



ADULT TRAINING: THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

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Abstracts of articles about training adults Compiled by Steve Keller, CPP

The material in this article is taken from an excellent series of articles in Training Magazine. Each article is referenced by title and author.



Training is published by Training Magazine, Lakewood Publications, 731 Hennepin Avenue Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403 and should be read by everyone involved in the training of adults.

Motivating and Managing Learning in the Classroom by J. B. Cornwell; Dec. 1978

This article asks how a trainer can motivate students. It is concerned with dealing with students who really don't want to learn. The author notes that students are human beings. They are individuals. The trainer must

ascertain from them exactly what they want to learn. Why are they there? He equates a good teacher with a good salesman. He recalls buying a car from a good salesman who summed up exactly what he thought the author wanted in a car. The author reacted with a clarification of his desires. He noted that the salesman started getting the customer's full cooperation when he offered the car with features that the buyer wanted. A teacher must offer what the students want in order to be successful.

What do you expect to learn? What are your objectives? When the learner knows his objectives--sometimes clarified with the teacher's help--cooperation can begin. The author states that the teacher must be able to tell the class what the features, benefits, and price is of his training program, then relate them to the advantages of learning what the program has to offer.

Why Do We Want Trainee Involvement? by Martin M. Broadwell May 1977

The author states that involvement by students in their own training eases the pain of training. Participation, when properly controlled, can add to the training experience. Class participation can be a very effective method of accomplishing class goals.

He says that involvement itself is not synonymous with successful teaching nor is just any kind of involvement guaranteed to be satisfactory. While involvement by adults in learning

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can be very useful, the trainer would ask if the involvement is really necessary before using it as a training technique.

Stimulating and Managing Participation in Class by J. B. Cornwell May 1979

The author sees three major categories of learners: 1. The typical learner who wants to participate to learn more. 2. The non-participator or under-participator who is inhibited for some reason and 3. The over-participator.

The author gives tips on dealing with all three.

The key words according to the author in describing a learning environment are formality and focus. The room arrangement can effect both. A formal arrangement can allow control of the situation by the teacher. With no formality, there is no central focus.

Look around the classroom. There is a reason why the room is arranged in this way. It maintains focus on the speaker, is informal, is different in some ways from standard classroom set-ups, and allows mobility of the instructor. While being different isn't necessarily good, it does help to maintain interest.

The author gives great tips in dealing with the motor-mouth and the non-participant who is embarrassed and wont speak up in class. Body language, such as the teacher's hand motions, can be important in n controlling the situation. This is an excellent article for your review.

Making the Most of the First 20 Minutes of Your Training by Don M. Ricks August 1977

The author states that the first 20 minutes of a seminar or training session are critical. The teacher must establish himself as a Human Being. Students can achieve their highest level of learning during the first 20 minutes. That is the instructor's chance to mold them into an active, working group.

The author says that in an adult classroom, the trainer should: 1. Neutralize the incipient Teacher-Pupil relationships, 2. Begin to form a class community, 3. Encourage trainees to discover and start to correct any non-productive learning agendas they may have, and 4. Encourage them to formulate definite in-course and post-course objectives for themselves.

Eye contact is important. It should be accomplished with every student at least once. One comment or question should be directed to every student in the room. Everyone in the room should interact with everyone else or at least half of the rest of the class.

Class members should be required to sit in different locations in the room and with different participants occasionally throughout the program. Students are active agents in their own learning. Great article.

Dealing With Age and Experience Differences by Martin M. Broadwell July 1976



This topic is especially important in adult training. Some older students want to say, I've heard all of this before. The author recommends a response, Great. Are you suggesting that you've not only heard all of this but you are also doing all of it now?

He recommends asking the hearer of it all before to help out with practical examples whenever possible. Use age and experience to your advantage before it is used against you to your disadvantage. He advised that you be careful because these older or more experienced learners carry great weight with the rest of the class.

The author gives important advice in dealing with this type of individual successfully.

Handling the I'd Rather be Somewhere Else Trainee by Martin Broadwell
November 1976

In a separate section of this excellent article, the author gives tips on how an instructor can get students to ask questions. Some of his suggestions:

1. Use phrases like, Don't be afraid to speak up if you have questions. Or Chances are that others have the same questions you have so you will be helping others if you stop me and ask any questions you might have.
2. Never treat a question like it is a stupid question. Mention the merit in every question.
3. Repeat questions loudly and clearly.
4. Never say Well, if there are no

questions we will move on since I'm running short of time.

5. Don't lecture for more than 5 minutes without asking for questions.

6. Allow time for trainees to respond.

7. Pay attention to the back of the room and encourage them to participate, too.

8. Don't call for questions just before coffee break or quitting time.

9. Include a roundtable session for questions within the class schedule.

Surviving and Handling Those Hostile Participants by Carl E. Pickhardt
September 1980

The author gives examples of some ways hostility can manifest itself in class: Hostile withdrawal, hostile diversion, and hostile attack. A good trainer will be able to let the hostile participant vent his hostility and pressure.

The author recommends several ways to deal with hostile learners:

1. Avoidance,
2. Acceptance,
3. Adaptation,
4. Standing Fast,
5. Counter Attack.

In avoidance, the teacher ignores the hostile student. In Acceptance, the teacher moves to find the purpose of the hostility. He then accepts the resistance and lets it continue. In Adaptation, the teacher engages the hostile student in such a way as to actually use his hostility to make a



point. (Take their argument away from them by saying You're right. I agree). In Standing Fast, the teacher will not give way. You will not debate. You will not discuss. In Pushing Back, the teacher counter-attacks. He can try to turn the other students against the hostile student.

Read the article in its entirety. Very useful in teaching adult Guards.

The power of the Questioning Approach by Paul J. Micali March 1981

The author discusses the Socratic method of questioning as part of the teaching process.

Education is a simple process; training is not. Educators give people knowledge. Trainers help people put knowledge to use, says the author.

He explains the need to question adult learners and use the technique to successfully teach them and help them put knowledge to work.

Using the Parable to Make a Point by Lilith Ren May 1981

This article says that adult learners are receptive to the use of parables in the classroom in making a point. A seven point outline is provided which teaches the teacher the technique of doing this successfully.

Using Mental Imagery to Enhance Learning by Ron Zemke January 1981

Mental imagery, the ability we all have

to see with the brain's eye, has been regarded as a powerful training tool for many years. It is effective with adults. The technique is explained in detail for those needing instructions on how to use it in the classroom.

Why it Pays to Use Quotes in Your Class by Walt Robson August 1978

The author feels that the use of quotes from historic characters is very useful in teaching adults who can relate to these quotes. He makes a good point and gives examples of how it is done. Fictitious quotes, such as the Murphy's Law quotes, can be used to hold a reader's interest.

Classroom Tips by the Editor of Adult Learning in Your Classroom.

A collection of Training Magazine's best articles gives some tips for classrooms where adults are being taught. Among the best are:

1. Don't flip your flip chart. Tear off the sheet and tape it up for future reference. It can serve as reference as well as a continuing tool for learning.

2. Use graffiti. One teacher had a troublesome class. She used a blackboard to create three columns. One was for Course Content, one for Methods of Presentation, and the other for Class Participation. She told the class to take ten minutes to fill in the columns with comments about the class. She left the room. Upon returning, she found that the first two columns had positive comments. The



third had negative comments. This revealed the source of class hostility. She was able to improve the student's perception of the class by changing the way she involved the class in the training.

3. Use humor in adult classes. Students retain more if humor is included in training.

4. Eye contact, varied vocal inflection, and appropriate posture are three factors which strongly effect how the teacher relates to the adult learner.

5. Adults learn effectively using the discovery method The discovery method is when class exercises are developed which allow the learner to find something out for himself.

6. Use of pictures helps improve adult learning.

7. Role playing is not popular as an adult learning method but it is effective.

Keeping Supervisors From Sabotaging Your Training Efforts by Joseph Spinale March 1980

We have all had an experience of teaching a new Guard what you want him to do, then finding that the experienced supervisor *unteaches* the Guard. This is one of the most serious things which can effect your training.

This article is very good and you should seek it out and read it. It is somewhat technical to summarize here, but the author gives advice for dealing with supervisors.

He says that supervisors sometimes give verbal support to training and the training officer but act in such a way as to negate what you have taught. Research indicates that supervisors often act this way not out of malice but only because the way they are acting has been rewarded in the past. While they supported what the organization promoted as improved methods of management, they actually continued to promote what they perceived as tried and true methods. After all, doing what they are doing got them promoted.

Solutions: Train your supervisor; insure that he will not be rewarded if he negates training; get support from the next highest level of management; reinforce him when he does what he is supposed to do. Provide open discussion with him about the consequences of his behavior.

Making Sure Your Supervisors Do On The Job What You Taught Them in the Classroom by James C. Robinson and Linda E. Robinson September 1979

The authors outline an action plan for post training. They recommend a program of self assessment by supervisors. They note that supervisory training should not be



limited to new supervisors or to those who are perceived as needing it. All supervisors should be trained so that they reinforce each others use of what they learned. They encourage management reinforcement of proper performance.

Thirty Things We Know For Sure About Adult Learning by Ron and Susan Zemke June 1981

The author lists thirty things we know for sure about adult learning. Hopefully by understanding these things we can teach adults more effectively. Some of those items listed are: Adults seek out learning experiences in order to cope with specific life-change events: marriage, divorce, retirement, new job, promotion, etc. The more life changing experiences an adult encounters, the more likely he is to seek out learning experiences. Adults are more receptive to learning before, during or just after a life changing event. Learning is often not its own reward for adult learners. Increasing or maintaining self esteem and pleasure are strong secondary motivators to adult learners. Adult learners are less interested in broad survey courses. They need to integrate new ideas with what they already know. They resist new material which conflicts with what they already know. While adults are slower in some learning tasks, they make fewer mistakes and are more accurate.

Adults tend to take errors personally. Programs need to be designed to accept viewpoints from people in different life stages. Adults prefer self-directed study over group learning.

Reading and talking to a qualified peer is generally acceptable to most adults. Non-human media such as video and books are popular with adults.

Straight forward how-to training is preferred by adults. Self-direction in study programs for adults does not mean isolation according to the author. Adults like small groups of people to learn with. Ten is a good number.

in its goals of 1/ teaching new skills to learners and 2/ convincing them to adapt those skills and use them in their day to day work.

The learning environment (classroom) must be psychologically and physically comfortable for an adult to learn. They fear losing self esteem and ego in a classroom. Education can be threatening to an adult. Adults need to have class expectations discussed up front. What are the expectations of the teacher? What are the expectations of the student? Life experience of the student should be used in the classroom. Open ended questions are useful in adult learning. New knowledge must be integrated with existing knowledge. In adult learning, the way the trainer handles conflict is important. Conflict must be unheated. Adult learners must be reminded that there are often several ways to meet the objective.

The above is provided as a resource material. We urge you to use resources like Training magazine to learn about adult training. You cannot successfully teach adults the way you were taught



in grade school. The more effectively you adapt your program to meet the needs of adult learners, the more effective your program will be in its goals of 1/ teaching new skills to learners and 2/ convincing them to adapt those skills and use them in their day to day work.

If you are still teaching your grown-up employees like kids are taught, you better reconsider because you are probably not getting through.

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