

# PHD Education and Training Tips and Tricks

## Does Tapping Into Experience Really Facilitate Learning?

When it comes to training, the adult learner differs from children as learners. How do they differ? Specifically they differ in experience, readiness to learn and perspective.

Adult learners decide what is important and they determine whether training is valid based on their experiences, beliefs and values. Adult learners expect that what they are learning to be useful immediately and because adult learners have a substantial amount of experience from which they draw from, their viewpoints could be biased.

Adult learners bring a unique perspective to learning and the instructor should tap into those experience in order to ensure they are meeting the needs of the adult learners.

Experience, Leadership, Appeal and Respect are a few principles to utilize when facilitating learning. Instructors are leaders, they are not dictators. However as an instructor, you have a responsibility to make certain that you are providing guidance, and resources for learning. Although instructors view themselves as the Subject Matter Expert, learners will determine whether the information being taught is relevant to incorporate the information in their work or personal lives.

Research by Sullivan, Wircenski, Arnold and Sarkees (1990) stress that the establishment of a positive learning climate depends on understanding the characteristics of adult learners who will be participating in the instructional process. Additionally, the research found that motivation, participation, personal concern, positive feedback, variety and uniqueness will support adult learning. So, it is evident that tapping into experience can facilitate learning.

## What's the Connection?

Adult learners want to know how instruction will help them.

What's in it for me?

Why do I need this information?

How will I benefit from it?

How can I utilize this information in a practical way?

How will it help me improve professional or personally?

***Are you tapping into experience to facilitate learning?***

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