quality instruction time equal to the amount the learner has enrolled for. Instructors are expected to teach the scheduled number of class hours.

Punctuality

Punctuality is expected of instructors. Instructors should always be on time and start and end their classes promptly. Instructor punctuality is assessed by learners / customers in class.

Disclosure of Proprietary Interest

ALABAMA PATHWAYS does not support or approve of the solicitation or sale of products, materials or services during a training event/session. Instructors are expected to disclose, in advance of the training event, any instructor's proprietary interest in any product, instrument, device, service, or material discussed during the training event and the source of any compensation related to the presentation. Products may be displayed and sold if the following criteria are met:

- Products are incorporated into the workshop session
- Class time is not spent soliciting products
- Products on display are appropriate to the learning objectives and/or for use by the target learner.
- Products are not required for course objective to be met.

III. LEARNER

Attendance

All learners are expected to attend at least 85% of the class sessions or class hours. CEU credit nor contact hours be should awarded to the learner who fails to abide by this standard.

Punctuality

Learners are expected to arrive on time for all scheduled classes and learning event sessions/activities. Learners will be considered late if they enter the class any time after the start of instruction, but may be given credit if the 85% attendance rule is met for the course.

Cheating

Cheating is not acceptable in any organization dedicated to learning. Cheating includes giving or receiving information during the course of a learning event that allows an individual to receive credit for work they did not do, or other acts of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism or falsely presenting work required for course credit. If a learner is caught cheating, no credit will be awarded to the learner.

Misconduct

Acceptable adult behavior is expected of learners in the classroom and at any learning event or activity.

Learning Outcomes: Writing an Objective

Learning outcomes are the result of the objective(s) identified for your session. Objectives for your proposal must be stated in behavioral terms. Courses can be geared for specific levels of learner outcome. The hierarchy of behavioral learning is: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Please use the attached verb list chart to assist you in writing effective and measurable behavioral objectives for your proposal. *A minimum of 2 behavioral objectives are required for a 2 hour workshop.*

The behavioral objective and test questions will be used to assess the quality of the educational program you are submitting for course. Your proposal will not be accepted unless this requirement is met.

Each objective must include the following components:

- Condition = Using what guidelines or in what type of setting?
Performance = What the learner is expected to do or perform as a result.
Criterion = Describe how well; i.e., what is the minimal level of performance?

Examples of appropriate behavioral objectives:

- At the completion of the training the participants will be able to list three reading readiness assessment measures that are appropriate for preschool.
- This session will enable the learner to utilize at least three different ways to implement a “print rich” environment their early learning classroom(s).
- Upon completion of the session the participant will be able to list the features of three different areas of preschool curriculum language development components.

Examples of Inappropriate objectives

- The student will have an opportunity to hear from national and regional experts about promoting and enhancing best practices in the preschool classroom.
- Upon completion of the session the participant will discover new ways to help young children develop their language skills.

Verb List for Writing Measurable Behavioral Objectives

<p>Knowledge</p> <p>Cite Count Define Draw Identify Indicate List Name Point Read Recite Recognize Record Relate Repeat Select State Tabulate Tell Trace Write</p>	<p>Comprehension</p> <p>Associate Classify Compare Compute Contrast Describe Differentiate Discuss Distinguish Explain Estimate Express Extrapolate Interpret Interpolate Locate Predict Report Restate Review Translate</p>	<p>Application</p> <p>Apply Calculate Complete Demonstrate Dramatize Employ Examine Illustrate Interpolate Locate Operate Order Predict Practice Relate Report Restate Review Schedule Sketch Solve Translate Use Utilize</p>
<p>Analysis</p> <p>Analyze Appraise Contrast Criticize Debate Diagram Differentiate Distinguish Experiment Infer Inspect Inventory Question Separate Summarize</p>	<p>Synthesis</p> <p>Arrange Assemble Collect Compose Construct Create Design Detect Formulate Generalize Integrate Manage Organize Plan Produce Propose Specify</p>	<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Appraise Assess Choose Critique Determine Estimate Evaluate Grade Judge Measure Rank Rate Recommend Revise Score Select Test</p>

Methods for Assessing Learning Outcomes

Assessing outcomes allows trainers to determine if participants achieved their goal and met learning objectives. The assessment of learning outcomes aids in accountability.

1. Plan your assessments before you begin.

When developing a course, use your goals and objectives to determine what will be assessed. Make note of what kinds of assessments you'll use and how often you will implement them. Make sure the assessments address the learning outcomes.

2. Assess frequently.

Make sure you have checkpoints along the way in order to truly measure participant learning. Assessments give insight on how you may need to adjust your pacing and instructional methods. If the majority of your class is performing well and on-schedule, then you can plan to continue the track you're currently navigating. If a large number of participants are producing poor results, you may need to slow down the pace of your instruction or even make changes in the ways you're delivering the material. If you see that only a few participants are struggling, you can implement interventions that target these specific few.

3. Vary your assessments.

Participants won't all be strong in the same areas. One participant may perform best on written tests, whereas another participant may excel in a hands-on project. Be creative in your assessment designs.

Formal Evaluation/Assessment Activities for Assessing Expected Learning Outcomes:

Application activities such as participants creating a learning center, a math game, tell a story using age appropriate language and pictures, etc.	Demonstration in which participants illustrate appropriate strategies, techniques and procedures.
Group discussion as participants share ideas and their application, examples from their own experiences of success and challenge.	Brainstorming during which participants offer suggestions for solving a problem, completing a task, etc.
Exam/Quiz in which the instructor develops a preview and review of information based on course content.	Role play for which group members create or are given a scenario relevant to the course to enact.

After deciding on the strategy you will employ in teaching your course, write an instructor statement for the section titled **Assessment of Learning Outcomes** on the needs assessment. Customize the statement to your teaching style and the Learning Outcome(s) for the course. Here are some examples:

- * Participants will brainstorm, identifying ten (10) effective transition activities.
- * Participants will role play telling a story to a group of four-year olds using a story, language and pictures that are age-appropriate.
- * Group members will share an example and a non-example of an appropriate guidance strategy for two-year olds.

Copyright Compliance for Instructors

What is Copyright?

Did you know that whenever you write a story or an essay for your class, or a drawing artwork, you automatically own the copyright to it? Copyright is a form of protection given to authors or creators of “original works of authorship” As the author; you alone have the right to do anything of the following: make and distribute copies, perform in public, and make “changes”.

All these are your creations and you would be very upset if someone just copied any of them without your permission. That’s where copyright comes in. Copyright law gives you set of rights that prevents people from copying your work and doing other things with your work that you may not like.

What is protected?

Copyright protects “original works of authorship” that are fixed in “a tangible form of expression.”

Copyrightable works fall into the following categories:

- Literary (which includes computer software);
- Musical, including accompanying words;
- Dramatic, including any accompanying music;
- Pantomimes and choreography
- Pictorial, graphic, and sculptural;
- Motion pictures and other audiovisual pictures;
- Sound recording and architectural works

What is not protected?

Not everything is protected by copyright law. The following are categories of things that are not protected:

- Ideas, procedures, methods;
- Titles, names, short phrases, and slogans;
- Works that are not fixed (improvised speech or performance that is not written down or recorded);
- Works consisting entirely of information that is available and contains no originality (standard calendars, standard measures and rulers, lists or tables compiled from public documents; and works by the U.S. government

Anyone who exploits the exclusive rights of copyright without the copyright owner’s permission commits copyright infringement. The exclusive rights of the copyright owner are not unlimited. There are some limitations on these rights. The most important limitation on these exclusive rights is the doctrine of “Fair Use”. The “Fair Use” doctrine allows limited copying of copyrighted works for educational and research purposes. The copyright law provides that copying “for news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research” is not an infringement of copyright. Unless you are absolutely sure, relying on the doctrine of “Fair Use” to avoid seeking permission to copy a work is risky. There are no set rules about what kind of use is “fair” and what is “infringing”. **The best course of action is simply to seek permission for all compiled material you intend to use.** (Adapted from *Copyright 101 for Schools* by Tywana Burton, NBCT.)

PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING

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Adults As Learners

Part of being an effective instructor involves understanding how adults learn best. Compared to children and teens, adults have special needs and requirements as learners. Despite the apparent truth, adult learning is a relatively new area of study. The field of adult learning was pioneered by Malcom Knowles. He identified the following characteristics of adult learners:

- Adults are *autonomous* and *self-directed*. They need to be free to direct themselves. Their teachers must actively involve adult participants in the learning process and serve as facilitators for them. Specifically, they must get participants' perspectives about what topics to cover and let them work on projects that reflect their interests. They should allow the participants to assume responsibility for presentations and group leadership. They have to be sure to act as facilitators, guiding participants to their own knowledge rather than supplying them with facts. Finally, they must show participants how the class will help them reach their goals (e.g., via a personal goals sheet).
- Adults have accumulated a foundation of *life experiences* and *knowledge* that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. They need to connect learning to this knowledge/experience base. To help them do so, they should draw out participants' experience and knowledge which is relevant to the topic. They must relate theories and concepts to the participants and recognize the value of experience in learning.
- Adults are *goal-oriented*. Upon enrolling in a course, they usually know what goal they want to attain. They, therefore, appreciate an educational program that is organized and has clearly defined elements. Instructors must show participants how this class will help them attain their goals. This classification of goals and course objectives must be done early in the course.
- Adults are *relevancy-oriented*. They must see a reason for learning something. Learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them. Therefore, instructors must identify objectives for adult participants before the course begins. This means, also, that theories and concepts must be related to a setting familiar to participants. This need can be fulfilled by letting participants choose projects that reflect their own interests.
- Adults are *practical*, focusing on the aspects of a lesson most useful to them in their work. They may not be interested in knowledge for its own sake. Instructors must tell participants explicitly how the lesson will be useful to them on the job.
- As do all learners, adults need to be shown *respect*. Instructors must acknowledge the wealth of experiences that adult participants bring to the classroom. These adults should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and allowed to voice their opinions freely in class.

Motivating the Adult Learner

Another aspect of adult learning is motivation. At least six factors serve as sources of motivation for adult learning:

- **Social relationships:** to make new friends, to meet a need for associations and friendships.
- **External expectations:** to comply with instructions from someone else; to fulfill the expectations or recommendations of someone with formal authority.
- **Social welfare:** to improve ability to serve mankind, prepare for service to the community, and improve ability to participate in community work.
- **Personal advancement:** to achieve higher status in a job, secure professional advancement, and stay abreast of competitors.
- **Escape/Stimulation:** to relieve boredom, provide a break in the routine of home or work, and provide a contrast to other exacting details of life.
- **Cognitive interest:** to learn for the sake of learning, seek knowledge for its own sake, and to satisfy an inquiring mind.

Barriers and Motivation

Unlike children and teenagers, adults have many responsibilities that they must balance against the demands of learning. Because of these responsibilities, adults have *barriers against participating in learning*. Some of these barriers include lack of time, money, confidence, or interest, lack of information about opportunities to learn, scheduling problems, "red tape," and problems with child care and transportation.

Motivation factors can also be a barrier. What motivates adult learners? Typical motivations include a requirement for competence or licensing, an expected (or realized) promotion, job enrichment, a need to maintain old skills or learn new ones, a need to adapt to job changes, or the need to learn in order to comply with company directives.

The best way to motivate adult learners is simply to *enhance* their reasons for enrolling and *decrease* the barriers. Instructors must learn why their students are enrolled (the motivators); they have to discover what is keeping them from learning. Then the instructors must plan their motivating strategies. A successful strategy includes showing adult learners the relationship between training and an expected promotion.

Learning Tips for Effective Instructors

Educators must remember that learning occurs within each individual as a continual process throughout life. People learn at different speeds, so it is natural for them to be anxious or nervous when faced with a learning situation. Positive reinforcement by the instructor can enhance learning, as can proper timing of the instruction.

Learning results from stimulation of the senses. In some people, one sense is used more than others to learn or recall information. Instructors should present materials that stimulates as many senses as possible in order to increase their chances of teaching success.

There are four critical elements of learning that must be addressed to ensure that participants learn. These elements are

1. **motivation**
2. **reinforcement**
3. **retention**
4. **transference**

Motivation. If the participant does not recognize the need for the information (or has been offended or intimidated), all of the instructor's effort to assist the participant to learn will be in vain. The instructor must establish rapport with participants and prepare them for learning; this provides motivation.

Instructors can motivate students via several means:

- **Set a feeling or tone for the lesson.** Instructors should try to establish a friendly, open atmosphere that shows the participants they will help them learn.
- **Set an appropriate level of concern.** The level of tension must be adjusted to meet the level of importance of the objective. If the material has a high level of importance, a higher level of tension/stress should be established in the class. However, people learn best under low to moderate stress; if the stress is too high, it becomes a barrier to learning.
- **Set an appropriate level of difficulty.** The degree of difficulty should be set high enough to challenge participants but not so high that they become frustrated by information overload. The instruction should predict and reward participation, culminating in success.

In addition, participants need specific knowledge of their learning results (*feedback*). Feedback must be specific, not general. Participants must also see a *reward* for learning. The reward does not necessarily have to be monetary; it can be simply a demonstration of benefits to be realized from learning the material. Finally, the participant must be **interested** in the subject. Interest is directly related to reward. Adults must see the benefit of learning in order to motivate themselves to learn the subject.

Reinforcement. Reinforcement is a very necessary part of the teaching/learning process; through it, instructors encourage correct modes of behavior and performance.

- *Positive reinforcement* is normally used by instructors who are teaching participants new skills. As the name implies, positive reinforcement is "good" and reinforces "good" (or positive) behavior.
- *Negative reinforcement* is the contingent removal of a noxious stimulus that tends to increase the behavior. The contingent presentation of a noxious stimulus that tends to decrease a behavior is called Punishment. Reinforcing a behavior will never lead to extinction of that behavior by definition. Punishment and Time Out lead to extinction of a particular behavior, but positive or negative reinforcement of that behavior never will. (To read more about negative reinforcement, you can check out [Maricopa Center for Learning & Instruction Negative Reinforcement Univeristy.](#))

When instructors are trying to change behaviors (old practices), they should apply both positive and negative reinforcement.

Reinforcement should be part of the teaching-learning process to ensure correct behavior. Instructors need to use it on a frequent and regular basis early in the process to help the students retain what they have learned. Then, they should use reinforcement only to maintain consistent, positive behavior.

Retention. Students must retain information from classes in order to benefit from the learning. The instructors' jobs are not finished until they have assisted the learner in retaining the information. In order for participants to retain the information taught, they must see a meaning or purpose for that information. They must also understand and be able to interpret and apply the information. This understanding includes their ability to assign the correct degree of importance to the material.

The amount of retention will be directly affected by the degree of original learning. Simply stated, if the participants did not learn the material well initially, they will not retain it well either.

Retention by the participants is directly affected by their amount of practice during the learning. Instructors should emphasize retention and application. After the students demonstrate correct (desired) performance, they should be urged to practice to maintain the desired performance. Distributed practice is similar in effect to intermittent reinforcement.

Transference. Transfer of learning is the result of training -- it is the ability to use the information taught in the course but in a new setting. As with reinforcement, there are two types of transfer: *positive* and *negative*.

- Positive transference, like positive reinforcement, occurs when the participants use the behavior taught in the course.
- Negative transference, again like negative reinforcement, occurs when the participants do not do what they are told not to do. This results in a positive (desired) outcome.

Transference is most likely to occur in the following situations:

- *Association* -- participants can associate the new information with something that they already know.
- *Similarity* -- the information is similar to material that participants already know; that is, it revisits a logical framework or pattern.
- *Degree of original learning* -- participant's degree of original learning was high.
- *Critical attribute element* -- the information learned contains elements that are extremely beneficial (critical) on the job.

Although adult learning is relatively new as a field of study, it is just as substantial as traditional education and carries and potential for greater success. Of course, the heightened success requires a greater responsibility on the part of the teacher. Additionally, the learners come to the course with precisely defined expectations. Unfortunately, there are barriers to their learning. The best motivators for adult learners are interest and selfish benefit. If they can be shown that the course benefits them pragmatically, they will perform better, and the benefits will be longer lasting.