

## ***Adult Learning Strategies***

Using Malcolm Knowles (1998) as a foundation, provided below are general strategies that are effective for trainers when working with the adult learner:

### **Strategy #1:     *Adults bring relevant experiences with them into the learning environment...***

- As a group, the trainees have more experience than the trainer does. These experiences need to be recognized because to ignore an adult's experience in the classroom is to ignore and invalidate that trainee as a person.
- It is the trainer's responsibility to create a supportive and encouraging learning environment and not one where egos are bruised. By supporting the experiences of trainees, we as trainers, are gaining the benefit of what they already know.

### **Strategy #2:     *Adults are self-directing...***

- Trainers cannot come across as dominant, but rather must be co-learners.
- Trainers should create an environment of respect for the trainees. For example, trainees should be comfortable enough to ask questions.

### **Strategy #3:     *Adults perceive time as very "now-oriented," so be sure adult learners understand the WIIFMs (what's in it for me?)...***

- Training sessions are taking participants away from their work, so explain that time invested now will pay off later.
- Show trainees how the material being presented is immediately applicable or give them a timeframe. Provide direct, concrete experiences in which the learning will be applied back to their current job.
- Frequently discuss the benefits of learning.

### **Strategy #4:     *Adults are problem solvers...***

- Ensure that the trainees are actively, rather than passively, involved in the learning process. This includes encouraging trainees to ask questions.
- Be sure to keep explanations brief so that interest level remains high. Avoid long periods of lecture.

### **Strategy #5:     *Adults thrive on an environment based on learning and trust...***

- Participants need to feel comfortable to participate without fear of repercussions.
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- People learn in different ways or sometimes in a combination of styles. They are divided into auditory (hearing), kinesthetic (doing), and visual (seeing) types. Because of these learning preferences, we know that people retain:
  - 10% of what they HEAR
  - 30% of what they SEE
  - 50% of what they SEE and HEAR
  - 70% of what they DO
  - 90% of what they SEE, HEAR and DO

Additional Resources:

*Andragogy and Technology: Integrating Adult Learning Theory As We Teach With Technology*

<http://frank.mtsu.edu/~itconf/proceed00/fidishun.htm>

*Adult Learning Theory*

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/methods/technlgy/te10lk12.htm>

*How Adults Learn*

<http://agelesslearner.com/intros/adultlearning.html>

*Principles of Adult Learning*

<http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/adults-2.htm>