Understanding What Drives the Adult Learner ... to Enhance Learning Outcomes

Presented By

the Training Doctor
we make workplace training better

Nanette Miner, Ed.D.

843.647.6304

www.trainingdr.com

Table of Contents

page…

None of these outcomes is any better than another.

They all have their place and importance.

The key to designing a successful outcome is to understand what you hope to achieve before you start the design process.

Nanette Miner

What's the difference between...
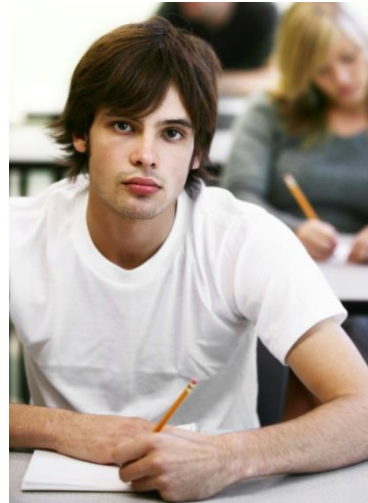
Educating

Training

Learning

The primary reason <u>training</u> doesn't work is because what we *really* want is for people to <u>learn</u>.

Nanette Miner

Everything we "know" about Adult Learning Theory is based on studies conducted during the 1970's using white, American, (mostly) male college students.

The differences between Adults and Children in terms of...

	Children	Adults
Concept of the learner	Dependent	Self directed
Experience	To be built	Resource for self and others
Readiness to learn	Uniform by age level	Develops from tasks or needs
Orientation to learning	Subject oriented	Task or problem-centered
Motivation	External	Internal
Learning climate	Low trust, authority-driven, competitive, judgmental	Relaxed, trusting, mutually respectful, collaborative, supportive
Plan for learning	Teacher	Jointly: teacher & student
Diagnosis of needs	Teacher / System	Jointly: teacher & student
Setting objectives	Teacher	Jointly: teacher & student
Activities	Transmitted / Assigned	Projects, independent study, experiential
Evaluation	By teacher	By learner
	Norm referenced	Criterion referenced
	Graded	Accomplished or not

What we need to overcome:

Most teachers overstuff their students. The most common communication mistakes? Relating too much information, with not enough time devoted to connecting the dots.

Lots of force-feeding, very little digestion.

This does nothing for the nourishment of the listeners, whose learning is often sacrificed in the name of expediency.

At one level, this is understandable. Most experts are so familiar with their topic that they forget what it is like to be a novice. Even if they remember, experts can become bored with having to repeat fundamentals over and over again.

In college, I found that a lot of my professors, because they had to communicate at such elementary levels, were truly fed up with teaching. They seemed to forget that the information was brand new to us, and that we needed the time to digest it, which meant a need for consistent breaks.

How true indeed that expertise does not guarantee good teaching!

Excerpted from Brain Rules
John Medina. 2008

The Adult's Approach to Learning / Training

Adults prefer…

Self direction

Experiential techniques

Relevancy to real life

Immediate applicability
(adults are competency-based)

Malcolm Knowles, "Father" of Adult Learning
1913 - 1997

> Instead of "training sessions," create "working sessions."
>
> **Leo Flanagan**

> Once a young lawyer graduates law school and joins a firm, the next two years are spent teaching him to be a lawyer.
>
> **Sharon Abrahams**

4 Learning Outcomes

4.

3.

2.

1.

(in order of difficulty to achieve)

These are not "either / or" options.
The best learner success is a result of all four learning outcomes
being addressed in the same learning opportunity.

Some other theorists have "tip toed" in to Adult Learning in the last 50 years…

Howard Gardner

Steven Brookfield

Rosemary Caffarella

Jack Mezirow

Frederic Margolis

Chip Bell

Deborah Kilgore

George Sieman

Theorists

Knowles

- As they mature, adults tend to prefer self-direction.
- Adults are competency-based learners – meaning they will learn a new skill, or take on new knowledge, if they can apply it to their immediate circumstances.
- Adults learn more effectively through experiential techniques.

Tough

- When adults learn something "naturally" rather than "being taught," they are highly self directing.
- What adults learn on their own initiative they learn more keenly and permanently than what they learn when being "taught."

Gardner

- All human beings possess not just a single intelligence.
- Most lay and scholarly writings about intelligence focus on a combination of linguistic and logical intelligences [the kinds of things we reinforce and reward in school].
- We must also take into account spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences.
- No direct educational implications follow from this psychological theory; but if individuals differ in their intellectual profiles, it makes sense to take this fact into account in devising an educational system.

The formal name for Adult Learning Theory is Andragogy (andra-go-gee)

Critical Thinking

The process of applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and /or evaluating information, gathered by experience, observation, reflection or reasoning… as a guide to belief or action.

Richard Paul

Adults learn by...

Experience
"Live it, learn it."
Is better to listen to an expert tell how a cash register works? Or get the hands on experience of manipulating the cash register while learning?

Observation and reflection
What happened? Why? Can it happen again? Do I want it to? Is this a good thing or a bad thing? What have I learned from this?

Thinking
Questioning: Why? Why now? What if? What if not? Yeah, but…

> If we want people to LEARN and not just memorize, they have to mentally work with the content; they must experience it, reflect up on it, and think about what it means to them.
>
> **Nanette Miner**

<u>Question</u> and Answer Techniques

Open / Closed

T E D stands for _____, _____, _____

Perspective

Loss

Comparative

Design 5 questions that will get your participants to *think* or *reflect*...

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

One way communi-cation methods, designed to present information, should not be mistaken for training.

Karen Lawson

Question and <u>Answer</u> Techniques

- Throw back to the questioner

- Throw to the group

- Put context around the question

Graphics are not fluff. We learn almost twice as well from images and words as from words alone.

Pictures translate across cultures, education levels, and age groups. Yet the majority of the content of corporate learning is text.

Jay Cross

Using Brain Rules to Ensure Learning

Capture (and keep) their attention

- Activities

- Hooks

- Stories

Structure + Hierarchy

- Explain "the plan" at the beginning of class, with liberal repetition of "where we are;" clearly and repetitively explain linkages

- Experts' ideas are organized around "core concepts"

John Bransford

Visuals

- "Real"

- Descriptive

- You can even make up an image to create an association in people's minds

According to the Principle of Multiple Representation, it is better to present an explanation in words and pictures than solely in words. The learner builds two different representations – the verbal model and the visual model - and then *builds connections* between the corresponding inputs.

According to the Principle of Contiguity, learners understand an explanation better when corresponding words and pictures are presented at the same time than when they are separated in time.

Training vs. Facilitating

Define Facilitation: _____

Engagement Techniques

Interaction is…

_____

_____

_____

Types of Interactions:

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

Collaboration is….

_____

_____

Types of Collaboration:

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

> Interactions take time but we MUST incorporate them because people internalize, assimilate, apply critical thinking and LEARN this way!
>
> **Nanette Miner**

RESOURCES

Research Studies

A Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning: Implications for Design Principles
Mayer, R and Moreno, R. University of California, Santa Barbara

Articles

Numerous articles from Stephen Brookfield on how to become a reflective instructor and encourage critical thinking
http://stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Workshop_Materials.html

Books

Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home and School
John Medina. Pear Press, Seattle, WA. 2008
Also visit: www.brainrules.net

Games Trainers Play
More Games Trainers Play
Even More Games Trainers Play
Ed Scannell and John Newstrom. McGraw-Hill, New York, NY. All published in the 1990's.

Frame Games
The Thiagi Group
www.thiagi.com

Planning Programs for Adult Learners: A Practical Guide for Educators, Trainers, and Staff Developers, 2nd Edition
Rosemary Caffarella. Josey-Bass. 2001

Web Sites

www.TD.org (ATD: Association for Talent Development)

www.TrainingMagazine.com

Blogs:

http://www.bdld.blogspot.com

http://bozarthzone.blogspot.com/

https://www.td.org/Publications/Blogs/ATD-Blog

ATD's Community of Practice Blogs (fantastic!) https://www.td.org/Publications/Blogs