How Adults Learn Best

- **MAKE THE TRAINING RELEVANT.**

  Adults need to see that the subject matter and the teaching methods are relevant to their lives and what they want to learn.

  Find out beforehand about the participants, and what they’re most interested in learning. Use examples and discussions in the training that reflect participants’ own experiences, and are relevant to their needs.

- **RESPECT PEOPLE’S EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS.**

  Adults come to the class with a wealth of prior experience and knowledge. They are more open to learning if treated with respect.

  Explain to the class that participants will learn from each other, and plan activities that build on and incorporate participants’ own experience.

- **BUILD ON PREVIOUS LEARNING.**

  Adults learn best when they can relate new material to what they already know. Learners need road maps, with clear objectives. Each new piece of information needs to build logically on the last.

  Avoid presenting large amounts of new information all at once. Use visual aids. Be sure to allow time for breaks and questions. Make sure everyone is ready for the next step before proceeding.

- **USE DIVERSE TRAINING METHODS.**

  Adults have different learning styles. Some people learn better if the material is reinforced with visual aids, and some learn better through hands-on activities. Learning works better when information is presented in different ways.

  Use a variety of teaching activities, including brainstorming, discussion, visual aids, role plays, games, and case studies. Change the pace and the method frequently, especially when covering difficult and abstract topics.
• ENCOURAGE CLASS PARTICIPATION.

When adults are involved in and help direct their own learning, they are more engaged and learn more. People need to practice as they learn, and hear things more than once to remember them.

Encourage questions and discussion during the class. Use hands-on practice, role playing, non-competitive quizzes, and other exercises often. Incorporate information presented earlier into new activities. Remember that an instructor’s skill in asking questions and analyzing people’s answers is of greater value than flooding the class with a mass of information they can get elsewhere or don’t need.

An old proverb says:

Tell me, I forget.

Show me, I remember.

Involve me, I understand.
Training Steps

1. **DO A NEEDS ASSESSMENT.** Find out about your audience and their training needs. What do they already know, and what do they want to learn?

2. **SET OBJECTIVES.** Objectives help you focus on what is most important. Aim for the bull’s-eye: emphasize the essential information.

3. **SELECT TEACHING METHODS.** Training is most effective when you use a variety of methods. People learn in different ways and retain more if they hear, see, and practice. Some useful methods are games, role plays, case studies, demonstrations, small group activities and brainstorming.

4. **DEVELOP A TRAINING PLAN.** A training plan is an outline that spells out what activities and methods you will use, how much time each activity will take, and what materials you will need.

5. **PRESENT THE TRAINING.** Follow your training plan as much as possible, but be flexible in meeting participants’ needs.

6. **EVALUATE TRAINING AND REVISE TRAINING PLAN AS NEEDED.** Get participants’ feedback on how well the training went and how effective it was. Decide what needs to be changed and improve your training plan for next time.
Aim at What is Essential to Know

Sometimes trainers try to cover too much material and lose sight of what is most important.

Being selective is critical. Determine whether the material you want to teach is:

- Essential to know,
- Good to know, or
- Nice to know.

Your main aim is to cover what is essential. Since your teaching time is limited, you need to aim carefully.

Aim for the bull’s eye. Ask yourself:

- Why am I teaching this?
- In what way will this prepare the person to stay safe at work, or to perform a new skill?
- Could this time be better used to teach something else that’s more important, or to teach the same thing in a better way?

Aim your teaching at what is most essential!
Memory and Learning Methods

- **Hear Only**: 20% Retained
- **See Only**: 30% Retained
- **Hear + See**: 50% Retained

**Hear + See + Discuss + Practice**: 90% Retained
# Teaching Methods Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Methods</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Presents factual material in direct, logical manner.</td>
<td>Experts may not always be good teachers.</td>
<td>Needs clear introduction and summary.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can include personal experiences which inspire.</td>
<td>Audience is passive.</td>
<td>Needs limits on time and content to be effective.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stimulates thinking to open a discussion.</td>
<td>Learning is difficult to gauge.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Works for large audiences</td>
<td>Can become unfocused.</td>
<td>Instructor must select and clearly define the problem or questions, then ask for all ideas (without debate or comment), which are recorded on board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorm</td>
<td>Allows creative thinking and new ideas.</td>
<td>Needs to be limited to 10-15 minutes.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourages full participation because all ideas are equally valued.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Discussion</td>
<td>Pools ideas and experiences from the group.</td>
<td>Not practical with more than 20 people.</td>
<td>Needs careful planning by instructor to guide the discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective after a lecture, film, story, or brainstorm that needs to be analyzed.</td>
<td>A few people can dominate, while others may not participate.</td>
<td>Needs advance preparation of questions and key points to bring out in the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Discussion</td>
<td>Allows participation of everyone in small groups (4-6 people).</td>
<td>Needs careful thought as to the purpose and task of group.</td>
<td>Needs preparation of specific tasks or questions for group to answer.</td>
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### Teaching Methods Chart (CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

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<td>Risk Mapping</td>
<td>Small groups creates a visual map of hazards, controls, and plans for action. Does not rely on reading or writing skills. Useful as a follow-up tool after discussion.</td>
<td>Works best for workers from the same or similar workplace.</td>
<td>The work areas being mapped need to be chosen carefully to make sure they are relevant to participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies</td>
<td>Develops analytic and problem-solving skills. Allows for exploration of different solutions. Allows students to apply new knowledge and skills.</td>
<td>People may not see the relevance to their own situation.</td>
<td>The scenario must be clearly defined to be effective. Need to pose the right questions for drawing out critical thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Playing</td>
<td>Introduces a problem dramatically. Develops analytic and problem-solving skills. Allows people to assume roles of others and understand their views. Allows for exploration of different solutions. Allows for practice in speaking up.</td>
<td>People may be too self-conscious. May not be appropriate for large groups.</td>
<td>Need to define the problem and roles clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Back Session</td>
<td>Allows for full class discussion after role plays, case studies, and small group exercises. Gives people a chance to reflect on what happened.</td>
<td>Can be repetitive if each small group says the same thing.</td>
<td>Instructor should prepare questions to focus the discussion, so it is not repetitive.</td>
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## Teaching Methods Chart

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<td>Hands-on Practice</td>
<td>Provides classroom practice of learned behavior (use of equipment, techniques, etc.).</td>
<td>Requires enough time, appropriate physical space, and equipment.</td>
<td>Instructor has to obtain, set up, and check equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worksheets and Questionnaires</td>
<td>Allows people to think for themselves without being influenced by others.</td>
<td>Can be used only for a short period of time.</td>
<td>Instructor has to prepare handouts, select questions, and have a clear idea of the goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual thoughts can then be shared with small groups or the entire class.</td>
<td>Can be isolating since people work alone.</td>
<td>Materials may need to be translated into other languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiovisual Materials (videos, DVDs, etc.)</td>
<td>Entertaining way of teaching content and raising issues.</td>
<td>Too many issues may be presented at once to have a focused discussion.</td>
<td>Participants should be encouraged to ask for help and work with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keeps audience’s attention.</td>
<td>Follow-up discussion may not have full participation.</td>
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<td>Effective in large groups.</td>
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## Factsheet E

**How Adults Learn**

- **Teaching Methods Chart**

Includes: Hands-on Practice, Worksheets and Questionnaires, Audiovisual Materials (videos, DVDs, etc.)

**Strengths**
- Provides classroom practice of learned behavior.
- Allows people to think for themselves.
- Entertaining way of teaching content.

**Limitations**
- Requires enough time.
- Can be used only for a short period.
- Too many issues may be presented.

**Preparation**
- Instructor has to obtain equipment.
- Instructor has to prepare handouts.
- Need AV equipment set up.
- Need to screen material ahead of time.

Participants should be encouraged to ask for help and work with others.
Training Evaluation Checklist

The trainer:

☐ Respects the participants, and the knowledge and experience they bring to the class.

☐ Knows the participants’ needs and tailors the training to these needs (makes it relevant, builds on what they already know).

☐ Uses participatory, interactive methods that actively involve the learners and draw on their own skills and knowledge.

☐ Uses a variety of different training methods to keep things interesting and to accommodate diverse learning styles.

☐ Uses “hands-on” activities whenever possible.

☐ Uses good props, demonstration equipment, visuals, etc.

☐ Is careful to do more listening than talking.

☐ Demonstrates enthusiasm and commitment to health and safety.

☐ Is well-prepared in advance and has a clear training plan.

☐ Makes expectations clear from the beginning.

☐ Gives an overview of what the training will cover.

☐ Avoids giving a talk or lecture for more than 10 minutes at a time.

☐ Involves all participants, not just some.

☐ Creates a safe learning environment for all participants.

☐ Recognizes and accommodates cultural and linguistic differences among participants.
Your Training Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>INSTRUCTOR’S NOTES</th>
<th>MATERIALS NEEDED</th>
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Topic: