5 Crucial Assumptions About Adult Learners and Implications for Educators:

1. **Self-concept:** As a person matures, his self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being.

   **Implications for educators:**
   a. Involve adults in identifying learning needs
   b. Involve them in setting goals
   c. Act as facilitators – guide them to their own knowledge - not bombard them with facts

2. **Experience:** As a person matures, he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning

   **Implications for educators:**
   a. Connect learning to previous knowledge/experience base
   b. Draw out participants’ experience and knowledge relevant to topic
   c. Relate theories and concepts to participants

3. **Readiness to learn:** As a person matures, his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles

   **Implications for educators:**
   a. Material should be organized and clearly defined elements
   b. Show how class/course will help them attain their goals

4. **Orientation to learning:** As a person matures, his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem centeredness.

   **Implications for educators:**
   a. Learning must be applicable to their work
   b. Let learners choose projects relevant to own interests
   c. Focus on problem solving

5. **Motivation to learn:** As a person matures, the motivation to learn is internal

   **Implications for educators:**
   a. Treat learners as equals and with respect
   b. Allow them to voice opinions
   c. Remember – every person is different
Adult Learners

What makes adult learners different from kids?

- Adults are self-directed, autonomous
- Adults are goal oriented
- Adults are problem centered – they need to know why they are learning something
- Adults are practical and problem-solvers
- Adults have accumulated life experience

Adults have different motivations for learning than children:

- To make or maintain relationships
- To meet external expectations – the boss says you need to upgrade skills to keep your job
- To better serve others – managers may learn basic first aid to protect employees
- For professional advancement
- For escape or stimulation
- Because they are interested in a topic

Barriers to learning are different for adults.

- Multiple responsibilities (families, career, social commitments)
- Lack of time
- Lack of money
- Child care issues
- Scheduling problems
- Transportation problems
- Having to learn (told by someone else) versus wanting to learn (interested in subject)
- Lack of self-confidence
## Adult Learning Principles

This handout provides a review of basic principles of adult learning and some questions to ask to guide putting the principles into practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPLE</th>
<th>PUTTING IT TO PRACTICE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learning is enhanced when it is immediately applicable to real life contexts.</td>
<td>What are some of the ways you can make training applicable for participants?</td>
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<td>2. Learning is enhanced when adults have control or influence over the educational experiences.</td>
<td>What are some of the ways you can give participants control over their learning?</td>
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<td>3. Learning depends upon past and current experience.</td>
<td>What are some of the ways you can use learners’ experiences as a resource for learning?</td>
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<td>4. Learning depends upon active involvement of the learner.</td>
<td>What are some of the ways you can keep learners stimulated and involved?</td>
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<td>5. Learning depends upon a climate of respect and comfort.</td>
<td>What are some of the ways you can create a safe, respectful, comfortable learning atmosphere?</td>
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<td>6. Learning is enhanced when learners achieve self-direction.</td>
<td>What are some of the ways you can encourage learners to be more self-directed and to continue learning on the job?</td>
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<td>7. Adult learning is enhanced when connections/relationships are created.</td>
<td>How can you create connections/relationships among participants and to the workplace?</td>
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<td>8. Adult learning is enhanced when learners are successful.</td>
<td>What are some of the ways you can help ensure that learners are successful?</td>
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